

Lymphatic System

The lymphatic or *lymphoid system* consists of a fluid called *lymph*, *lymphatic vessels*, lymph nodes, a number of structures and organs (spleen, thymus) containing lymphatic tissue (lymphocytes B & T within a filtering tissue/tonsils), and red bone marrow. The lymphatic system assists in circulating body fluids and helps defend the body against disease-causing agents i.e. participate in immunity. Most components of blood plasma filter through blood capillary walls to form *interstitial fluid*. After interstitial fluid passes into lymphatic vessels, it is called *lymph* (=clear fluid). The major difference between *interstitial fluid* and *lymph* is location: Interstitial fluid is found between cells, and *lymph* is located within lymphatic vessels and lymphatic tissue. Lymphatic tissue is a specialized form of *reticular connective tissues*. In the small intestine, fats absorbed into the lymphatics give the lymph (now called *chyle*), a milky appearance.

