What Is The Function Of The Spleen?
The Organ of Nourishment, Nurturing & Bonding

The spleen performs many vital functions which, when you learn what they are, will rekindle your appreciation of the body and motivate you to become healthier than ever before.

Western Medicine hardly understands the spleen. Scientists need to know the practical and physical properties of an organ; spiritual properties cannot be measured. The spleen is mainly a spiritual organ. It is so deeply spiritual that without it functioning well we can only ever be a fraction of our true selves.

Don't be concerned if you have had your spleen removed; with herbs and acupuncture you can maintain the energy meridian of the spleen. We know that without a spleen people are more prone to infection and are advised to take drugs to safeguard against it. Young children especially are at risk. Damaged and weak spleens are increasingly common; they can be affected by emotional or physical trauma. Any blunt wound to the left side of the body can damage the spleen; falling out of a tree, off a wall or from a horse, sports injuries, car accidents – any of these can damage the spleen. On an emotional level there are so many areas that can impact the spleen energy. I will focus on these aspects.

The Spleen is the Organ of Nourishment, Nurturing and Bonding

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) it is the yin, essentially feminine, aspect of the Earth Element. ‘Yin’ is about grounding, mothering, Mother Earth. What most humans are looking for in life is that deep connection we call love. Do we know love before we incarnate? Do we lose touch with it during the incarnation process? I believe we do. I believe that we all know somewhere in our body that deep level of love for ourselves and for humanity that is powerful enough to prevent wars. Somehow, somewhere on our journey we lost that connection and have measured love against experiences we had before or during
our birth.

On the other hand, and because of its importance within the body, practitioners of TCM refer to the spleen as the ‘Emperor of Organs’ and pair it with the stomach. To that extent TCM suggests that for the treatment of all illness we must first always address both the spleen and the stomach.

Does this not indicate how much value they place on food as determinant of long term health?

If I were to list the functions of the spleen I would put them as:

- providing nourishment to the body
- controlling the power of thought
- helping to resolve addictions
- playing a role in touch/bonding at birth
- controlling the thyroid
- filtering red blood cells

But these are mere bullet points and don’t even begin to explain the richness of the spleen.

**The Spleen and Digestion**

As humans we live by way of food and water. But it’s never quite as simple as that because how well we live is determined by our ability to absorb and process this nourishment.

You can eat a Grade A, organic meal yet if your spleen is weak or ‘damp’ your body will not absorb any nutrients. A strong spleen ensures that a person is well nourished. A weak or ‘damp’ spleen may result in a person being well-fed but undernourished.
The spleen is the primary organ of digestion. Metaphorically I see the spleen as the conductor of the orchestra. In the same way that the orchestra can still function without the conductor, it performs so much better with the conductor.

As an illustration I went to watch my daughter sing in a local choir competition. The two top contenders were both so good it was hard to choose between them. One small choir of eight had a brilliant conductor and the result was just incredible. The choir my daughter sang in had a larger group of singers and no conductor. They performed equally as well, but the skill of this choir was that each individual child had to play their part to a very high performance level.

Both systems work. Without the conductor, the spleen, each individual player needs to be very strong and healthy and have the capability of doing their job at the optimum level. If one member of the group is sick it will affect the whole balance.

The way we live today it is impossible to make sure that each one of our individual organs stays healthy. A poor diet, junk food, questionable GM food, any drug, antibiotic or hormonal treatment, could create an imbalance within the body.

The Spleen and Thought
The Spleen controls our thought - the power to concentrate and to apply the mind. It's a slightly different concept to the Western way of thinking yet it's same as the process of assimilating nutrition from food, replicated at a mental level by nourishing the mind.

Within our language, we talk about ‘digesting information’, ‘chewing on that’ and ‘food for thought’. Here's where the spleen becomes interesting for it is acknowledged as a seat of emotions. Any disharmony within the spleen will likely bring about both a poor digestive capacity as well as a difficulty in receiving emotional nourishment.

TCM categorises the major causes of illness as emotional imbalances: fright, grief, fear, anger, joy, worry and pensiveness. Qigong Masters say that the spleen carries the qi of the earth and for that it needs grounding, time spent walking or somehow in Nature. Quieting the mind can help reduce any earthly imbalance.
A strong spleen energy provides the basis for a healthy emotional life where wellbeing and satisfaction replace a sense of lack and poor health.

**The Spleen and Addictions**

Allergies are also a sign of a weak spleen, particularly allergies to wheat and dairy as are addictions and cravings such as sugar, alcohol, cigarettes and even gambling or abusive behaviour patterns.

Addictions have become so prevalent that we hardly notice or worry about them so much these days. In fact we even love our addictions and addictive behaviour patterns because to us, they’re familiar territory and help us feel safe.

