

Ayurveda Tarka

Ayurveda Questions answered by Dr JV Hebbar

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Contents of this book are for educational purpose only. Please consult your healthcare service provider before following any health advice given in this book. Do not use this book for treating yourself or others. Please contact your healthcare practitioner for any health consultation. The spices, herbs, herbal products, home remedies, health tips and such other materials explained in this book are not intended to prevent, diagnose, treat or cure any disease.

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|| Jai Guruji ||

Dedication

I, Dr. Janardhana V. Hebbar, dedicate this book at the holy feet of **Sri Guruji – Swami Vivekananda** and my spiritual Guru, **Dr. A. Chandrashekhara Udupa** MBBS, FAGE, Managing Director, Divine Park Trust (R), Saligrama, Udupi. (www.divinepark.org)

He guides, He energizes, He shows the path,

He holds my hand and makes me walk!

Project By

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1. In olden times a Vaidya could make a diagnosis, an anamnesis based solely on 'shabda' listening by letting the client spell the Sanskrit alphabet. Where can I read something more about this procedure?

Dr JV Hebbar:

There could be such a diagnostic method which uses only patient's pronunciations to diagnose a particular disease, fit to be understood and practiced by some Ayurveda doctors of high-level intellect. But they are not mentioned in the main Ayurvedic treatises, i.e. Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Ashtanga Hrudayam that most of us, the average-level intellect Ayurveda doctors read.

Marketing Ayurveda with unrealistic expectations or magical claims has become a trend in the western world. Mysticism, very spiritual ways of diagnosis / treatment are employed by some Ayurvedic doctors just to be unique and to stand apart from the rest of the practitioners.

Read: [Why Charaka And Sushruta Did Not Mention Pulse Diagnosis?](#)

If there is a spiritual healer who practises a spiritual way of diagnosis and healing, ideally, he should not be charging a fee for his service. Because the terms 'commercial' and 'spiritual' are antonyms. A person who seeks money from you, for his service can rarely be termed as spiritual.

Read: [Complete Pulse Diagnosis Method As per Ayurveda Textbook](#)

Why would you want to believe the accuracy of a diagnosis made just by listening to the patient's voice? There are -

- 9 different ways to examine a disease - to understand the nature of a disease, its magnitude, causes, premonitory symptoms, signs, aggravating and pacifying factors, disease pathogenesis, prognosis and complications.
- 5 sense organs to examine a disease - Not just listening to the voice, but the other senses can also be made use for the diagnosis of a condition. For example, crackling sound from the joints can indicate osteoarthritis, bad breath or a whitish coating on the tongue can

indicate weak digestive strength, a raised body temperature on touch can indicate fever etc.

- 5 different modes of disease examination - like understanding the causative factors, premonitory signs, signs and symptoms of the disease, aggravating and pacifying factors and disease pathogenesis.
- 10 ways of patient examination - including the assessment of the body constitution, examination of the disease, body tissues, compactness of the body, anthropometry, habituation, examination of mental faculties, capacity of food intake, capacity of exercise and age.

Read: [Examination of the patient and disease in detail](#)

The whole of Ayurveda, written in Ayurvedic textbooks, is considered as Agama / Apta / Aptopadesha, which means 'scriptural testimony'.

In the ancient times, knowledge was passed down from the teacher to the disciple through an oral tradition. It was sage Bharadwaja, who sensed that the future generations might have trouble in memorizing all the knowledge and started to record the information in a written form as palm leaf manuscripts.

Aptopadesha Pramana - Features, Description

Ancient Ayurvedic textbooks are written

- **parīkṣakaiḥ praṇītaḥ** - after being well-examined by the examiners in multiple ways

- **śiṣṭa anumato** - accepted by well-learned scholars of the society,

- **loka anugraha pravṛttaḥ** - written for the welfare of the whole world.

(Reference: [Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 11/27](#))

If only the sound of the patient was sufficient to make a complete diagnosis, then the ancient masters would not have written about other methods of diagnosis like examination of tongue, feces, urine, examination by inspection, palpation etc.

Read: [Urine Test And Diagnosis In Ayurveda - Taila Bindu Pareeksha](#)

If a person wants to go to an Ayurveda practitioner who would diagnose the disease solely by listening to his voice, then the person must have complete trust in the doctor's words about the diagnosis, treatments and

progress made in healing etc. Only that doctor can tell him if the disease is getting cured or not. That is a lot of trust being put on an Ayurveda doctor. Read: [Stool Examination In Ayurveda - Detailed Explanation](#)

If an Ayurveda doctor proclaims that he is the sole owner of a diagnostic / treatment technique, and that he heals spiritually, I would be skeptical. I would rather trust an Ayurveda doctor who practices based on the textual references of Charaka, Sushruta etc.

Yoga was modified into hot yoga, cold yoga, Bikram yoga, and then on to beer Yoga, naked yoga etc.

Let us not push Ayurveda in that direction.

Do not believe your Ayurveda doctor if -

- He prescribes a formula without disclosing its contents, when asked.
- He offers to heal you spiritually but for an exorbitant cost, maybe like a million dollars.
- He claims to heal you with just Mantras or just by his touch or just by his vision. (Highly experienced spiritual Gurus can do this, not your neighborhood Ayurvedic practitioner).
- He claims to have a 100 % success rate in curing all diseases that he treats.

The universal rule that holds good for a lot of aspects of life, also holds good for Ayurveda.

If it sounds too good to be true, it could be a scam.

2. Can you give an example of how Ayurveda approaches a disease Vs Modern science.

Dr JV Hebbar:

The modern system emphasizes microbial theory. For example, let us consider tonsillitis with fever in children. It is caused by bacterial infection of tonsils, resulting in inflammation. In the modern line of treatment, antibiotics are prescribed to kill the infection causing bacteria and

antipyretics to reduce the body temperature.

In the Ayurvedic approach, the root cause is identified first. In this case,

Jwara - fever is the root cause. The fever is caused due to weak digestion / metabolism strength, which leads to the production of Ama (a toxic product formed due to incomplete or improper digestive activity).

So, in an Ayurvedic approach, the Ama is treated first. In the case of fever, with tonsillitis, Ama relieving, and digestion promoting medicine, which also has anti-fever (antipyretic) properties is chosen.

For example, **Shaddharana Chooranam** or its tablet form (a wonderful medicine explained by Master Sushruta) is suitable in this condition.

In children, Talisadi churna mixed with honey is also a medicine of choice, due to its palatability and action of improving digestion, antipyretic and anti-inflammatory effects.

Read related: Tonsillitis Ayurvedic Treatment, Herbs, Home Remedies

Fever is caused due to **Rasa dhatu (nutrition in blood circulation)** getting afflicted by Ama, which blocks the body channels. To counter this Jwara (fever), antipyretic medicine is chosen, for example, **Amruthotharam Kashayam**.

To check the inflammation, a cup of freshly made lukewarm **Triphala Kashaya** mixed with 2 pinches of **turmeric powder** and a pinch of salt is advised for gargling, 2 - 4 times in a day.

The child is given only boiled and lukewarm water to drink, restrict consumption of cold foods like ice creams, fried foods etc.

I have recently seen a child patient who was repeatedly getting tonsillitis infection, getting better with the above principles and medicines adopted.

That does not mean that this is the ideal medicine for all cases of tonsillitis. I am just trying here to point out the difference in approach between the two systems of medicines. Please consult an Ayurveda doctor before trying any remedies / medicines.

3. How to choose different medicine forms based on disease?

Dr JV Hebbar:

These are the general rules of choosing different medicine forms for different diseases:

There are 7 body tissues as per Ayurveda, out of which the first three i.e. Rasa (nutrition in blood circulation), Rakta (blood tissue) and Mamsa (muscle tissue) are considered superficial tissues and the remaining four i.e. Meda (fat), Asthi (bone), Majja (marrow) and Shukra (reproductive tissue) are considered deep tissues.

- In a strong disease, affecting the digestive system or superficial tissues such as Rasa or Rakta, only a short-term course of medicines is required. In such conditions, herbal decoction or **Kashaya** can be administered. Kashaya is prepared by adding one part of herbs in 16 parts of water, boiling and reducing to 1/4th of its original quantity and then filtering it.
For example, in fever of recent origin, Amrutottaram Kashayam is beneficial.
- In case of a disease with mild or moderate strength, but is chronic or occurring repeatedly, a medicine form which is milder than Kashaya is preferred to be administered throughout the day, so that the medicine is available at the levels of digestive tract and blood circulation. In this case, a herbal drink is chosen. It is called **Paneeya**, prepared by adding 1 part of herb with 64 parts of water, boiled and reduced to half of its total quantity.
It is milder and safer for continuous use throughout the day.
For example, for treating a mild fever which is chronic, Shadanga Paneeya is advised.
- In conditions where Kashaya is preferred, but a longer duration of effect is desired, fermented liquid medicines like **Asava or Arishta**

can be used.

For example, Ashwagandharishta for infertility issues.

- Palatability of a medicine is very important when it comes to treating children. **Herbal syrups** which are similar to Kashaya, but having a sweet taste and nutritious component, can be administered in children. For example, Zeal kid drops is a safe and effective treatment for cough and cold in children under 3 years of age.
- In diseases affecting the deeper tissues of the body, in chronic conditions which require a sustained effect of medicines, **Herbal ghee** is the medicinal form of choice. While administering ghee, care should be taken to correct weak digestive strength. Ghee can also be administered to prepare the body for elimination or detoxification procedures like therapeutic emesis and purgation. For example, Mahatiktaka Ghrita is advised for chronic skin diseases such as psoriasis. It can be used either as a medicine or in the form of internal oleation before Panchakarma treatments.
- In diseases caused due to Vata imbalance, oral intake of **herbal oils** can be advised. It helps to remove the excessive dryness and roughness produced in the body due to Vata imbalance. For example, Ksheerabala oil 101 either as drops or in capsule form is beneficial in neurological problems such as diabetic neuropathy, neuralgia, arthritis etc.
- When a short term action on specific tissues or systems are desired, **Herbal powders or Churna** is the medicine of choice. Eg: Nishamalaki churna is indicated in diabetes. Pushyanuga churna is indicated in menstrual disorders. Taleesadi churna is indicated in diseases affecting the respiratory

system.

- In conditions where administration of powders or liquid medicines are difficult, **Herbal tablets** can be used which is more convenient for oral intake. Nowadays, Kashayam tablets are common in the market, which are prepared by concentrating and solidifying liquid decoctions. Examples for some herbal tablets are Sanjivani vati which is useful in food poisoning, Dhanwantharam kashayam tablet for post-natal care of the mother etc.
- In diseases affecting the deeper tissues such as muscles, fat etc, **Guggulu tablets** are used. Guggulu is the oleo-gum resin of Commiphora mukul. It balances all the three Doshas in the body. Guggulu is combined along with other herbs to prepare tablets. Examples include Medohara guggulu or Navaka Guggulu for obesity, **Triphala guggulu** for hemorrhoids, Kanchanara guggulu for goitre etc.
- In chronic diseases or diseases affecting deeper tissues like the reproductive tissue, **Herbal jams (Avaleha)** is preferred. Since this type of preparation is slightly heavy for digestion, the digestive strength should be corrected prior to administration. Examples of Avaleha are Agastya Rasayanam for chronic asthma, **Ashwagandhadi lehyam** for reproductive and neurological disorders etc.

