

The Spleen

By Zona Jackson

The spleen is about 5 inches in length, 3 inches wide and 1 ½ inches thick. It is located just above the left kidney between the diaphragm and the stomach. Like the liver, it is very vascular in structure, and is approximately 76% water.

NK (natural killer) cells destroy body cells that become infected or become cancerous. The spleen filters the blood and removes old red blood cells that need replacing. The largest cells in the blood, monocytes, act as the “garbage collectors” of the body. They engulf and digest foreign particles as well as damaged or aging cells, including tumor cells. After spending about twenty-four hours circulating in the bloodstream, most monocytes enter the tissues and perform similar functions there. At this point, they are known as macrophages.

The spleen is populated by macropages, dendritic cells (white blood cells that collect bits of antigens so that T cells can learn to recognize them), red blood cells, killer cells, and B and T cells. In the spleen, antigens are brought to the B cells, which use them to learn to manufacture the appropriate antigen response. People whose spleens have been removed tend to be more prone to illness because these important functions are no longer performed.

Inflammation or enlargement of the spleen may be associated with enlargement of the liver or other organs. It may be found with serious forms of blood disease, cancer, some infectious diseases, malaria, and various other diseases.

Symptoms: There is usually some degree of pain in the left side just under the ribs. This pain may extend up to the shoulder. There may be a chill followed by fever. The skin may become hot and dry. Constipation may be present. In some cases the urine is scanty and dark in color. The person is very thirsty.

Treatment: A light, nourishing diet must be provided. A fruit diet for a few days is excellent. The bowels should be kept open.

Proper immune function is an intricate balancing act. While inadequate immunity predisposes one to infectious illness of every type, it is also possible to become ill as a result of an immune response that is too strong or directed at an inappropriate target. Many different disorders, including allergies, lupus, pernicious anemia, rheumatic heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, and possibly diabetes, have been linked to inappropriate immune system activity. Consequently, they are known as auto-immune, or “self-attacking-self” disorders.

While much is known about the functioning of the immune system, much more remains to be learned; only in the past ten to fifteen years have many facets of immune function begun to be studied and understood by physicians and researchers. The field of immunology (the study of the immune system) is one of the fastest growing fields in medicine today.

Sources: *Prescription for Natural Healing*, by Dr. James F. Balch, *Back to Eden*, by Jethro Kloss, *Business of Living*, by Ellis Shorten.

Gifts of Nature has two products that have been especially helpful for the spleen: *Regenezone* and *Super Aloe*.