Lymph Nodes Animation

The lymphatic system is a complex network of thin vessels, valves, ducts, nodes and organs. It helps to protect and maintain the fluid environment of the body by producing, filtering, and conveying lymph and by producing various blood cells.

Lymph nodes play an important part in the body’s defense against infection. The most common cause of swollen lymph nodes is infection, which might occur even if the infection is trivial or not.

Here is an enlargement of a lymph node. To better understand its function, let’s take a look at a cut section. ‘Afferent’ means towards. Afferent lymph vessels bring unfiltered fluids into the lymph nodes to be filtered. ‘Efferent' means away from. Efferent vessels carry clean fluid away from the lymph nodes into the cardiovascular system where it helps form the plasma in the blood.

Overall, it works like a biological filtering system. When the body is invaded by foreign organisms, the painful swelling sometimes felt in the neck, armpits, groin or tonsils comes from the microorganisms being trapped inside collections of lymph cells or nodes.

Eventually, these organisms are destroyed and eliminated by cells that line the walls of the lymph nodes. Then the swelling and pain subside.