We all know about sugar-related addictions so let’s look instead at one of the biggest drugs we’re all addicted to - money. We have a compulsion to make more than enough money to cover our continually increasing costs of living because we believe that money keeps us safe. When we’re addicted to something we only feel safe when we have enough of it. But when we reach that point of perceived sufficiency we realise that we aren’t safe after all.

The double bind here is that we can never feel safe when our body is on ‘active alert’ and it is likely to remain like that until we feel safe! We now have a disease known as Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and is treated as if it is something that is more to do with the psyche than the body.

When John D Rockefeller was once asked, "How much money is enough money?"
He replied, "Just a little bit more."

Here’s a key point. What we have forgotten in our obsession with the mind is that when the body is unhealthy then the mind cannot function properly. While we live on active alert pumping adrenaline into the body on a daily basis we can never hope to have a healthy body. We are living in the sympathetic mode of the autonomic nervous system which means that the normal functions of the body do not operate as they should.
• We do not breathe properly
• We do not digest our food properly
• We do not eliminate toxins
• We clench our body; it can remain clenched for our entire life
• We become ill and take medicines that cannot be properly utilised or eliminated.

As we spiral further downwards, we start to crave the negative influences in our lives. We become addicted to abusive substances, and lifestyles that are damaging to us and our relationships. Our body gives us negative messages about food, because it is so out of balance and has no regulator. A weak spleen craves unhealthy sweet foods. Gone is any last vestige of loving our body as the need to feed this craving takes over. We can also become addicted to unhealthy thoughts and ideals; we become dogmatic and extreme in our views. We see this all around us in our lives, in the way countries are governed, and the increase in litigation when two parties cannot see a mutually acceptable perspective.

And while all this is happening we have lost our connection with spirit because we feel abandoned. We lose our ability to trust in the flow of our lives, because our distorted responses are not the truth. We believe that struggle is the only way.

Understanding this piece, understanding that this is to do with the energy of the Spleen means that there is a solution. Some people will have spent time and money with an analyst if they had got to the level I have been describing. We cannot separate the mind from the body in the healing process, so healing the body will allow the mind and our thoughts to heal as well. Knowing the emotional pieces allows the body to settle and can help the nervous system come into balance so that the spleen can start to regain some strength.

The Spleen and Birth
If we start with our own arrival on the planet, our conception and birth, we can see how this might have affected our spleen. One aspect of the Earth energy is that it is caring and nurturing; it is about bonding in that first moment, when a new baby is placed on the mother’s stomach to make its way up to the breast. Mother and baby have known each other for the past nine months and now they meet. That first eye contact, in those first few moments of life, is so empowering and enduring and gives the spleen considerable strength.
At this point the hormone oxytocin is released allowing the mother’s milk to flow, the baby to be nourished and a feeling of contentment and love that is tangible to everyone who has participated. The baby feels the passion of the Fire energy from the mother’s Heart and this is supportive to the Earth Energy of the spleen.

Most of us, at our births, were taken away from our mother to be washed, weighed and dressed by the midwife. Already the single point of bonding has been lost forever; the baby, instead of bonding with its mother, instead looks into the eyes of the midwife and bonds with her. This lost opportunity to bond can bring about confusion and deep trauma in the baby, the result being an emotionally weakened spleen giving rise to trust and safety issues in later life.

Sadly, in most cases the true moment of bonding with the mother never materialises, although natural birthing practitioners are now becoming much more aware of its importance.

Once we have a pattern of weakness, other events come into our lives which continue the downward spiral. We lose our ability to orient ourselves, are more prone to accidents causing additional trauma to the spleen, damaging and weakening it further. It loses its ability to manage our digestive system and cleanse the blood properly. Our thoughts become confused. Because of our feeling of abandonment, we start living in a state of active alert in which our body finds it difficult to settle.

At the time of birth any intervention will add trauma to the spleen. Dr Michel Odent has explored how interventions at birth affect the health of a person later in life. He has already found that inducing labour can lead to Asperger’s Syndrome; forceps delivery has been linked to cranial haematoma (bleeding in the skull) and ventouse suction to eating disorders. Has no-one considered the sudden shock to a baby “from his mother’s womb, untimely ripped” - by C-section? This can catalyse significant trauma to the spleen as a result of the natural birth process being interrupted. When the spleen is out of balance our whole body is out of balance and such imbalances can severely affect both our nervous system and digestive system.

What about before the birth? Our parents and grandparents were born from Victorian and post Victorian parents where children were ‘seen and not heard’. They had little bonding or nurturing. Many of us were conceived from parents with
already weak spleens – we never had a chance. As the spleen is not yet fully understood in the West, no-one monitors it and no-one fully appreciates the consequences of having a weak spleen.

