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The Ileocecal Valve

The ileocecal valve is made up of the last portion of the small intestine, called the ileum, and the first portion of the large intestine, called the cecum. It has the important function of keeping material that has gone into the large intestine from returning to the small intestine.

Imagine the small intestine as the kitchen area. After food has been processed and absorbed there, waste products move into the large intestine (the garbage area). When the ileocecal valve is functioning normally, it prevents backward movement. When it is not functioning correctly, there is a backward movement of waste products into the small intestine.

Ileocecal Valve Syndrome is responsible for numerous symptoms and sometimes called the "great mimicker". Symptoms such as low back pain, hip pain, headaches, and dizziness may be caused by a problem with the ileocecal valve. Additionally, any of the following symptoms may be a result of ileocecal valve involvement: shoulder pain, sudden low back pain, pain around the heart, dizziness, flu symptoms, pseudo bursitis, pseudo sacroiliac strain, tinnitus, nausea, faintness, pseudo skin infections, pseudo hypochlorhydria, headache, sudden thirst, pallor, dark circles under the eyes, and bowel involvement.

To correct this problem, a doctor must explore many influencing factors that control the valve, such as nerve control to the digestive system, allergies and sensitivities, acupuncture, nutritional supplements, homeopathies, and emotions.

Even when control of the valve has been attained, the chances that the condition will recur are great unless follow-up care to continue to soothe the irritated valve is followed. This may include wellness visits with your doctor to continue to facilitate a healthy digestive system. ■

Schematic of normal movement of material in the bowel

