

## V

**Vacuum** – an empty space devoid of matter or an enclosed space where the air has been partially removed so the air remaining in the space exerts less pressure than the atmosphere

**Vacuum suction** – a mechanical method of lymph drainage used to stimulate the lymphatic system and speed up the removal of waste from the body and disperse fluid. It is applied using a vacuum suction unit containing an electrically driven vacuum pump connected to a perspex or glass ventouse (cup) by a flexible plastic tube. The pump draws air from the ventouse causing the air pressure inside to reduce. This forms a partial vacuum which lifts the underlying tissue up into the ventouse, which is then slowly guided over the skin towards the lymph nodes.

**Valve** – a membranous structure in a hollow organ, passage or vessel that folds or closes to prevent backflow of fluid. It is also a device that controls the flow of gases, liquids or other materials through a passage.

**Variable cost** – a cost that varies depending on the treatment provided

**Varicose veins** – distended veins occurring most commonly in the legs. The condition is often inherited or caused by obstruction to blood flow. Extra care must be taken during treatment, some treatments may be contraindicated or treatment may be adapted or modified.

**Varnish** – the coating of a surface to add colour and gloss, another name for enamel

**Vasoconstriction** – constriction or decrease in diameter of blood vessels.

**Vasodilation** – dilation or increase in diameter of blood vessels.

**Vasopressin** – also known as antidiuretic hormone.

**VAT** – Value Added Tax is an indirect tax levied on most business transactions. It is a tax on consumer expenditure, as it is paid on goods and services. A business must register for VAT when its taxable turnover reaches a certain limit.

**Vein** – a blood vessel conveying blood towards the heart

**Vellus hair** – fine soft downy hair of the foetus and covers some parts of the body

**Venous return** – the flow of blood back to the heart

**Ventouses** – glass or perspex cups used in vacuum suction

**Ventricle** – a lower chamber in the heart which collects blood from an atrium a smaller chamber above and pumps it out of the heart, or part of the body filled with fluid

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**Venule** – a minute blood vessel that drains blood from the capillaries

**Verruca plantaris** – a plantar wart occurring on the sole of the foot

**Vertebrae** – bones of the spinal column, each vertebra contains an arched hollow section through which the spinal cord passes and is separated by a disc. The spinal column is divided into sections, 7 cervical, 12 thoracic, 5 lumbar and 4-5 sacral bones some of which become fused in adulthood and 3-5 which form the coccyx and also have some that fuse together in adulthood.

**Vesicle** – a tiny blister in the skin containing a clear fluid

**Vibrations** – fine trembling massage manipulations that are gentle and soothing in effect, using the palmar surface of the hands and fingertips on the area to be treated. The vibrations are achieved by rapid contraction and relaxation of the muscles in the therapist's arms and hands.

**Vichy shower** – also called affusion shower, it is a popular spa treatment. A fine spray of water is produced by micro jets fixed to a horizontal rail above a wet table on which the client lies. The temperature of the water and the pressure of the spray may be altered to suit each individual client and the therapist can apply massage to the body at the same time. The effects are soothing or stimulating depending on the pressure of the water jets.

**Virilism** – the development of masculine characteristics, deepening of the voice, increased body hair and muscle bulk, in a female.

**Virus** – micro-organism which causes disease, smaller than bacteria and capable of reproduction and mutation in living cells

**Vitamins** – essential substances required in small amounts for healthy growth and development in the body

**Vitiligo** – the appearance of single or multiple white areas of skin on any part of the body. It is completely devoid of pigment after melanocytes, the pigment forming cells are destroyed. The areas of white skin are susceptible to burning in the sun and must be well protected.

**Volt** – the force driving electricity through a circuit

**Voluntary** – done willingly without compulsion or obligation

**Voluntary muscle** – also called skeletal muscle, it is contractile tissue and is under conscious control. Skeletal muscles produce movement by applying force to bones and joints. They have one end (origin) that is attached to a relatively stationary bone and the other end (insertion) is attached across a joint to another bone.