This is just a general explanation regarding the dosage forms and medicines. Some rules may change, based on the decision of the Ayurvedic doctor.

4. Where can I learn Ayurveda in 15 days? How can I start practicing after that?

In India, if you wish to start practice, you need to complete a 5.5 years course of B.A.M.S (Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery).

In countries like the USA, there are courses starting from 1 year to up to 4 years, wherein you will be given successively increasing qualifications, with each passing year, such as Ayurveda Counsellor, Practitioner, Ayurveda doctor etc.

I have been in the field of Ayurveda and studying it for 22 years, but still there are topics which are new to me. The knowledge in the ancient treatises is vast. So, in a span of just 15 days, at the best you can just get introduced to Ayurveda.

To try how it feels to study Ayurveda, consider taking the below video course - <https://www.easyayurveda.com/previous-classes-webinars-video-ebook/>

5. How to know if your husband has not slept yet?

Dr JV Hebbar:

The husband comes home after a tough day at work, freshens up, spends time with his wife and children, has dinner and then goes to bed. Even as he lays on the bed, in his mind, he is planning for the next day. He wants to sleep peacefully but his head is full of thoughts about the previous day's cricket or soccer match.

At that moment, his wife enters the bedroom. The tired husband who does not want any altercation or confrontation with the wife, tries to act as if he is asleep. Not his fault. The innocent human creature wants his peace of mind intact.

Now, the wife has to look for below signs to get to know if the husband is really asleep or faking sleep.

This guide is for women to catch the culprit and men to improve their acting skills.

1. Farting :) *Most of the times*, it cannot happen when someone is asleep. It happens only when the anal sphincters are voluntarily relaxed. For someone to voluntarily relax it, one has to be awake.
2. You notice your husband's arms or legs move, or the bed covers moving just as you enter the bedroom. It is just your completely awake husband acting in haste.
3. His smartphone screen is still on. It indicates that he has just kept aside his phone and is playing dead.
4. He turns away from your side to face the other side. Usually, changing sides does not happen in the initial phase of sleep. If he is doing it right at the moment the wife comes in, he does not want to get caught awake.
5. Tell something that interests him, like some news about his favorite film actor / sports / politics while he is asleep. He probably will not hold back the urge to react. If he does not react, tell him the same thing next morning. If he does not seem excited, it means that he has already heard it last night.

Cheers ;)

Read to know about the [9 Qualities To Look For In A Man Before Marriage](#).

6. How to counter the side effects of covid vaccine?

The last two newsletters contained for and against views on the covid vaccine. If you missed it, [read about it here](#).

The decision of taking the vaccine is left for the individual to make. If you take the vaccine and want some Ayurvedic help to reduce the probability of side effects, here are a few tips.

Disclaimer: This is just theoretical analysis. No clinical trial is done on the below content. Consult and follow your doctor's advice.
All matters are strictly for educational purposes only.

Countering the side effects of Covid vaccine:

Commonly found side effects: Pain at the site of injection, tiredness, fever or headache, muscular or joint pain.

The vaccine side effects mainly affect Rasa (nutrition in blood circulation) and Rakta Dhatu (blood tissue).

- **General medicine to reduce the side effects and to boost immunity:**

Amrutottaram kashayam - This is a herbal decoction containing Indian tinospora (*Tinospora cordifolia*), ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) and Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*). This is useful to correct and improve immunity and to reduce the chances of fever and inflammation. Regular adult dose is 10 ml, mixed with 10 ml water, twice a day, half an hour before food for 1 week.

Chyawanprash - This is useful to keep immunity high and to improve respiratory health. Dosage of Chyawanprash is 1 teaspoon in the morning, before food, with milk or lukewarm water for 1 month.

Ksheerabala oil 101, Amritarishta, Guduchi Sattva and Guduchi Kashaya are other alternatives to improve immunity.

Other important herbs which can reduce side effects and improve immunity are:

Guduchi - *Tinospora cordifolia*

Ashwagandha - *Withania somnifera*

Dashamoola - Group of 10 anti-inflammatory herb roots

Tulsi - Holy Basil

Yashtimadhu - Licorice
Kalamegha - Andrographis paniculata
Katuki - Picrorhiza kurroa

- **To reduce the pain at the site of injection:**

Try to avoid the movement of the limb where the vaccine is injected. More the movement, more the Vata aggravation and more the pain. Keep the muscle relaxed as much as you can.

Make a salt pack with cotton cloth. Heat it on a stove pan and gently apply it on the site of injection, after checking the temperature on the back of your hand. Avoid doing this if there is extreme redness or pus at the site of injection.

Cold pack for a few minutes can help to reduce the pain.

If there is no pus, local application of Mahanarayana oil can reduce the pain and swelling.

Important herbs useful in pain management at the site of injection are -

Guggulu - Commiphora mukul
Shallaki - Boswellia Serrata
Rasna - Pluchea lanceolata
Dashamoola - Group of 10 Roots
Devadaru - Cedrus deodara
Kushta - Saussurea lappa

- **Treatment for fever**

In case of fever following vaccination, consult your doctor and follow the advice.

Medicines like Amrutottaram Kashayam, Amritarishta, Sudarshan Vati, **Sudarshana Churna**, Mahasudarshan Churna, ShadDharana Churna etc. are useful.

- **Treatment for headache**

The following medicines can be useful in headache after vaccination - Trishun tablet, **Yogaraja guggulu**, Shirashuladi Vajra Rasa, **Rasnadi kashayam tablet** etc.

- **Treatment for bodyache**

Bodyache is a common complaint in most people after Covid vaccination. Medicines like Dashamoola kashaya, Pathyaksha dhatryadi kashaya, Rasnadi kashaya, Maharasnadi Kadha, Rasnadi guggulu etc are useful to relieve bodyache.

- **Treatment for fatigue, malaise**

Medicines like **Ashwagandharishta**, Balarishta, Vidarigandhadi Kashayam etc can help to reduce fatigue experienced following vaccination.

- **Allergic reaction:**

In case of any allergic reactions to the vaccine, it is best to consult a doctor at the earliest. **Haridra Khanda**, Dashamoolarishta, Gandhaka Rasayana, Kaishore Guggulu, Vilwadi Gulika, **Khadirarishta** etc medicines can reduce allergic reactions in the body.

A doctor may prescribe other treatments and medicines based on the symptoms and tissues involved.

7. Immunity, viruses and Ayurveda

What is immunity and what influences our immunity?

Ayurveda explains immunity as the Ojas. It is explained as the essence of all body tissues. Ojas is a quantifiable liquid which is responsible for overall health, energy and liveliness according to Ayurveda. If all the tissues are getting optimum nutrition, without any blockage to the body channels, the body will have optimum immunity.

Read: **Immunity In Ayurveda: Concept, Diet, Herbs, Medicines**

How can we boost our immunity?

Good health and immunity can be achieved by preventive care measures like -

- **Dinacharya - daily regimen** which includes waking up early in the morning, oil massage, herbal smoke inhalation, gargling, physical exercise etc,
- **Ritucharya - seasonal regimen** which includes specific diet and regimen for each season,
- Drinking warm water throughout the day,
- Using spices like turmeric, coriander, garlic, ginger regularly in the diet,
- Medicines like chyawanprash, decoction of herbs like Guduchi, Tulsi etc,
- Practising Yoga and Pranayama, celibacy, control over sense organs, proper stress management etc.

How quickly can the immune system be boosted?

How quickly the immunity can be boosted in an individual depends on his age, underlying disease conditions etc. In a healthy young adult, immunity can be boosted quickly.

Persons with Kapha prakriti or Kapha body constitution are naturally gifted with good immunity, those with Pitta prakriti have moderate immunity and those with Vata prakriti have the least immunity.

Vata in the body can be compared to air in the atmosphere. Imagine a balloon filled with air. The microbes inside the balloon can move very quickly, spreading everywhere. Whereas, in a balloon filled with water or mud (correlated to Kapha), the microbes cannot spread that easily.

What are you doing to boost your immunity and how often?

I do regular exercise (10 km run everyday), follow a moderate lifestyle, get

a good amount of sleep, and avoid all excesses. I also drink herbal tea with spices, tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) and Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*).

Do we have to be afraid of the viruses or the reaction of our immune system to them?

It is true that having good immunity gives us the best chance to ward off any virus. But to answer the question specifically, it depends on the virus. We cannot ignore the potency of HIV, Epstein-Barr virus, human papillomavirus, hepatitis B virus (which can cause cancer) etc. With good immunity, we can protect ourselves from mild to moderate viral infections.

8. Do we have to be afraid at all, having Ayurveda as a highly effective support?

Low immunity is not the only cause for disease manifestation. External factors such as road traffic accidents, food poisoning, results of our deeds in the present and past lives (karma) etc can also contribute to disease. While I am an optimist to say that Ayurveda has answers to most illnesses, even Master **Charaka**, **Sushruta** and **Vagbhata** have mentioned incurable diseases.

We have to draw a line between belief and fanaticism.

I have seen a few people who over-relied on Ayurveda and neglected treatment for cancer and severe lung infections and ultimately lost their life. Steve Jobs is a great example. For 10 months, he relied on naturopathy and avoided the surgery for pancreatic cancer. His life might have been saved if surgery was opted as soon as cancer was detected. I have said this before, and I am not ashamed to tell this again. There is a place in this world for allopathy (modern medicine), as much as there is a place for Ayurveda / Yoga.

Do you believe Ayurveda is the most powerful preventive medicine on our planet?

Yes, I know that Ayurveda is at the forefront of preventive medicine, when compared to all other life-sciences. Preventive medicine is the future of

medicinal practice.

स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्यरक्षणमातुरस्य विकारप्रशमनं च॥

svasthasya svāsthyarakṣaṇamāturasya vikārapraśamanam ca॥

In this Sanskrit verse explaining the aim of Ayurveda, by Master Charaka in Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana Chapter 30, verse 26, maintenance of health of a healthy individual is mentioned before curing the disease of a diseased person.

9. Soon after getting up, why do I feel the phlegm collected in the throat, which makes me nauseous?

As per Ayurveda, there is a natural vitiation of Doshas which occur in our body at different times of the day. Kapha Dosha is increased during the first part of the day and night respectively, i.e. from around 6am to 10 am and from 6pm to 10 pm. Phlegm collection in the throat, feeling nauseous, heaviness of the head, pain in the sinuses, running nose soon after waking up in the morning are all due to Kapha dosha increase.

