

Corona Defense: Mobilize and Strengthen the Immune Response

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Editor's Note: This article is adapted from the author's 2006 submission on viral infection defense because of its relevance to the current coronavirus outbreak and ongoing annual flu outbreaks.

Growing fear of the coronavirus from China (COVID-19) prompts a revisiting of how to strengthen the immune system and more quickly overcome infections, particularly those of viral origin. As most of us realize, there are still few effective viral medications, meaning a strong and vibrant immune response is our best defense.

The recent World Health Organization's warning of the "substantial risk" of a coronavirus pandemic in the next few years has been echoed in our national health organizations' warning that the spread of this disease is "inevitable." Many have warned of a possible pandemic approaching the infamous Spanish flu outbreak of 1918. When one considers that this outbreak occurred in the horse-and-buggy days, today's international travel at jet speeds makes the threat even more ominous.

We all understand the basic concept of somatovisceral neural reflex: that disturbances in physical structure and function, particularly in the spine, can have a profound adverse effect on organic function; and that correcting somatic dysfunctions and releasing areas of blockage in nerve, blood and lymph flow can have a profound healing effect in the body.

When adding treatments based on the Eastern concept of impaired *chi* (life force), as recognized in acupuncture and some forms of neural reflex work (see *Thie's Touch for Health* and Chapman's *Neurolymphatic Reflex*), one can easily imagine a much more comprehensive, holistic approach to healing than is now commonly accepted.

The Power of Lymphatic Flow

Looking back, a valuable approach to treating infections (viral or bacterial) was utilized by early osteopaths in their effort to mobilize the immune response by increasing lymphatic flow. Their various lymph drainage and lymph pump maneuvers, combined with spinal manual therapy, were proven very effective in the 1918 flu pandemic. In fact, they reported decreased mortality in infected patients from 5 percent (national average) to 0.25 percent per 100,000 treated in this manner.

The lymphatic system is, of course, home to most of the body's defense system. An increase in lymphatic flow would therefore help speed up the production and distribution of antibodies specific to any viral or bacterial antigen.

Additionally, sufficient hydration (eight large glasses/day) and increasing available proteins for constructing antibodies is essential to this process. Many also now believe that an alkalized internal pH, attained through a diet of mostly fruits and vegetables (80 percent), or by simply

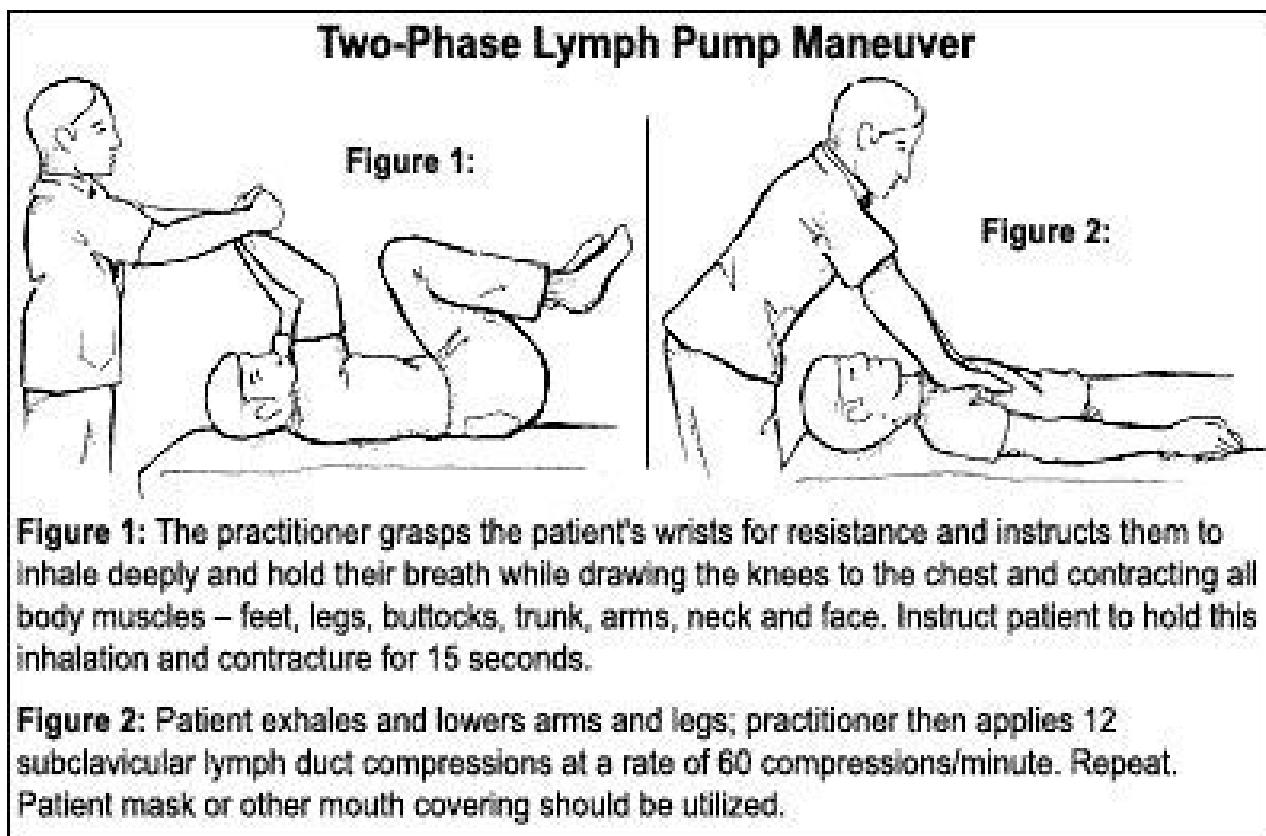
ingesting a teaspoon of baking soda dissolved in a glass of warm water weekly during the flu season, or immediately after infection, helps the immune system by decreasing the rate of reproduction of "pH-dependent" human pathogens, which thrive best in an acid or neutral medium.