So what happened? Births have become the domain of the medical profession. There is nothing medical about birth. Medical, chemical and other mechanical interventions have become fashionable to help the mother with little or no regard for the baby whose arrival into the world should be the most important factor.

Caesarian sections became more normal than natural vaginal births in order to cause the least discomfort to the mother. Many conscious mothers are making choices now to have their babies in the most natural way and there is still a long way to go in understanding the dynamics of the relationships created between the baby and the mother as well as the father as a result of the birth experience.

If you can feel any pain or loss as you read this, then this has probably happened to you. I know it touches me deeply. This is a point at which your spleen energy weakened.

How wonderfully enlightened are the birthing centres where the mother helps to birth her own baby with her gentle loving hands and lifts the baby to her stomach where the baby can connect using its own instincts by finding its way to the mother’s breast.

Touch is as basic a need as food, so supporting the Spleen through touch creates a sensual awareness with the body. This can be achieved through massage, hugs, cuddles, kisses. Even stretching is valuable to keep the mother relaxed and grounded.

The Spleen and the Thyroid
I’ll repeat here that the spleen is the organ of nourishment, nurturing and bonding. It is the Earth Element. Without a properly functioning spleen people can only ever be a fraction of their true selves. The spleen is what keeps people grounded, present and aware; conscious in each moment they live. With a strong spleen people don’t
let life pass them by. On a physical level, the spleen controls the thyroid; in turn the thyroid regulates metabolism.

Metabolism is key to the weight loss industry - the burning of more calories with less effort by boosting metabolism. Yet the success of the multi-million dollar weight loss industry is largely based on failure – people’s failure to lose weight permanently and thus seek the next diet or exercise fad. It’s that age-old marketing trick of not wanting to lose a paying client.

Look at the problem of losing weight from a fresh perspective: how can eating fewer calories make any difference to a person’s weight if their digestive organs aren’t processing food correctly?

**The Spleen and Blood**
As part of the lymphatic system, one physical task the spleen performs is to filter out from the bloodstream, dead and injured red blood cells, thus keeping the rest of the bloodstream healthy and vibrant. When the spleen is strong and doing its job properly, the blood flowing through the body is clean and healthy, helping to maintain an environment contrary to the conditions in which germs proliferate. That is really a powerful thought and shows how possible it is to achieve better health.

**The Spleen and Malaria**
Here’s a simplified sequence for how malaria spreads. In order to reproduce, the female Anopheles mosquito feeds on blood. This particular mosquito is a carrier of the *Plasmodium* parasite. When it takes a blood drink through its needle like tube it injects saliva to make sure the victim doesn’t feel a thing.

Somewhere between 10 – 100 infective plasmodium parasite cells can be transferred into humans within that saliva. The mosquito does this every time it takes a new blood meal. The infective parasite cells are then carried by the blood into the host's liver where they invade the existing liver cells and multiply prodigiously. Within 5 days those 10 – 100 infective parasite cells can each multiply in number up to 40,000. After 10-15 days they return from the liver back to the bloodstream and start attacking the red blood cells, bursting them open. By this stage the plasmodium parasites are increasing a further 10-fold every 2 days and...
become a massive physical burden to the bloodstream, overwhelming any immune response.

With the increased migration of dead or injured red blood cells to the spleen it enlarges, presses against surrounding organs, ruptures and kills about 2 million people every year, although many deaths go unrecorded. In Burkina Faso (Upper Volta), one child dies from malaria on average every half hour.

The human host’s response to the mosquito bite may be anywhere between 2 weeks and 3 months. Response varies depending on many factors yet usually starts as chills, diarrhoea, anaemia, chronic tiredness, increasing to violent shaking in waves. The body becomes cold to the core followed by fevers of 106 degrees, sweating and a coma. Those who survive this will develop an immunity, albeit temporary. There are approximately 500 million new cases of malaria annually.

Complications that cause death come from:

- kidney failure
- infectious jaundice in liver
- internal bleeding
- fatal shock and coma

In the process of the spleen enlarging, people notice a feeling of fullness after only eating a small amount. This usually happens when the spleen becomes enlarged to the point that it presses on the stomach. If an enlarged spleen presses on the surrounding organs, this can impair the spleen’s ability to filter your blood properly.

An enlarged spleen can remove too many red blood cells from the bloodstream thus creating an imbalance between red and white cells, leading to anaemia and an increased incidence of infections.