The intensity of this problem increases especially during spring season, where again Kapha is naturally dominant.

This problem is profound in high Kapha people such as those with obesity, cough, cold, sinusitis, asthma etc.

Solutions:

To prevent collection of phlegm in the throat, following these rules on the previous night can help -

- Replace curd with buttermilk at night. ([learn why](#))
- Consume light and easily digestible foods for dinner. Avoid heavy foods and excessive consumption of food at night. ([learn why](#))
- Include some amount of spices in the dinner.
- Mix a quarter teaspoon each of fresh ginger juice, lemon juice and honey. Consume it at night.
- Consume half a teaspoon of **Triphala** at night. It can be either consumed with a glass of lukewarm water or with honey. Triphala water (1 teaspoon of Triphala in a cup of lukewarm water) gargle is also very beneficial.
- Digestion promoting medicines that contain spices such as Trikatu

churna or **Hingvastak churna** can be taken as per the advice of your Ayurvedic doctor.

g. If you have the habit of eating before feeling hungry, please avoid it. Proper digestion of food takes place only when there is a good appetite.

General Kapha decreasing measures such as exercise for at least half an hour per day, fasting once a week, powder massage, nasya treatment, herbal smoking etc. can also be very helpful.

10. Is refrigerated buttermilk hot or cold?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Buttermilk is explained as slightly hot in nature in Ayurveda textbooks. It is a fermented product. Most fermented products are able to open up the blocked channels within the body, help in digestion and hence are considered hot.

Read: **Buttermilk benefits, side effects**

Buttermilk has some amount of fat in it as well (unless you remove the fat from it entirely). This fat brings in the nutrition component to buttermilk. This unique combination made Master Charaka exclaim that, for the patients of chronic liver disorders such as ascites, associated with Vata and Kapha Dosha, buttermilk is a nectar (ambrosia).

तक्रं वातकफार्तानाममृतत्वाय कल्पते|१०७|

takraṃ vātakaphārtānāmamṛtatvāya kalpate|107| (Charaka Chikitsasthana 13/108)

Read: **Ayurvedic management of ascites**

Now we know that buttermilk is hot in potency. But what will happen if it is refrigerated?

Refrigeration brings in some cooling effect to the buttermilk. But its form or constitution does not change. It is still a fermented product and it retains its hotness. The coldness of refrigeration can only slightly decrease its hotness.

Other ways to reduce the hotness of buttermilk are by adding water, sugar, or coolant herbs such as Amla - Indian gooseberry or **coriander seeds** to it.

Cooked foods, when refrigerated lose their freshness, become heavier to digest and have the potential to block the body channels.

Cow milk or water, which are naturally coolant liquids, become cooler when refrigerated.

11. What Is Your Slogan?

Dr JV Hebbar:

During the lockdown, I gained a lot of weight. So, I decided to exercise regularly and started running 10 km everyday. I also started sleeping for 8 hours a day. This began to eat up my work hours. I was feeling guilty because of less focus and time spent on work. But exercise was important for weight control and to maintain my health. I came up with the slogan, which I repeat to myself, "Never regret sleeping."

Whenever I feel guilty about oversleeping, I remember this slogan and feel better about it.

In the office, sometimes we struggle to define the work motto of our work. So, I came up with the slogan "Reach one more person with Ayurveda". This helps to keep a better focus on our work.

One of my other favorite line is "Like there is no tomorrow".

Read: **My work, my life.. like there is no tomorrow**

For a person who is over-conscious and obsessive about minute details of his health, I would recommend - ***"It's okay to let go sometimes"***.

For a person with less concentration on health, who would binge watch shows, binge eat snacks, I would recommend -

"Go natural with eating"*or*

sarvamanyat parityajya śarīramanupālayet|
tadabhāve hi bhāvānām sarvābhāvaḥ sarīriṇām|

This is a verse from Charaka Samhita Nidana Sthana 6/7. It means - 'one should maintain his body, leaving everything else. If there is no body, there is nothing that can be made available to the individual'.

For a person who is into writing, teaching, and other such kinds of educational work, I would recommend "***Where is the art? Where is the fun?***"

Read: [How To Give An Artistic Touch To Your Work?](#)

For a depressed person, the slogan "***This too shall pass***" might help.

Having the right slogan at the right point of our lives puts things into perspective and helps us to stay focused.

12. What medicines can be advised for nourishing tissues in a weak and underweight diabetes person?**Dr JV Hebbar:**

Excessive weight loss or tissue depletion is a feature of Vata dosha vitiation. If tissue depletion and diabetes are common denominators, then herbal ghee and oil preparations are best to nourish the emaciated tissues. Ghees and oils which can be used are -

- **Arjuna ghrita** - for cholesterol and vascular care,
- Triphala ghrita - for vascular care, eye care, to maintain healthy lipid levels,
- Indukanta ghrita, Dadimadi ghrita - to improve nutrition levels which are depleted due to Rasa dhatu kshaya.
- **Tiktaka ghrita**, Mahatiktaka ghrita - for blood tissue (Rakta dhatu) related disorders,

- Ashwagandha ghrita - for improving strength of muscle tissues and to prevent muscle wasting,
- Shatavaryadi ghrita, Chagaladya ghrita - for Shukra dhatu or reproductive system related problems,
- **Brahmi ghrita**, Mahakalyanaka ghrita - as brain tonics etc.

Administration of these Ghritas can be planned after improving digestion strength (deepana and pachana) and purification (shodhana) therapies. If Vata dosha is highly vitiated, then **Mahamasha taila**, Ksheerabala taila etc. can be administered.

सर्वेषु मेहेषु मतौ तु पूर्वो कषाययोगौ विहितास्तु सर्वे ।

मन्थस्य पाने यवभावनायां स्युर्भोजने पानविधौ पृथक् च ॥३३॥

सिद्धानि तैलानि घृतानि चैव देयानि मेहेष्वनिलात्मकेषु ।

मेदः कफश्चैव कषाययोगैः स्नेहैश्च वायुः शममेति तेषाम् ॥३४॥

sarveṣu meheṣu matau tu pūrvau kaṣāyayogau vihitāstu sarve |
manthasya pāne yavabhāvanāyāṃ syurbhojane pānavidhau pṛthak ca
||33||

siddhāni tailāni gṛtāni caiva deyāni meheṣvanilātmakeṣu |
medaḥ kaphaścaiva kaṣāyayogaiḥ snehaiśca vāyuh śamameti teṣām ||34||
charaka Chikitsa Sthana 6

दृष्ट्वाऽनुबन्धं पवनात् कफस्य पित्तस्य वा स्नेहविधिर्विकल्प्यः ।

तैलं कफे स्यात् स्वकषायसिद्धं पित्ते घृतं पित्तहरैः कषायैः ॥ ३७ ॥

dr̥ṣṭvā'nubandham pavanāt kaphasya pittasya vā snehavidhirvikalpyaḥ |
tailam kaphe syāt svakaṣāyasiddham pitte gṛtaṃ pittaharaiḥ
kaṣāyaiḥ||37|| (**Charaka samhita chikitsa sthana 6/37**)

According to this verse,

In a patient of diabetes with secondary vitiation of Vata along with Kapha or Pitta, medicated oil or ghee can be administered.

If Vata is associated with Kapha, medicated oils processed with decoction of Kapha alleviating herbs should be used.

If Vata is associated with Pitta, medicated ghee processed with decoction of herbs that alleviate Pitta should be used.

13. What are the ingredients that make oil as herbal oil?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Three basic components are required for the preparation of an herbal oil:

1. Paste of herbs
2. The base oil - it can be mustard oil, sesame oil, coconut oil or even castor oil.
3. Liquids - Water / milk / decoction / juice extracts etc.

These ingredients are taken in a 1:4:16 ratio. The preparation method depends on the traditional Ayurvedic formula. The above three components are processed together to cook an herbal oil. By using herbal ingredients in preparation, oil is converted into an herbal oil.

To read about anti-dandruff herbal oil preparation, [click here](#).

To watch and learn the preparation of Amla hair oil, [click here](#).

14. Is air conditioner (A/C) allowed to be used? What was the technique used back in old times to beat the heat?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Ancient methods of air conditioning, as explained by Master Vagbhata in [Ashtanga Hrudayam, Sutrasthana, 3rd chapter](#):

- a. Day time should be spent in forests having tall trees which seem to touch the sky, such as Shala (*Shorea robusta*), Tala (*Borassus flabellifer*) etc., which obstruct the hot rays of the sun.
- b. One should reside in houses around which creepers of grapes and aromatic flowers are spread. These help to block the direct sun rays.
- c. Sheets of cloth dribbling with sweet scented water are arranged all

around.

d. The person should sleep on a soft bed prepared with banana leaf, kalhara (sougandhika – a water plant), leaves of lotus, water lily etc., which are naturally coolant plants. Their fully blossomed flowers should be placed all over the place.

Spend the day remaining inside the house cooled by water fountains, water being scented with **Ushira (CusCus grass)**, and thereby relieving oneself from the heat of the sun.

At night, one should sleep on the terrace, under the moonlight. Exhaustion due to heat of the day is relieved by -

Anointing the body with moist paste of sandalwood,

Wearing garlands,

Wearing of very light and thin dresses,

Fanning with fans made of Tala vrinta – ornamental fans made of peacock feathers, or large leaves of lily made wet,

Cool breeze sprinkling water droplets,

Garlands of flowers of camphor, jasmine and of pearls and beads of **sandalwood** are recommended.

Side effects of modern air conditioners:

Constant use of air conditioner causes Vata and Kapha related problems as below:

Vata dosha related problems include: Fatigue, dry skin, feeling sick, worsening of body ache, fever etc.

Kapha dosha related problems include: Worsening of cold, running nose, joint stiffness etc.

Vata and kapha dosha problems include: Worsening of cough, cold, breathing problems, diseases such as Covid 19 etc.

Even though it has many disadvantages, air conditioners have some advantages to it as well like cleaner air due to filters, reduced risk of dehydration, mosquito repellent ultrasonic technology, prevention of excessive heating of electronics etc.

For Pitta body constitution (Pitta prakriti) persons, a/c can be life saving.

Some Pitta prakriti people start fainting as soon as the atmospheric temperature rises above 30 degree celsius.

A/c is useful for people with highly vitiated Pitta disorders such as chronic

skin diseases with burning sensation, bleeding disorders, etc.
It is best if the air conditioner is used only when the pros overtake the cons.

15. Which Fruits should I be taking all the time?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Both Master Charaka and Master Sushruta have mentioned fruits as a separate unique category of eatables. Out of the fruits mentioned by them, two balance the Tridoshas and are good for all. They are -

Dadima - Pomegranate - *Punica granatum* and
Amla - Indian gooseberry - *Emblica officinalis*

Grapes (*Draksha* - *Vitis vinifera*) are praised as - '*Draksha Phalottama!*' or 'the best among all fruits'. No wonder modern scientists have extracted resveratrol from it, which is gaining ever-increasing importance in preventive and anti aging medicine research.