Slowly sipping a tablespoon of a natural or store-bought beef broth and letting it rest under the tongue for 30 seconds or so delivers valuable proteins sublingually into the bloodstream and facilitates the rapid production of antibodies specific to any invading virus or bacterium. Natural beef broth is obtained by "parboiling" a cut-up pound of round steak and harvesting the juices (see instructions below).

This combination of increasing lymph volume and movement, providing potent and easily assimilated proteins for rapid antibody production, and discouraging reproduction of pathogens by increasing internal pH is the foundation for the holistic approach to treating infections of any kind. And it only makes sense physiologically.

Instructions for preparing beef juice: Cut one pound round steak into 1/2-inch cubes and place in quart glass jar. Place jar in pan of low boiling water and cover the jar top with folded hand towel. Allow to parboil for an hour and a half, adding water to pan as necessary. Pour off juice and squeeze meat pulp for additional juice. Store in refrigerator.

The Lymphatic Pump Maneuver



So, how does one increase lymphatic flow? First, remember that lymph fluid is largely propelled by muscular contraction, and lymph channels are similar to veins in their one-way valve structure, with natural movement toward the heart. Second, remember that lymph fluid collects from the lower extremities and trunk in the abdominal cisterni chyli, just below the diaphragm, before moving upward to be dumped back into the subclavian veins through the lymphatic ducts.

Individual anatomy may vary, but generally, the left subclavian vein receives lymph from all

regions except the right side of the head, neck and thorax, which dump into the right subclavian vein. As the name implies, the veins that receive the body's lymphatic flow reside just below the clavicle.

Thus, to begin the "lymphatic pump" maneuver, place a patient supine on the table with the practitioner standing at the head. Ask the patient to raise their arms, which the practitioner then grasps by the wrists. Then instruct the patient to take a deep breath, draw the knees to the chest and contract all body muscles while pulling the arms against the resistance held by the practitioner.

Hold this position for 10 to 15 seconds. This is the first phase of the maneuver and moves lymph fluid toward the subclavian lymphatic ducts.

Next, have the patient exhale while lowering the arms and legs. Then, placing the heels of the hands with extended wrists just below the clavicle, slightly medial to the midline, deliver a series of a dozen A-P thrusts similar to the CPR maneuver. This compression of the upper chest wall and underlying tissue is what propels the lymph into the subclavian veins and completes the lymph pump maneuver.

A thorough treatment is to apply about a dozen repetitions of the maneuver, being very careful to use only enough pressure to compress the chest wall about 1 inch. Of course, greater care should be taken with geriatric women or anyone suspected of having osteoporotic ribs. The whole process requires only about five minutes.

The effect can be quite dramatic. Most patients suffering an infection report an immediate ease in body ache and increased sense of wellness. Repeating the maneuver twice daily is not too frequent. One can enhance the effect by instructing patients to take 20-minute hot baths while performing the knee-chest contractions, followed by slow backward "wind milling" of the arms and shoulders. Doing so will further aid lymph motility.

A final trick is to have patients apply a mentholatum rub onto the neck, chest wall, lower legs and feet: front, side and back, and put on a night shirt and socks before retiring or while resting. In the supine position, this will further help sustain increased lymphatic movement.

Remembering that exotic viral and bacterial pathogens introduced from distant lands is what decimated native populations around the world historically should prompt all health care providers to develop natural methods to help strengthen their patient's inherent ability to overcome infections by mobilizing the immune response. These approaches and the lymphatic pump maneuver have the potential to actually save lives.

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