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William Wells

Email: wells@biotext.com

Apoptosis eliminates the asymmetry of plasma membrane phospholipids and **exposes phosphatidylserine** on the outside of cells. Fadok *et al.* report in the May 4 **Nature** that they have found a phagocyte protein that recognizes the phosphatidylserine (*Nature* 2000, **405**:85-90). Addition of the receptor to lymphocytes allows the cells to engulf apoptotic cells. Engagement of the receptor on macrophages induces the production of anti-inflammatory TGF- β consistent with the absence of inflammation during apoptosis.

References

1. Exposure of phosphatidylserine on the surface of apoptotic lymphocytes triggers specific recognition and removal by macrophages.
2. Nature magazine's homepage, [<http://www.nature.com/nature/>]