A Sticky Ileocecal Valve Could Be Causing Your Digestion Issues
Health Dispatch, July 17, 2010 – Dr. David Williams

Your ileocecal valve is located between the small and large intestine. It’s located in the same area of the appendix, and many times what is thought to be an appendix problem is, instead, a problem with this valve. This little valve has two very important jobs to do. First, it blocks the toxic contents of the large intestine from backing up into the small intestine. Second, it keeps the food products in the small intestine from passing into the large intestine before the digestive processes have been completed.

When the ileocecal valve isn’t working right, it can cause many symptoms:

- diarrhea
- constipation
- flu-like symptoms
- shoulder pain
- lightheadedness
- nausea
- ringing in the ears
- bursitis-like pain in the shoulders and hips
- low back pain
- recurrent sinus infections
- dizziness
- chest pain
- heart fluttering
- headaches
- fever

The valve can at times become either stuck shut or stuck open. When shut, the closed ileocecal valve can cause constipation, and when stuck open the problem will be diarrhea.

When the valve sticks shut – In its normal course, food moves through the small intestine and into the large intestine, then gets expelled from the body. When the valve sticks shut, the feces are forced to stay in the small intestine and are unable to move any further. Naturally, since the small intestine’s main job is to absorb, it keeps right on working and reabsorbing all of the waste products and garbage that were destined to be expelled. Also, with the valve shut and the food backing up, you become constipated.

When the valve sticks open – By sticking open, not only does food move through you at a rapid rate (to say the least), it also lets the waste products in the large intestine back up into the small intestine and again be reabsorbed into your body.

There are several reasons the valve doesn’t always work right:

- spicy or roughage-type foods;
- stress or emotional trauma; and
- previous appendix removal.

Fortunately, there are some easy things you can do that help stabilize the valve.
Unsticking the Valve

There are several things that need to be done for both open and closed valves.

First, eliminate spicy foods for a week or so. If the problem is diarrhea, it is also helpful to eliminate all roughage-type foods for a short time. If the problem is a closed valve and constipation, then increase the roughage.

Eliminate alcohol, cocoa, chocolate and caffeine products.

With a closed valve (constipation), add calcium and vitamin D to the diet.

With an open valve (diarrhea), add a product called lactic acid yeast wafers to the diet. My preferred product is made by Standard Process. This product alone can sometimes stop even the most stubborn cases of chronic diarrhea!

Open Ileocecal Valve: What to Do

There are a couple other tricks you can use when the problem is a valve that’s stuck open (causing diarrhea or loose stools). I find they work quite well for travelers who are suffering from the infamous “turista,” or traveler’s diarrhea.

First, you can sometimes hold the valve shut for several minutes. This is done by placing your hand over the valve – located about halfway between the belly button and the right “hip bone” – and, while pushing in, pull up toward the left shoulder.

The second way is to place a cold pack made of cold water or ice over the valve for about 15 to 20 minutes. This process can be repeated if necessary.