Apart from these, the fruits that are native to your region or naturally grown in your place (not exotic or imported), the fruits that grow in proper seasons are good. For example, mangoes grown in summer are good, as it is the natural season for it. Mangoes obtained in other seasons are considered unnatural.

The choice of fruit to be consumed can also be made based on disease conditions.

Pomegranate is useful for acid peptic disorders, ulcerative colitis, diarrhea and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) associated with diarrhea.

Bananas are good for excessively tired, fatigued people with constipation.

Berries improve brain health and maintains healthy cholesterol levels.

Guava is rich in vitamin C (more than twice the recommended daily value).

Watermelon is good for those suffering from Pitta disorders etc.

It is a good idea to mix and match different fruit combinations to your diet plan.

[Click here](#) to learn more about how fruits can be consumed together with meals.

16. Ayurveda recommends four kinds of fats - bone marrow fat, muscle fat, ghee and sesame oil. Then how do you say that non-vegetarian food is bad for fasting? In fact most of the diets that prove effective against epilepsy, depression, heart diseases and osteoporosis consist of high animal fat. In fact giving lots and lots of ghee was a treatment methodology in Ayurveda and ghee is nothing but animal fat.

Dr JV Hebbar:

Fasting is a practice of restraint and minimalism. It is also a practice of self control and an act of spirituality or religious righteousness to many.

The purpose of fasting is to eat a minimal quantity of food or no food. Some people cannot do waterless fasting. So they are advised to drink water.

Some people cannot do water-only fasting. So, they are advised to use simple fruit juices.

Some cannot do fruit juice fasting, so they are advised to take only light diet.

Meat / meat soup is a 'guru ahara' - meaning, it is heavy to digest food. If someone is taking meat, it is almost equivalent to taking normal food. By taking meat on the day of fasting, the concept of minimalism is compromised.

Many spiritual / religious people do not consider meat as Satvic or carrying positive energy. Hence, on the day of fasting, which is considered spiritual, meat is advised to be avoided.

Read related: [How to do fasting? Step by Step Guide](#)

Ghee is just an animal product. To produce ghee, the animal is not killed or harmed in any way.

I am not saying that meat is a bad food. For those who are habituated to meat, for them, it is a good source of protein. The qualities of different meats are mentioned in Ayurveda. Medicinal preparations containing meat are also explained. For example, **goat meat** is used in various Ayurvedic medicines.

17. Concerning vamana, after proper internal and external oleation, can Kunjal kriya be substituted for herbal emetics to remove the Doshas? Is the regular practice of Kunjal Kriya a way to control Kapha and Pitta doshas?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Let us first understand the context -

There is a detoxification procedure in Ayurveda which induces vomiting, called Vamana. This is done to treat Kapha disorders such as obesity, chronic respiratory disorders, skin diseases etc.

Procedure of vamana involves internal oleation by administering high dosage of fats (either oil or ghee, selected as per the disease condition) for a few days (internal oleation), followed by one day of oil massage and fomentation and administration of emetic medicine with licorice, sweet flag, *Randia spinosa* etc.

Kunjala Kriya is a Yogic practice, where salt water is consumed in large quantities and vomiting is induced.

The questioner is asking, in the traditional Vamana procedure, can the emetic medicines be replaced with Kunjala kriya after internal and external oleation therapy?

The answer is no. Here are the reasons -

a. If it was allowed, masters Charaka, Sushruta etc. would have mentioned this, as they were knowledgeable about Ayurvedic procedures.

b. It is not a good idea to mix Ayurvedic and Yoga therapies. The purpose of therapy, mechanism of action of medicine used, etc. completely differ in these two great sciences of healthcare.

c. In Vamana procedure, the emetic medicines are given specifically to liquefy the toxins from the sites of pathology and to expel them through the oral route. Just saline water might not do this laborious work efficiently.

Kunjala Kriya is in no way inferior to Vamana. I am just saying that the purpose of these two therapies are different.

In conditions where Vamana procedure cannot be done at all (due to regulatory restrictions, non-availability of medicines etc.) but the patient can undergo Kunjala Kriya, it may be carried out without prior oleation and fomentation (the two procedures of different sciences should not be combined together) to yield benefits.

18. What is the relationship between meditation, stress and aging?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Stress in individuals is defined as 'any interference that disturbs a person's healthy mental and physical well being'. It may be acute or chronic, positive or negative etc. Being under heavy stress can easily take away 2-3 years of your life.

Meditation increases self-awareness, keeps the mind stress free, improves brain functioning, improves sleep and metabolism and slows the aging process.

How does meditation slow down aging?

Various researches have been carried out to understand the effect of meditation on aging. In these studies, telomeres or the cap-like structures at the ends of the chromosomes are studied. With aging, telomere length starts decreasing. Length of telomeres is a biomarker for aging. Shorter telomeres are biomarkers for ill health or early death.

Research has shown that **meditation** and telomere length are found to be

connected. Those who practised meditation had a longer telomere than those who didn't and more the hours of meditation, more is its effect on telomere length.

Nicola S. Schutte, John M. Malouff & Shian-Ling Keng (2020) Meditation and telomere length: a meta-analysis, Psychology & Health, 35:8, 901-915, DOI: 10.1080/08870446.2019.1707827

Other factors that can increase telomere length are **Vitamin D** and regular exercise.

19. What is the one medicine that you would recommend for people with hypothyroidism and depression?

Dr JV Hebbar:

There are no magic formulas to cure chronic diseases in Ayurveda. The choice of medicine depends a lot on the patient's body type, digestion, tolerance capacity, chronicity of disease etc. Hence, the below answer should not be considered as a sure-shot remedy for any disease.

All things considered, I think **Ashwagandharishtam** is a very effective Ayurvedic product for the said two conditions. It is a fermented medicine in liquid form.

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is very well known for treating hypothyroidism.

Patients of hypothyroidism often suffer from depression. To cure depression in such patients, thyroid hormone normalization is the recommended step.

In many patients, administering Ashwagandha directly causes stomach disturbances, mood changes, worsening of anxiety etc. symptoms.

Hence, it is best to use Ashwagandharishtam, in which Ashwagandha is the main ingredient.

People with depression often suffer from **obesity**, especially if they are given modern antidepressants. People with depression and hypothyroidism also often suffer from sexual weakness.

Ashwagandharishtam is also effective against both weight gain and sexual weakness.

20. Why do many people who move to a colder climate country feel depressed?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Possible causes for depression in people who move to a colder country are

-

1. Home sickness, missing friends and family

2. Sun plays an important role in maintaining a happy and active mind.

There is a concept of winter blues, where the mood and energy drops. In Ayurvedic terms, **Pitta Dosh**a which is related to mood, enthusiasm and intelligence is less stimulated due to long winters.

People from warmer countries take time to get accustomed to long winters in cold countries.

3. The people who live in warm countries will have abundant sunlight. The body readily produces vitamin D when their skin is exposed to sunlight.

People even develop extra melanin on their skin, so as to avoid harmful effects of excessive exposure to sunlight. But when they move to a cold country, the same melanin prevents Vitamin D formation from sunlight.

This causes vitamin D deficiency. Vitamin D is related to our mood. Due to its deficiency, people who move to cold countries start having mood disorders such as depression.

Such individuals can overcome their depression by taking Vitamin D supplement and also **cow ghee**, which

a. helps in better absorption and utilization of fat soluble **Vitamin D**

b. naturally improve brain functions, memory, mood and concentration.

21. Does Ayurveda recommend drinking water early in the morning?

Dr JV Hebbar:

In the chapter explaining daily regimen, both Master Charaka and Master Vagbhata have not directed to drink water in the morning.

The simple Ayurvedic rule for drinking water is - drink when thirsty, till you completely quench the thirst; do not drink water when you're not thirsty.

Read: [Benefits and usage of water as per Ayurveda](#)

Some exceptions that can be made to this rule are -

- People drink large amounts of water, early in the morning, to have regular bowel movements. It is fine to continue that. At least it is better than depending on laxatives for bowel evacuation.
- Obese people drink water to keep hunger at check, which is fine, as long as they do not suffer from weak digestion and related issues. Drinking lukewarm water is beneficial in Kapha related disorders like obesity.

Read: [Benefits of drinking hot water](#)

- People who workout / run in the morning can drink as much water as they want to quench the thirst and tiredness.
- People with kidney and bladder stones are usually directed to drink water frequently. This is a good preventive measure to follow.
- People with headaches and hangovers drink water to get rid of their symptoms. It can also be practised.

Read: [Quality of water stored in different vessels](#)

Master Bhava Mishra mentioned 'Ushapana' which means drinking water early in the morning, before sunrise. The quantity of water to be consumed according to him is 8 prasriti which is approximately 640 ml. He says that a person who follows this practice remains free from diseases and leads a healthy life for a hundred years.

22. What is the best time to administer rice washed water?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Rice washed water, called Tandulodaka, is a famous Ayurvedic remedy. It is prepared by adding one part of broken rice to 8 parts of water, soaking it for a few hours and filtering it. [Read detailed preparation here.](#)

It is primarily indicated to reduce burning sensation associated with fever, acid peptic disorder etc., in people who work under the hot sun, during autumn, summer etc. and in various Pitta related disorders.

The best time to administer Tandulodaka is when Pitta dosha is naturally predominant during the day. If the day is divided into three parts, the first 1/3rd is dominated by Kapha dosha, the second 1/3rd is dominated by Pitta dosha and the last 1/3rd is dominated by Vata dosha. The time of Pitta dominance begins around 10 AM and lasts till around 2 PM. This is the time of day when the sun rays are the strongest. When Pitta starts aggravating naturally due to the effect of sun, administering Tandulodaka can reduce Pitta aggravation and can thus help in the treatment of Pitta related disorders.

So, the best time to administer Pitta balancing remedies including rice washed water is between 10 - 11 AM.

The same rule applies to all Pitta remedies such as [coriander seed drink](#), Pitta eliminating Panchakarma therapy called Virechana etc. Here, the medicine to induce virechana (therapeutic purgation) is administered at the time of onset of Pitta aggravation.

23. Which type of rice is best for daily use?**Dr JV Hebbar:**

There is a type of rice explained in Ayurveda, called Shashtika Shali, a variety of rice which is harvested in sixty days (Shashti means sixty, shali means rice). This is considered as the best quality of rice. It is recommended to be used on a daily basis.

Some companies market a type of rice called Navara rice, which is purported as Shashtika shali, and is comparatively very costly.

It is available on Amazon as (affiliate links) -

Organic navara rice

Navara or Njavara rice

It is also told that **red variety of rice - Rakta shali** is the best. If Navara rice is available, it is good. Otherwise, any locally grown red variety of rice is still very good to use. There is no need to buy the very costly Navara rice.

If red rice is also not available to you, locally grown white rice (if possible, unpolished) can also be used.