**Learning To Love The Body Is Not Easy.**

I wonder why not? Where does this dislike of who we are physically come from? Perhaps it is an old ancestral belief, or some kind of advertising hype so that we buy products to improve ourselves. Cynicism aside, until we learn to love our body it will never work for us the way we would like it to. Of course, there are people that put far too much attention on their body, spending large sums of money and many hours in the gym conditioning it to perfection. This is as potentially unhealthy as taking no notice of it at all.
Most of you reading this have come to realise that it is important to take care of the body. After all it is how we incarnated to be human; without a body we would still be spirits. And some of us may prefer that state, and find the body cumbersome and time consuming. But here we all are with our respective bodies so let’s make the best of it. It is my belief that having been placed firmly in a body with the Fire energy of the Heart to keep us alive, we were given the spleen to learn to love that body. What has made it so hard for us is that the spleen has been kept one of the biggest secrets. most GP’s are sadly unaware of this. Without a healthy spleen we have no hope of having a healthy body.

Our body is an incredibly well designed piece of equipment but our self regulating mechanisms have been hijacked by our modern way of life. Today many people live unnaturally, eat unnaturally and expose themselves to stresses that differ from the simple survival needs we originally had. Stress affects our nervous system to the extent that we often live our entire life in a state of active alert. This keeps us in our sympathetic nervous system, shutting out the parasympathetic or unconscious nervous system which then has a tough time doing its job of breathing and digesting food. This also creates all sorts of unnatural conditions in which germs can thrive.

TCM has come some way to understanding the body and treats the body with the respect it deserves, healing only by supporting the systems and organs rather than chemically wiping out a whole mass of bacteria both good and bad. By focussing on and treating the symptoms Western medicine has lost sight of the whole. Louis Pasteur contributed a major breakthrough in understanding how germs survive in the body. He noticed that germs need very specific conditions to survive and when these specific conditions alter, the germs die. Instead of using broad-spectrum anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and anti-viral drugs to wipe out the germ and causing immense damage to the liver and body as a whole, all that needs to be done is change those conditions. If the temperature, pH balance or light conditions are not correct the germ cannot survive. Pasteur found different conditions suited different germs, and therefore very specific treatment is required. This is far from the medical approach taken today.

The performance of the spleen is impacted by damp and humid conditions. Dampness is also brought about by immuno-suppressant drugs and sedentary lifestyles. Exercise helps to reduce the body’s moisture levels and is using more vibrant yang energy to balance the more passive yin energy of the spleen. We feel
dampness in the body when our limbs ache, our digestive system isn’t working as it should, and our head is fuzzy and unclear.

The Spleen energy is what keeps us centred in our body; it gives us the ability to orient ourselves to our environment and be in harmony with it. It means that wherever we live we can feel at home. On a bigger scale, this harmonious aspect may be out of balance as we continue to damage and drain the resources of our planet. Only when we do our own healing work can we expect this to shift on a global scale.

What To Do Next
If you resonate with any of this, there are things you can do right away

1. There are very few remedies that support the spleen to perform efficiently. and none that I know of that are available from any conventional health store. The only one I have found that can do this gentle, powerful work is Maestro a 350 year old recipe. It takes time to do its work but understand how long it has taken your body to become the way it is, some of which is possibly inherited from ancestral patterns. When your Spleen is balanced and your digestion is working at its optimal level, you never need to worry about such things as your weight. What you do need is to slow down and be patient.

Right now Maestro is in limited supply. The ingredient herbs have been grown in the valleys of the Lebanon and Syria for hundreds of years but the ongoing military action has prevented us from buying any more. As I write this there are exactly 155 bottles of Maestro available. When this stock is exhausted, we will no longer be able to supply anyone. Don’t leave this one too late.

To give you some idea as to the value of Maestro, it is a recipe from the Aboukhazaal family of Master Herbalists whose origins date back some 2,000 years to Ancient Phoenicia - now the Lebanon and Syria. If the bankers and politicians don’t sort out their egos in the Middle East, these recipes may be lost to mankind forever.

2. Get a copy of Daverick Leggett’s powerful book on the spleen energetics, giving suggestions of food and food types that support improved health. There’s also Daniel Reid's wonderful ‘Guarding The Three Treasures’
There are links below for you to find out more information.

Phylipa Dinnen
www.resourcesforlife.net

**Client Feedback on Maestro**

A.M., Sussex writes:
“What can I say about this product? When I was reading about this it said "Maestro makes my heart sing". Well, it makes me want to do handstands and cartwheels! I cannot believe how much better I have felt since taking this product. The other fabulous bonus about this is the freedom to eat what I want. Having followed a strict no wheat diet for over 5 years I have gone back to eating bread and pasta. What a relief when I am a hurry to be able to grab a sandwich and not go through all the bloating/weight gain and headaches I used to get. Maestro rules! “

**Maestro**: click on *Ancient Herbal Remedies*

Some excellent sources of information about the Chinese Medicine are:

*Helping Ourselves, a Guide to Traditional Chinese Food Energetics* by Daverick Leggett

*Guarding the Three Treasures, the Chinese Way of Health* by Daniel Reid