

THE THYMUS GLAND: FOUNDATION OF IMMUNITY by John Burgstiner, B.S.

It is said that over sixty five million Americans suffer from compromised immunity. Supporting your immune system is the most important step you can take in building resistance to illness and limiting the natural effects of aging. According to Dr. Michael T. Murray, nationally known author and lecturer and co-author of the best seller *Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine*, “***The most effective method for maintaining or attaining a healthy immune system is supporting the functions of the thymus gland. To a very large extent, the health of the thymus determines the health of the immune system.***”

The thymus gland, which lies just beneath the breast bone, is known as the “master gland of immunity”. It is large in infants during which time it serves as a production facility for immature T-cells, white blood cells that play a key role in “cell-mediated immunity”. Among other things, the thymus secretes cytokines (ie.- interferon, interleukins), chemicals that influence the specialization and migration of T lymphocytes throughout the body. Thymic hormones help these immune cells to mature, “programming” them to recognize tissues and pathogens as either self or invader. Recognizing the enemy is the first and likely most important step in the immune response.

As we age, the thymus shrinks as its role shifts from production to regulation of the immune response. Thymic hormone levels in the blood are known to decline dramatically with age, and their absence is associated with depressed immunity, chronic infections, auto-immune disorders, and cancer. Animals (and humans) that undergo surgery to remove the thymus often develop multiple infections and the “wasting syndrome” that is typically seen with AIDS patients. *The thymus is extremely susceptible to free radical and oxidative damage caused by stress, radiation, poor diet, infection and chronic illness.* People who have undergone radiation, chemotherapy or other immune-suppressing treatments also typically have low thymus function. Whatever the cause, depressed immunity can lead to an increase in the frequency and severity of colds, fatigue, allergies, or the onset of opportunistic infections.

How Do I Strengthen and Support My Thymus?

The thymus is quite responsive to environmental stimuli and thus is the beneficiary or the victim of the choices that we make every day. In addition to a healthy diet, adequate rest, water and exercise, we must learn to manage stress effectively. Antioxidants like vitamins C and E, beta carotene and selenium are critical to protect the thymus from free radical damage. Other nutrients such as zinc, vitamin B-6 and certain amino acids are important because they are required for the production of thymic hormones. Vitamins and minerals serve as cofactors and catalysts in the enzymatic pathways that regulate our metabolism. As we age, many essential vitamins and minerals become depleted. Their presence is essential for the proper working of the chemical factories within our cells.

Glandular Therapy: Cells Help Like Cells

Glandular hormone replacement therapy is a long-established natural method of restoring normal physiology to organ systems. It is based upon the use of animal glandular and organ substances to bolster the function of the human body’s organs and glands. The protein fragments in the animal glandular material apparently contain vital nutrients and information that are transmitted to the corresponding human organ or gland.

In the world of modern medicine, when your thyroid malfunctions, your doctor gives you synthetic thyroid hormone. If your adrenals slow down, the prescription is synthetic adrenal hormone.

But for some reason, the shrinking and declining function of the thymus has been largely ignored– even though every doctor is taught in medical school that the thymus controls the immune system. As your thymus shrinks and weakens with age, the most effective and direct way to stimulate it is by consuming organic calf thymus tissue. Bovine thymus has long been heralded as a delicacy, known throughout the world as “sweetbread”, but cooking destroys many of the beneficial properties of the gland. Far more effective is to ingest raw, freeze dried thymus extract, which leaves the critical thymic factors intact.

Thymic factors are said to be *immune modulators*. Thymic extracts have been shown to normalize the ratio of T-helper cells to suppressor cells whether the ratio is low as in AIDS, chronic infections and cancer, or high as found with allergies and autoimmune diseases like rheumatoid arthritis. In other words, thymic factors appear to influence the immune response up or down as needed! With all of the toxic exposures we face every day, it has never been more important to maximize the efficiency of our immune system.

Terry Beardsley, PHD has devoted his distinguished career to researching and understanding the role of thymic hormones in regulating the immune response. His fascination with the immune system began back at UCLA Medical School in the 1970s when he was confronted with the case of the famous “Bubble Boy”, who lived in total isolation due to his profound lack of immune function. Dr. Beardsley’s research has since shed significant light on the immune response, particularly as it relates to thymus functions like maintaining the integrity of immune cells. Dr. Beardsley credits his inspiration to focus his energies on thymus research to an article published by nutritional pioneer, Carson B. Burgstiner, M.D., who was making headlines with his thymus support protocol.

Dr. Burgstiner was the first to combine glandular therapy with comprehensive nutritional support in a single patented delivery system. In his ground breaking research, Dr. Burgstiner found that adding vitamins and minerals to the glandular materials resulted in far greater immune response potential than taking the glandulars alone. According to Dr. Burgstiner, “*the added nutrients served as coenzymes to activate the enzyme systems and prepare the substrate*”. The focus of Dr. Burgstiner’s medical practice was always to reestablish normal physiology on a cellular level.

In 1996 Dr. Burgstiner formed Preventive Therapeutics, Inc. (PTI) to improve the quality of life of his patients through research, education and outstanding nutritional support products. Each of PTI’s natural health products enhances the effects of the others. Together they form a comprehensive wellness protocol and a powerful deterrent to chronic illness. Using state of the art absorption technology, PTI products are designed to restore integrity to the immune system and major organ systems.

To learn more about PTI products or find the PTI retailer nearest you, call (800)556-5530 or visit: www.thymic.com.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

John Burgstiner serves as President of Preventive Therapeutics, Inc., an Atlanta based nutrition company founded by the late Carson B. Burgstiner, M.D.. Mr. Burgstiner earned a Bachelor of Science degree from UGA (pre-med curriculum) in 1983 and is now a candidate for a dual doctorate (ND/PHD in Natural Health) from the Clayton College of Natural Health.

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