Read: [Rice Combinations With Pulses, Vegetables, Grains, Soups](#)

Brown rice has become a fad these days, which is nothing but the de-husked unpolished rice. This is also very good to use, considering that it has a good fiber content in it and thus, contains less amount of calories and has low glycemic index. For diabetic people, brown rice is better than polished white rice.

Read related: [Navara Rice \(Shashtika Shali\) Qualities, Uses, Remedies, Research](#)

24. What is the difference between oil pulling and gargling?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Oil pulling and gargling are two different therapies recommended for different purposes in Ayurveda.

Oil pulling: It is called Gandusha in Ayurveda. Gandusha is defined as a procedure where a mouthful of medicated liquid is retained in the oral cavity for a specific period of time. In oil pulling, a suitable oil is taken and is retained inside the mouth till the mouth is filled with a frothy, phlegm-like fluid or till secretions start coming out of the nose and eyes.

It is recommended to be done daily to detoxify the accumulated Doshas (toxins) in the oral cavity and throat.

Apart from oils, various herbal decoctions, juice extracts, milk, buttermilk, honey etc. are used for the purpose of Gandusha.

Gandusha has both local and systemic effects, which means the effect of oil pulling / Gandusha can be observed in the oral cavity as well as on the

entire head and neck region.

For example, Master Sushruta recommended Gandusha with strong liquids to treat Kapha type of headache, which is compared to sinusitis.

(Reference: Sushruta Samhita, Uttara Tantra, 26/19)

In Gandusha the medicated liquid acts by penetrating deep into the channels connected to the oral cavity, melting the toxins (imbalanced Doshas) and expelling them out.

In cases such as mouth ulcers with extreme burning sensation and bleeding, soothing liquids such as coconut oil or ghee is used for Gandusha. Here, the local healing effect is expected.

So, Gandusha has both local and systemic actions.

Mouth gargling: Also called Kavala, this is another procedure mentioned in Ayurveda, where medicated fluid is taken in the oral cavity and gargling is done. Later the medicine should be spit out and replaced with fresh liquid. This procedure is largely targeted towards disorders affecting the tonsils and throat. Here, the local effect of cleansing is expected. A very famous example is using a mixture of two pinches of both turmeric and salt in a cup of water. This liquid is used for gargling to relieve inflammation in the throat, laryngitis or tonsillitis.

After gargling for a few seconds, the content of the mouth is spat out and filled again with fresh liquid and gargling is continued.

The difference between oil pulling (Gandusha) and gargling (Kavala) can be summarized as -

- Medicated oil is retained in the oral cavity in Gandusha. Medicated liquid is gargled in Kavala.
- Oil pulling has both systemic and local effects. The liquid is not changed throughout the procedure.
- Gargling has a local effect and the liquid is changed many times during the procedure.

25. Is Chyawanprash effective in thyroid hormone imbalance?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Though there is no research paper available about the efficacy of Chyawanprash in thyroid disorders, the following assumptions are safe to make.

a. Hyperthyroidism:

Hyperthyroidism is a condition where the thyroid gland produces thyroid hormones in excess. An increase in thyroid levels causes symptoms such as mood swings, nervousness, irritability, restlessness, excessive sweating, heat intolerance etc. Most of these symptoms suggest Pitta Dosha increase.

Chyawanprash is a medicine which stimulates the organs naturally. It also has a hot potency. In hyperthyroidism, which presents with an excessively stimulated thyroid gland and Pitta dosha increase, it is safe to assume that Chyawanprash is not very useful.

b. Hypothyroidism:

Hypothyroidism is a condition where the thyroid gland does not produce sufficient thyroid hormones. A decrease in the levels of thyroid hormones leads to symptoms such as weight gain, infertility, fatigue, lethargy, slow body growth, slow heart rate etc.

In all these symptoms, the stimulating action of Chyawanprash is very useful. Hence, Chyawanprash can be an ideal daily supplement for people with hypothyroidism.

c. Autoimmune thyroiditis:

This is a chronic condition where the body produces antibodies against the thyroid cells and destroys it. Inflammation due to autoimmune thyroiditis leads to an underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism). Signs and symptoms are similar to those of hypothyroidism.

Ayurveda recommends use of immunity modulating antiaging and anti-inflammatory medicines such as Chyawanprash in cases such as autoimmune thyroid disorder.

In any disease, including thyroid disorders, it is always best to perform Panchakarma detoxification procedures first and then administer Chyawanprash. The efficacy of chyawanprash will be enhanced if administered after Panchakarma therapies.

26. If we want to take one particular medicine for a long period of time, is it a good idea to take it on alternate days?

Dr JV Hebbar:

The idea of taking the herbs on alternate days is to -

- a. Keep the dosage of herbs as minimal as possible,
- b. Avoid taking it daily to prevent possible side effects of the herb / remedy. For example, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) may cause constipation or loose stools, Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) can be very hot for some people. So, taking them on alternate days reduces the chances for side effects.
- c. Enjoy the benefits of the herbs for a long period of time - several months up to a year.

27. Which remedies or herbs can be taken for a long period of time in this way?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Deciding which herbs or remedies can be taken for a long time depends on the nature of the herbs / remedies. If it is a safe medicine such as Triphala, Amla, Guduchi etc., then they can be safely continued for 4 - 6 months, if taken on alternate days.

Here are a few herbs which can be taken for a longer period in small dosage along with its indications -

Triphala (*Terminalia chebula*, *Terminalia bellirica* and *Emblica officinalis*) - useful for obesity, eye health, easy bowel evacuation

Amla (*Emblica officinalis*) - to slow down ageing process, for cell and tissue rejuvenation

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) - to correct and improve immunity, to prevent frequent infections

Vasa (Adhatoda vasica) - for respiratory health
Manjishta (Rubia cordifolia) - for skin health
Aloe vera - for skin, blood and colon health
Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera), **Gokshura** (Tribulus terrestris),
Shilajit (Asphaltum punjabianum) - for stamina and muscle health.

It is always recommended to check with your doctor before taking any herb / remedies.

28. For migraine, which medicine can be used as nasal drops?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Nasya is a therapy where a drug is administered through the nostrils. The drug may be in the form of herbal oils, liquids or powders. In Ayurveda, the nose is considered the gateway of the head. So Nasya is very beneficial in treating disorders of the head.

The choice of oil for Nasya for migraine depends on the nature and intensity of the migraine. If there is severe pain in the face and neck, sensitivity to sound and scalp tenderness (pain on touching the head), it means that Vata Dosha is more dominant. In such cases, **Mahanarayana taila** or **Shadbindu taila** or **Anu taila** is useful.

If the patient with migraine experiences aura, blurred or impaired vision, sees flashes of light, burning sensation, increased warmth, redness of eyes, nausea and vomiting, it means that Pitta is more dominant. In such cases, **Varanadi Ghritam** (herbal ghee) and **Ksheerabala 101 oil** are useful.

29. Should the Nasya oil be warmed?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Usually, oil or ghee used for Nasya is slightly warmed just above normal room temperature before administration. Lukewarm oil gets absorbed faster and spreads quickly in the body.

How is the oil warmed?

Nasya oil or ghee is very sensitive to heat. The blend of oil and herbs is very delicate. Direct heating of the oil over fire may cause loss of medicinal principles from it. Hence, it is best to warm the oil using a water bath. For this, a wide mouthed vessel is taken, with water in it. This is heated over fire to around 50-60 degree celsius. The bottle containing oil or ghee for nasya is dipped in the water for 1-2 minutes.

Before instilling the oil in the nostrils, test its temperature. You can do this by putting a drop of the oil on the back of your hand. It should not be very hot.

30. Can Nasya be done with sesame oil (gingelly oil)?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Sesame oil is sweet and bitter in taste and has an astringent sub-taste. It has the capability to enter into minute body pores and bring about a soothing effect. It is hot, strong and piercing in nature.

The below mentioned benefits of **sesame oil** can be expected when it is used as nasal drops -

Lekhana - scraping action - useful in case of sinusitis,

Deepana - improves digestion strength,

Sroto vishodhana - clears and cleanses body channels,

Tvachya - good for skin, relieves dryness of facial skin and prevents dryness of hairs,

Vayasthapana – anti-aging, rejuvenating, improves the health of hair and maintains youthfulness of face. It prevents early graying of hair, hair fall and wrinkling of skin,

Medhakara – improves intelligence and

Smritikara – improves memory.

31. Can herbal ghee be given to a person with high cholesterol?

Dr

JV

Hebbar:

Many experts believe that intake of ghee in a small dose of 1 - 2 teaspoons every day is healthy and it does not alter cholesterol levels. Herbal ghee is

the ghee processed with medicinal herbs. Most of these herbs, such as Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), neem (*Azadirachta indica*), etc. reduce the cholesterol in the body. For example, **Patoladi Ghrita** is a herbal ghee formulation which contains pointed gourd root (*Trichosanthes dioica*), **Kutki** (*Picrorhiza kurroa*), Vasa – Malabar nut (*Adhatoda vasica*), Musta (*Cyperus rotundus*), **Kalamegha** (*Andrographis paniculata*) etc. which are used extensively for the treatment of cholesterol.

Hence, it is safe to say that herbal ghees in general do not increase cholesterol in normal doses.

In a preparatory procedure called '**Snehapana**' or internal oleation done before Panchakarma, herbal ghees are administered in a very high dose. The purpose of this high dose of herbal ghee is to melt away the accumulated toxins in the deeper tissues and organs of the body. During this period, the person is advised to follow a strict calorie restricted diet. So even though high doses of herbal ghee are administered, it does not increase cholesterol levels.

32. What is the effect of bathing soon after meals?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Ayurveda recommends bathing in the morning, preferably on an empty stomach. Food should be consumed only after the body is purified by proper evacuation of urges, bathing etc measures, followed by purifying the mind by worshipping God and doing meditation. Following this, nutritious foods should be consumed in the right quantity. This is the recommended order of a healthy routine.

Bathing soon after food causes indigestion, bloating, and delay in the natural downward movement of food from the intestines to stomach. It temporarily alters the blood circulation to the stomach and intestines. In simpler terms, soon after food intake, a strong digestive fire or Agni is required in the stomach for proper digestion of food. If a person takes a bath soon after eating, it would cause the digestive fire to weaken,

resulting in poor digestion.

33. Is a hot water bath advised during summer?

Dr JV Hebbar:

As per the general Ayurvedic rule for bathing, it is advised to use lukewarm water for washing the body and cold water for the head. But an exception to this is also explained.

अतिशीतं हि शीते च श्लेष्ममारुतकोपनम् ||२०३||

अत्युष्णमुष्णकाले च पित्तशोणितकोपनम् |

atiśītaṃ hi śīte ca śleṣmamārutakopanam ||203||

atyuṣṇamuṣṇakāle ca pittaśoṇitakopanam |- Kaiyadeva Nighantu Vihara Varga, 203

This sloka means -

During extreme winter, taking cold water baths vitiates Kapha and Vata dosha because both these doshas have a cold quality. It can cause or worsen respiratory problems, cold, cough, asthma etc.

