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DR. CHARLES' HEALTH CHAT

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The Protein - Salt Overload

Our industrial world has provided us with modern conveniences as well as new diseases. Not known to many is that the leading disease is **obesity**. Although it is not recognized as the leading cause of death, some nutritionists would take issue at that statistic. Medical authorities however, will not deny its contributory factors towards untimely death and disability.

There is also no end to the methods and rational to the *diet cures* offered to treat the malady of being overweight. There is also no end to the reams of failures *diet cures* fail to offer. Perhaps then, there are more than *food* issues regarding this complex of symptoms obesity presents. A commonly overlook factor is that obesity is know known to be a condition called *lymphatic stasis*, or lymphedema. This is also called *tissue puffiness*. You may have experienced this at the end of the day when your ankles get swollen from standing long hours, or when it was difficult to take off your rings due to swollen fingers.

Just as there is a circulatory system for your blood, there is also one for water. Body water (lymphatic fluid) bathes your cells called extracellular fluid. It is the actual exchange media for nutrients - in, and cell wastes - out. It actually exists between your blood and your cells. Its content and composition is largely determined by the amount of *extracellular* sodium and protein. These two agents attract or draw water. These two agents also slow down the circulation of lymphatic fluid leading to tissue puffiness.

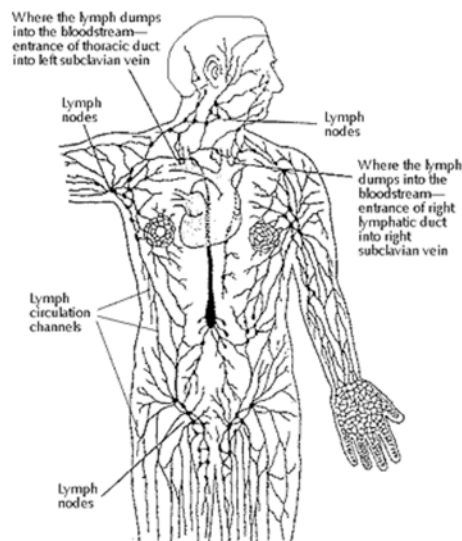


Diagram of the lymphatic system. **Body water must defy gravity to enter the blood by moving upwards to the subclavian trunk located at the clavicles. Here it enters the blood stream.**

It was the famous cancerologist Max Gerson who stated that all disease begins when intracellular potassium is replaced by extracellular sodium. Dr. Jarvis, the famous Vermont physician, called it the eternal battle that sodium and potassium have over the body's tissues. We seem to get plenty of salt but are always short when getting adequate dietary potassium. The old naturopaths of earlier years aptly called the syndrome the protein-salt overload. This is a condition where one eats too much protein based

animal food which also contains a lot of salt, and too little fresh fruit and vegetables. The two - protein and salt - go hand in hand, when it comes to animal food dieting.

It is well known that protein in the blood escapes into the extracellular fluid from the body's microscopic capillaries. Your blood pressure forces blood proteins through these microscopic sieves. High blood pressure makes the condition worse. Protein attracts salt and water into the extracellular spaces. The net result is tissue puffiness. This leads to stale body fluids and reduced immunity. Your lymphatic system is also part of your immune system by its network of lymph nodes and the thymus gland which essentially is a lymphoid organ. The sluggish circulation of body water allows old, stale protein to linger in your body longer and increases your chance of infections since bacteria love stale protein.

Sixty percent of your body's fluids lies just below the skin which accounts for the term tissue puffiness. If this fluid does not circulate daily and adequately, it leads to a variety of esthetic problems:

- a) Body odor, the lymph nodes in the armpits become stagnated, a fertile ground for bacteria.
- b) Foot odor and infections, body water accumulates in the feet due to gravity and lack of exercise. Athlete's foot, deformed nails, and stinky feet are signs of fungal infection.
- c) Swollen breasts.
- d) Puffy neck, commonly called turkey waddles since the lymph nodes in the neck become stagnated which also leads to untimely headaches and sore throats.
- e) Swollen or pot belly.

We could go on and talk about all the medical complications of lymphatic stasis, but perhaps the esthetic complaints are sufficient to motivate one to pay more attention to one's diet. Clearly, eating animal protein compulsively as so many do, leads to obesity. And eating animal flesh daily is not necessary for adequate nutrition. There are many other sources of more nutritious proteins found in grains and beans. This is not an argument in favor of vegetarianism, but rather a perspective that medical literature can clearly demonstrate. In fact, the recommendation of the World Health Organization for adequate protein intake is to simply eat an equal portion of grains and beans together. Consider these tasty arrangements while I leave the condiments to the healthful reader:

- * Rice and blackeyed peas
- * Rice and black beans with olive
- * Soyberger on whole wheat
- * Oatmeal with fresh carrots and peas
- * Cream of wheat with squash
- * Pearl Barley with green peas
- * Millet with chickpeas
- * Fresh cut corn with lima beans (succotash)

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