During summer, taking hot water baths vitiates Pitta and blood tissues because hotness is a quality of Pitta dosha and it is directly related to blood tissue. It can lead to bleeding disorders, dizziness, digestion issues etc.

Hence, using very hot water for bathing should be avoided during the summer, especially if a person is of Pitta Prakriti and suffering from Pitta or blood related disorders.

To read more rules regarding bathing, [click here](#).

34. Is rock salt (Sendha namak) good for daily use?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Rock salt is one among the many other ingredients (for example, fruit of Indian gooseberry, Vigna radiata or green gram, milk, ghee etc) that are

recommended for daily use. In fact, in ancient India, among all varieties of salt, rock salt was the one being used widely. But since rock salt usage led to iodine deficiency, gradually it was replaced with common salt.

Rock salt has more minerals when compared to table salt, as the latter loses some mineral contents when it is subjected to processing. But common salt has more iodine content when compared to rock salt. Rock salt contains some amount of iodine, along with other useful compounds such as lithium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, chromium, manganese, iron, zinc, and strontium.

Hence, even today, it is good for daily use. We use rock salt at our home.

Recommended daily intake of salt is 1 - 2 grams. Overdose may cause problems related to aggravated Pitta dosha such as early greying of hairs.

Like the common salt, Sendha namak (rock salt) should also be used with caution in patients with high blood pressure. In such cases, if the doctor has recommended to reduce salt intake, they can take 500 mg per day, or even less.

Is rock salt useful in constipation / bloating?

It is mentioned in the treatises that rock salt or Saindhava lavana is 'vibandhagna' which means it is useful to relieve constipation and bloating. The effect of rock salt is enhanced, if it is used along with **Haritaki** or **Triphala**. For this reason, rock salt is used in medicines to treat indigestion, constipation, bloating and gastritis like Hingwashtaka churna, Lavana bhaskara churna etc.

To read about more remedies for constipation, [click here](#).

35. Can ghee and milk be used for hemorrhoids?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Both milk and ghee are sweet, unctuous and cold in nature.

They ease bowel movements and make the fecal matter smooth and unctuous. This helps in easy elimination. A teaspoon of **ghee** or a cup of **milk** is very good for people with hemorrhoids.

Charaka Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 14/223 mentions that, for bleeding haemorrhoids with severe pain and burning sensation, ghee can be applied locally. This helps to relieve the burning sensation and reduces bleeding. For this purpose, only cold ghee or ghee at room temperature should be used.

Similarly, cold milk or milk at room temperature can be used to wash the bleeding hemorrhoid mass. This helps to reduce the bleeding and decreases pain and burning sensation.

Milk can also be used for sitz baths to stop bleeding due to hemorrhoids.

[Click here](#) to read more about Ayurvedic treatments and remedies for hemorrhoids.

36. Is applying oil on the navel region beneficial?

Dr JV Hebbar:

In Ayurveda, umbilicus is explained as a Marma or vital point. Based on the effect of injury, it is classified under 'sadyo pranahara marma' or which results in immediate death if injured. In the ancient epic, Ramayana, it is told that God Shri Rama killed Ravana by striking an arrow in his navel.

In Sanskrit, the umbilical region is called **Nabhi Marma**. In Charaka samhita sharira sthana 8th chapter, 24th verse it is said that in case of bleeding during pregnancy, the umbilicus and the lower abdomen region should be smeared with **Shata Dhauta Ghrita** (ghee which is washed in water for a hundred times).

Umbilicus is the right level in which the duodenum – the first part of intestine is situated.

The part of the abdomen around the umbilicus is called the umbilical region. It contains parts of organs like the stomach, small and large intestines and the pancreas.

This clearly indicates that the oil or any ointment applied on the navel region has its effect on the inner organs.

Hence, to strengthen, stimulate or to calm down the functions of organs of the lower abdomen like the colon, urinary system, reproductive system, applying oil on the navel region is beneficial.

Application of oil can relieve bloating, constipation, difficulty in urination, acid peptic disorders and weak digestion.

Different oils are recommended for different body constitutions. For Vata prakriti individuals, application of sesame oil is beneficial as sesame oil has hot and unctuous properties, opposite to the qualities of Vata dosha. Application of coconut oil or ghee is recommended in Pitta prakriti and mustard oil for Kapha prakriti individuals.

Besides application of oil on the navel region, there are many Ayurveda treatments explained which involve the umbilicus. For example, **Nabhi Purana** is a treatment where medicated liquids, mostly oils, are pooled in the umbilicus.

To read more about treatment methods and benefits involving the umbilicus, [click here](#).

37. In which conditions, Ashwagandha is administered along with Shatavari?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Shatavari is *Asparagus racemosus*.

Ashwagandha is *Withania somnifera*.

The below reference is from the textbook Bhavaprakasha Nighantu -

Based on its potency, Ashwagandha is hot and Shatavari is cold.

Both these herbs have a Rasayana or anti aging effect on the body.

Ashwagandha is 'balya' or strength promoting and Shatavari is 'stanya' or lactation promoting. A combination of these drugs is used in the post-natal care of the mother to improve lactation and also to improve strength of the organs of the lower abdomen.

Ashwagandha is explained as 'Atishukrala' or which promotes sperm or semen production. Shatavari is 'Shukrakari' which also means the same.

Hence this combination is very useful in treating oligospermia and sexual disorders. To improve sperm count, one may add **Kapikacchu** (*Mucuna pruriens*) to this combination and to improve vigor, **Shilajit** (*Asphaltum punjabianum*) can be added.

In some people, taking Ashwagandha alone causes loose stools. Shatavari is explained as 'Atisarajit' which means that which wins over diarrhea. In this way, Shatavari is useful to relieve the side effects of Ashwagandha, pertaining to the digestive system.

Ashwagandha is an energizer and stimulator. Due to its stimulating action on the mind, some people complain of increased thoughts or anxiety while using Ashwagandha.

Shatavari is calming and maintains mental balance. Excessive mental stimulation caused by Ashwagandha can be negated by using it along with Shatavari.

This combination is perfect for women of menopausal age, when they require improved body strength, calmness of the mind and reduced hot flashes. Read related: **Perimenopause – Ayurvedic Care**

38. Can Haritaki be taken with milk? How should it be given to improve brain power?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Haritaki is *Terminalia chebula*. Haritaki fruit is one among the three that constitute Triphala. It is hot in potency and promotes bowel movements (*sara*).

Haritaki can be taken along with milk. Milk is a coolant and would negate the slightly hot effect of Haritaki. But this combination might enhance the laxative effect of Haritaki.

Haritaki Murabba: Murabba is a sweet fruit preserve made by dipping Haritaki fruits in sugar syrup till it becomes soft and tasty. It is often used as a condiment for daily use. Haritaki Murabba contains all the natural benefits and has more nutritious value. It can be eaten as it is, followed by a cup of water or milk.

Haritaki is 'medhya' or improves intelligence. For this quality, Haritaki is used in combination with other memory and concentration enhancing herbs such as **Gotu Kola** (Centella asiatica), Brahmi (Bacopa monnieri), Shatavari, **Shankhapushpi** (Convolvulus pluricaulis) etc. It is used in the treatment of autism, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), senile dementia and to improve memory and concentration in students. Read more regarding **tips to improve concentration**.

39. How is milk and ghee useful together?

Dr JV Hebbar:

In Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana chapter 25, verse 40, Master Charaka declares that -

क्षीरघृताभ्यासो रसायनानां

kṣīraghṛtābhyāso rasāyanānām

This sloka means that daily intake of ghee and milk is the best **Rasayana or anti aging remedy**. To be able to consume ghee and milk on a daily basis, one has to have a **good digestion strength or Agni**. If one has good digestion strength, milk and ghee will get properly digested and nourish and rejuvenate all body tissues.

For this purpose, ghee and milk can be taken together or even separately.

Time for consumption:

The ideal time of intake of milk and ghee varies according to the desired result -

- For people seeking sound sleep, a cup of warm milk with a teaspoon of ghee is to be taken at night, before or after food.
- For lean people who desire to put on weight, it can be taken 2 - 3 times in a day.
- People with nasal congestion, cold and cough with sputum may feel their symptoms worsening, if they consume milk and ghee at night. For them, this remedy can be taken in the afternoon, when **Pitta is naturally high** which will negate the cold effect of this remedy.
- People with neurological and joint disorders or other Vata dosha related conditions can take this remedy in the evening hours. This is the time when Vata dosha is naturally predominant in the body. By

taking milk and ghee in the evening, it can help to pacify the vitiated Vata.

40. Can we do Yogasana and Surya Namaskara after drinking honey water?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Water with honey is a traditional remedy, mentioned by Master Charaka, called 'Madhudaka'. Here, 'Madhu' means honey and 'Udaka' means water.

काश्यार्थं स्थूलदेहानामनु शस्तं मधूदकम् || ३२३ ||

kāśyārthaṃ sthūladehānāmanu śastaṃ madhūdakam || 323 ||

In Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 27th chapter, verse 323, Master Charaka says - 'for the obese people to lose weight, honey water is beneficial'.

Master Charaka has explained this in the [chapter of food and drinks](#), in the context of 'Anupana' – commonly used drinks along with meals.

This indicates that obese people can use honey water on a daily basis, in a larger quantity.

But one should be careful not to consume honey excessively. 2 cups of water, mixed with 1 – 2 teaspoons of honey, can be the maximum dose of this remedy, per day. Even a higher dose is possible, if your Ayurveda practitioner recommends. Honey mixed in hot water is not recommended according to Ayurveda. Instead, lukewarm water or water at room temperature can be used along with honey.

[Read more about honey water remedy.](#)

Honey, though sweet, balances Kapha Dosha due to its scraping and astringent properties. Hence, it is used as a remedy along with many Kapha balancing medicines such as Talisadi Churna, Sitopaladi Churna etc., that are commonly used for the treatment of cold, cough and asthma.

[Read more about the benefits of honey.](#)

There is Kapha dosha dominance in people who are obese. Honey is effective in the treatment of obesity as well, as it helps to balance Kapha dosha.

Read about other effective treatments and remedies for obesity.

Can honey water be consumed before Yogasana?

If you have the habit of drinking a few sips of water, ahead of your Yoga schedule, then you can definitely take a few sips of honey water.

But care should be taken not to drink excessively, as a high quantity of liquids in the stomach is not ideal while doing Yogasana or **Surya Namaskara**.

It is always better to maintain a minimum time gap of 10-15 minutes between consumption of honey water and practise of Yoga.

41. Do Ayurvedic medicines reach the target organ? If I have a headache and take an Ayurvedic medicine, how does it reach the head to relieve pain?

Dr JV Hebbar:

There are many ways by which herbs act directly on the target site.

a. Target herbs: There are certain herbs which are naturally inclined to certain organs. For example -

Arjuna – Terminalia arjuna - on heart,

Kutki - Picrorhiza kurroa - on liver and intestines,

Guggulu – Commiphora mukul - on blood vessels, joints

Gotu Kola - Centella asiatica - on the brain

Gokshura - Tribulus terrestris - on urinary tract,

Punarnava – Boerhavia diffusa - on urinary tract,

Various spices - on digestive and respiratory systems etc.

b. Herbs that act on the whole body:

Trikatu – a combination of ginger (Zingiber officinale), black pepper (Piper nigrum) and long pepper (Piper longum) reduces cholesterol and fat tissue.

Dashamoola – a group of 10 anti-inflammatory herb roots bring down swelling and pain all over the body.

c. Herbs that reduce specific symptoms:

Rasna – *Pluchea lanceolata* or *Vanda roxburghii* - reduces pain and swelling,

Dashamoola reduces inflammation,

Garlic - *Allium sativum* - relieves bloating and cholesterol.

Sometimes, along with the oral medicines, paste or oil application is done externally to target specific organs. External application of medicine even helps the oral medicines to target the organ. For example:

Lepa (external application of paste) for goitre or cervical lymphadenitis (Galaganda):

Sarshapadi lepa (a medicated paste application with mustard, barley, moringa seed, radish seed etc.) is applied, along with internal administration of Kanchanara guggulu, Varanadi kashayam etc., to treat goitre.

Time of medicine administration:

If medicine is administered before food, it is useful to target disorders due to vitiated Apana Vata such as constipation, difficulty in urination, irregular menstruation etc.

If medicine is given after food, it is useful in targeting Udana Vata related disorders, for example, respiratory disorders involving organs of the chest.

Read related: [Time of medicine administration as per Ayurveda](#)

Medicines, when administered at night, target the eyes and other organs of the head and neck. For example, a teaspoon of Triphala churna (powder), along with a teaspoon of honey and 10 drops of ghee at night is explained as a remedy for eye care by Master Charaka. [Read more about this remedy.](#)

Targeting an organ through Anupana or co drink:

Specific co-drinks are mentioned to be taken along with medicines in specific conditions. For example, Grahani or irritable bowel syndrome is targeted by administering medicines along with buttermilk.

For the administration of medicines to improve brain function, memory and concentration, ghee is chosen as the co drink.

Lohasava is chosen as a co-drink for anemia and blood tissue related disorders.

Meat soup is used as a co-drink to target muscle tissue disorders etc.

Read related: [Anupana – Co drinks along with medicines](#)

42. How much time does a herbal oil take to act on muscles?

Dr JV Hebbar:

There are many Ayurvedic herbal oils that act on the muscles. For example,

Murivenna, Mahanarayana taila and Dhanwantaram tailam are used to get relief from muscle pain.

Bala Ashwagandhadi taila is useful to improve the bulk and strength of muscles. It is used for massages in gym going people. If you are going to the gym, consider applying this oil, before or after workout.

Nirgundi taila prepared with Vitex negundo is helpful to relax the tensed-up muscles and to relieve pain.

Masha taila and Mahamasha taila are used for improving muscle bulk, strength and to relieve muscle wasting. It is used for massage in conditions like muscle wasting after paralysis, after long term fracture bandaging etc.

Sahacharadi taila and **Kottamchukkadi taila** are used to relieve muscle stiffness and lack of muscle flexibility. It also improves blood circulation to the muscles. These oils are beneficial in conditions like muscle injury from a blunt force trauma, muscle pull, joint stiffness associated with muscle pain as in rheumatoid arthritis etc.

Bala Taila, Maha Bala taila are used to improve nerve conduction in muscles, to make the muscles more agile and responsive, in the treatment of paralysis, palsy etc.

The time required for these oils to act on the muscles varies from person to person.

In younger people, the oils act quickly.

In a muscle injury of recent onset, the pain relief effect with oil application can be expected within just 2 days, though the complete pain relief may take 1 – 3 weeks.

Muscle pain relief takes just 1-10 days.

A paralyzed muscle may take 2 – 12 weeks to respond.

A wasted muscle may take 4 – 8 weeks to respond.

These are rough estimates.

The effectiveness of the oil also depends on the type of therapy adopted.

For example, if oil massage is followed by sudation (sweating treatment), the oil can penetrate deeper into the tissues.

Oil can be used in the following ways to get a good result on the muscles -

- **Dhara** – streaming over the muscles,
- Avagaha – where the patient is made to sit neck-deep or navel-deep in medicated oil in a tub,
- **Lepa** – herbal paste with pain relieving herbs such as castor root, leaves of Nirgundi (Vitex negundo), Rasna (Pluchea lanceolata), mixed with above mentioned pain-relieving oils,
- Parisheka – sprinkling of oil over the affected body part,
- **Phizhicchil** – wherein warm oil is streamed over the whole body or affected part followed by a massage.

These therapies enable longer exposure of the muscles to the oils, which gives a quicker result.

The action of these oils on the muscles can be hampered if there is Ama, the product of altered digestion and metabolism. Under such circumstances, the digestive fire should be kindled and Ama should be metabolised by using oral medicines that contain spices such as Hingwashtak churna. Following this, if oil massage is done, the oil absorption and action will be faster.

The action of these oils on the muscle can be fortified by taking oral medicines that further help to relieve inflammation, improve blood circulation etc.

For example, massage using a pain relieving oil along with oral intake of **Sallaki tablet - Boswellia serrata** will help to reduce muscular pain quickly.

Read related:

[Muscle cramps: Causes, Symptoms, Ayurvedic Treatment, Herbs](#)

43. How to use coconut oil for improving brain power?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Coconut oil has a medium chain triglyceride (less than 12 carbons per molecule) called lauric acid.

Lauric acid is known to cross the blood brain barrier. This compound is immensely being researched for Alzheimer's disease and depression.

An example for one such study is -

'Lauric Acid Alleviates Neuroinflammatory Responses by Activated Microglia: Involvement of the GPR40-Dependent Pathway'. This study concluded that Lauric acid may reduce glial activation and the subsequent neuronal damage in Alzheimer's disease patients who consume coconut oil. This proves that lauric acid promotes normal functioning of the brain.

Nishimura Y, Moriyama M, Kawabe K, Satoh H, Takano K, Azuma YT, Nakamura Y. Lauric Acid Alleviates Neuroinflammatory Responses by Activated Microglia: Involvement of the GPR40-Dependent Pathway. *Neurochem Res.* 2018 Sep;43(9):1723-1735. doi: 10.1007/s11064-018-2587-7. Epub 2018 Jun 26. PMID: 29947014.

Lauric acid is also an appetite suppressant. Hence, coconut oil in diet is useful to reduce the appetite. If you are into intermittent fasting, having

2 – 3 teaspoons of coconut oil in the last meal of the day will keep hunger away, till the next day.

Lauric acid is useful against yeast infection caused by Candida albicans. It has a calming and nourishing effect in the gut.

Even Ayurveda mentions that -

वातपित्तहरं केश्यं श्लेष्मलं गुरु शीतलम् ||१३८||

vātapittaharam keśyaṃ śleṣmalam guru śītalam ||138||

(Reference - Dhanvantari Nighantu, Suvarnadi Varga)

Coconut oil balances Vata and Pitta Dosha and promotes Kapha Dosha. It takes a long time to undergo digestion and is a natural coolant.

Coconut oil for a calming effect on the mind:

In your day to day life, if you feel anxious or difficult to concentrate (say, before an exam or an interview), or cannot sleep properly, not able to concentrate during your meditation or Yoga session, wherein you want the mind to calm down, relax and focus, then you can take 1 – 2 teaspoons of coconut oil followed by half a cup of warm water.

[Read more about Ayurvedic benefits of coconut oil benefits here](#)

44. What to do if Shatavari kalpa is not giving results in improving breast milk production?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Shatavari Kalpa is an Ayurvedic medicine used in pregnancy and postpartum care of the mother. It acts as a galactagogue (promotes the production of breast milk). If you are not getting the desired result, try using a very high dose of **Shatavari kalpa**, like 1 tablespoon, four times a day, before food. Let the mother drink more quantities of milk.

Dill seeds (Anethum sowa) can be administered along with Shatavari kalpa for better results.

Any one among Vidaryadi Kashaya, StanyaJanana Kashaya, and Padmakadi Kashaya can be given along with Shatavari kalpa.

The regular dose of Kashaya is 15 ml, mixed with 15 ml of water, twice a day, half an hour before food intake.

Let the mother feed the baby, even if there is very little milk. It stimulates lactation.

If none of these measures work, boiled and cooled milk is the best substitute for the infant, according to Ayurveda.

The mother should avoid excessive thoughts and worries, lack of sleep and excessive physical activities.

45. Can Brahmi capsule / tablet be taken together with milk? If yes, should it be taken with hot milk or cold milk?

Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*) is a herb which has 'Rasayana' or anti-aging properties. It is considered as 'Medhya' or which improves brain functions such as memory, concentration, cognition etc.

Milk, containing a small amount of fat, is also explained to have anti-aging properties.

So, Brahmi with milk is a good combination.

Brahmi is cold in potency. Milk is also naturally cold. Taking Brahmi with cold milk will increase the coldness in the body. This is ideal for Pitta body type people, who feel hot all the time. In a person with Kapha constitution, Brahmi along with cold milk may vitiate Kapha dosha due to excessive cold quality. Here, Brahmi along with hot milk is more suitable. In a Vata prakriti individual also, Brahmi along with hot milk is preferred.

The hotness of the hot milk slightly decreases the natural coldness of the milk.

Other alternative co-drinks for Brahmi are -

Ghee, which improves digestion strength,
Cold or lukewarm water,
Honey - it is slightly hot in nature and it ensures quick absorption and assimilation of Brahmi.

The ideal dose of a 250 mg Brahmi capsule or tablet is 1 - 2 tablets, once or twice a day, before food. It can be continued for a period of 1 - 2 months, based on the patient's needs.

46. Ayurveda says that over-exercise can harm you. But gym going guys, without a doubt do over-exercise. So will their life span not decrease?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Strength up to which exercise should be done is explained in Ashtanga Hridaya Sutrasthana, in the chapter explaining daily regimen.

Master Vagbhata writes -

अर्धशक्त्या निषेव्यस्तु बलिभिः स्निग्धभोजिभिः ॥ ११ ॥

शीतकाले वसन्ते च मन्दमेव ततोऽन्यदा ।

तं कृत्वानुसुखं देहं मर्दयेच्च समन्ततः ॥ १२ ॥

ardhaśaktyā niṣevyastu balibhiḥ snigdhabhojibhiḥ || 11 ||

śītakāle vasante ca mandameva tato'nyadā |

taṃ kṛtvānusukhaṃ dehaṃ mardayecca samantataḥ || 12 ||

Strong individuals, who consume an unctuous diet, should regularly practice exercise in winter and spring, using only half the strength one can gather.

In other seasons, exercise should be done using lesser strength.

At the end of the exercise, one should undergo mild massage (pressing the body parts with mild to moderate pressure).

So, if a person is taking good amounts of an unctuous diet - rich in fats and protein, they can do regular physical exercise.

Professional bodybuilding gym goers who give special attention to their diet and maintain a balance between their strength and exercise can surely live long.

As long as there is balance between input of calories and output of energy, it is all fine.

But if a bodybuilder takes performance enhancement medicines and obsesses over a very low percentage of body fat, it is not healthy. This is why we often hear about the unfortunate early deaths of some body builders such as Rich Piana, Dallas McCarver etc.

For ordinary people like you and me, it is good if we exercise for 45-60 minutes everyday, with moderate amounts of strength, till sweat appears on the forehead, chest, hands, things and back.

A related research showed that over-exercise is associated with suicidality among individuals with disordered eating.

April R. Smith, Erin L. Fink, Michael D. Anestis, Jessica D. Ribeiro, Kathryn H. Gordon, Heather Davis, Pamela K. Keel, Anna M. Bardone-Cone, Carol B. Peterson, Marjorie H. Klein, Scott Crow, James E. Mitchell, Ross D. Crosby, Stephen A. Wonderlich, Daniel le Grange, Thomas E. Joiner,
Exercise caution: Over-exercise is associated with suicidality among individuals with disordered eating,
Psychiatry Research, Volume 206, Issues 2–3, 2013, Pages 246-255, ISSN 0165-1781.

47. How to use Triphala or Haritaki for its rasayana/tonic / nutritional/antioxidative benefits rather than for constipation ?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Any Rasayana or anti-aging medicine will come with its inherent medicinal qualities.

Triphala is a Rasayana, but it acts as a mild laxative.

Amla fruit (*Emblica officinalis*) is a Rasayana, but it can be slightly constipating in some.

So, the Rasayana (anti-aging medicine) should be chosen based on the patient's underlying health conditions.

For example, the energy, nutritional needs, and internal organs to be

healed for someone recovering from Covid 19 will be different from the needs of a person recovering from ulcerative colitis or rheumatoid arthritis.

How to choose Rasayana medicines?

Based on the underlying disease condition, a suitable Rasayana medicine can be chosen. For example,

- In Pandu or anemia, Lohasava can be used for a longer duration. Here, the medicine acts as a Rasayana along with curing anemia. In obesity - Triphala is used as Rasayana. It is also useful to reduce excessive fat tissue.
- In respiratory disorders due to Kapha and Vata dosha vitiation, Chyawanprash, Brahma rasayana and Agastya rasayana are useful.
- In case of generalised weakness, anemia and stress, Kushmanda can be used as Rasayana.
- In case of lack of muscle strength, Ashwagandharishta is used.
- In neurological conditions, oral intake of Mahanarayana taila, Dhanvantaram tailam 101, Balarishta etc acts as Rasayana.
- In Vata, Pitta and Rakta related disorders, Ksheerabala taila is beneficial.
- To improve strength of muscles, Shilajit (Asphaltum punjabianum), Gokshura (Tribulus terrestris), protein rich diet acts as Rasayana.

48. When I do Anulom Vilom Pranayam, I start getting phlegm in my mouth and have to spit the mucus. Even if I do it continuously for 1 hour, the mucus still comes out. What is the remedy for this?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Getting a little bit of phlegm in the mouth in the initial few days of Pranayama is very normal. If it continues, it indicates, as per Ayurveda, that you have increased Kapha Dosha in the throat / respiratory tract. As a home remedy, mouth gargling with half a cup of lukewarm water mixed with 2 teaspoons of fresh ginger juice and a teaspoon of honey once or twice a day, just before food for 7 - 10 days can be useful.

Consider having dinner before 9 PM.

It is best to avoid curds, sweet foods and fried foods at night ([know](#)

why).

If things do not improve, you may need Ayurvedic medicines such as **Kantakari Avaleha, Talisadi Churna** etc.

Read related: [Side effects of Pranayama and how to manage them](#)

49. In the Sanskrit verse explaining the benefits of Arjunarishta, 'phuphusa gada' is mentioned. Phuphusa means lungs. Does it mean Arjunarishta is useful in lung disorders?

Dr JV Hebbar:

This is the verse explaining the benefits of Arjunarishta -

हृत्फुफुस गदान् सर्वान् हन्त्ययं बलमोजकृत्।

hr̥tphuphusa gadān sarvān hantyaḥ balamojakṛt (Bhaishajya Ratnavali Hrudroga Adhikara 33/77)

It means that **Arjunarishta** alleviates all diseases of the heart and lungs and improves strength and immunity.

Lung disorder, in this context should be understood in relation to cardiac disorders. It should be understood as shortness of breath or breathing problems, which arise due to cardiac disorders.

In cases of poor cardio-vascular fitness, weak functioning of heart, etc. leads to breathing problems, Arjunarishta is useful.

Even in chronic respiratory diseases causing weakness and debility, Arjunarishta can be useful to improve strength and immunity of the patient.

But it is not commonly used in classical lung disorders such as bronchitis or COPD (asthma).

50. What should be the time gap between nasal drops therapy and food?

Dr JV Hebbar:

If the **Nasya procedure** (nasal drops) is done in the morning, it is better to do it on an empty stomach. Your morning beverage or breakfast can be consumed 30 minutes after Nasya.

If you do Nasya in the evening, maintain a gap of at least 30 minutes between nasal drops and food.

It is always better to do nasya before food, on an empty stomach. Doing it after food may lead to vomiting and increased chances of weak digestion strength due to Kapha accumulation.

51. Can honey be administered with water in children?**Dr JV Hebbar:**

Honey with water can be a simple remedy for children who are obese and are advised to lose weight. It is best to use it, under medical supervision, in children above 7 years of age.

For them, a small dose of half a teaspoon of honey with half a cup of boiled and cooled water is advisable.

Take care that honey is not mixed with hot water as this combination is contraindicated in Ayurveda.

Can it be taken at night?

Water with honey is commonly taken in the morning. It provides a good amount of energy to the body and clarity to mind. But it can also be taken in the evening or night, the most suitable time being 30 minutes before dinner.

Does it increase hunger?

Initially, you may experience a slight increase in hunger, if taken before dinner. This is commonly seen if you add ginger juice and lime juice to honey water. If you experience increased hunger, avoid ginger and lime. Take only cold water and honey mix. Also, consider taking it 30 minutes after food.

Is it useful in thyroid problems?

Patients with hypothyroidism, lowered levels of T3 and T4 hormones often suffer from obesity, water retention, puffy face etc. So, honey with water can be very beneficial to lose weight.

Honey with water is also useful to prevent lifestyle disorders such as diabetes and hypertension.

[Read more about this remedy here.](#)

52. What are the uses of Murivenna?

Dr JV Hebbar:

The term 'Murivenna' is derived from two Malayalam words - 'Murivu' meaning wound and 'Enna' meaning oil. Conditions where Murivenna is indicated are mentioned below -

- **Murivenna** is commonly used for quick healing of hairline fractures, crushing injuries, blunt injuries and to strengthen joints.
- It is also used in non healing wounds, diabetic carbuncles and foot ulcers.
- It is applied externally to relieve pain and improve flexibility of joints in lumbar spondylosis and slip disc.
- It is useful in healing partial Anterior Cruciate Ligament tear. A healing when the tear is complete, is very difficult, if not impossible.
- It relieves muscle inflammation (myositis).
- This oil is useful in Gout, called Vatarakta in Ayurveda. Murivenna is a unique combination of pain relieving (Vata Dosha pacifying) herbs and coconut oil, which balances Pitta Dosha and Rakta (blood tissue).
- It is also useful in yeast infections.
- It is a combination of the best of the herbs for skin and wound care, like Pongamia, Aloe vera, moringa etc.

53. What is the difference between 7 Dosha body types and 10 Dosha body types (Prakriti)?

Dr JV Hebbar:

All traditional Ayurvedic textbooks mention about 7 types of Prakriti or Dosha body constitution -

1. Vata Prakriti
2. Pitta Prakriti
3. Kapha Prakriti
4. Vata Pitta Prakriti
5. Pitta Kapha Prakriti
6. Kapha Vata Prakriti and
7. Vata Pitta Kapha Prakriti or Tridosha Prakriti.

Recently, Ayurveda practitioners have started differentiating Vata Pitta Prakriti and Pitta Vata Prakriti.

Vata Pitta Prakriti has more of Vata dosha and less of Pitta dosha characteristics and Pitta Vata Prakriti has more of Pitta dosha and less of Vata dosha characteristics. Based on this concept, they added three more types of Prakriti -

1. Pitta Vata Prakriti
2. Kapha Pitta Prakriti and
3. Vata Kapha Prakriti

These three types of Prakriti along with the other 7 types constitute the 10 types of Dosha body constitution.

If the Ayurveda practice involves analysing Prakriti and giving personalized health, diet and lifestyle advice, purely based on Prakriti, then considering 10 types of Prakriti is fine.

For example, in a Pitta Vata person, because Pitta is more dominant, diet and lifestyle advice to balance Pitta would be ideal.

If the Ayurveda practice involves disease treatment, then, sub-division into 10 types does not add much value. In this instance, considering only 7 types is just sufficient.

[Take Dr Hebbar's Prakriti video course here](#)

54. If two substances are mentioned under bad food combinations, does it mean that these foods should not be taken together as well as one after the other?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Let me explain this with an example -

Combination of urad dal (black gram - *Vigna mungo*) and curd is considered bad as per Ayurveda. Consuming black gram along with curd, at the same time, by mixing it together is contraindicated. But if a person consumes a meal of idli or dosa (prepared from black gram) along with sambar and then soon after that eats curd or curd rice, it is perfectly fine. Here the black gram and curd are taken one after the other, as a meal, mixed along with various other food items. This does not have any bad effects on the body.

Are there any combinations that should be avoided when using raisins? Is it okay to eat raisins on an empty stomach, in combination with other dry fruits like pista, walnuts, figs etc? Can we add it to rice preparations like pulav? Can we add it to curd rice?

If the **raisins** are sour, avoid consuming it with milk. There are very few rules regarding the consumption of raisins. It is said in Ayurveda - 'Draksha phalottama' which means grapes are the best among fruits.

Having raisins on an empty stomach is very fine. In fact, soaking 10 raisins in water overnight and having it the next morning, is a very good remedy to control Pitta related conditions such as migraine, gastritis etc.

Having raisins along with dry fruits like pista, walnuts, figs, rice preparations like pulav and curd rice is fine.

55. Can Shilajit increase Ojas?**Dr JV Hebbar:**

Ojas is the essence of all the body tissues. This quantifiable liquid in the body is responsible for overall health, energy and liveliness.

Shilajit can increase Ojas. In fact, all herbs which have a Rasayana effect (anti-aging and rejuvenating properties) can increase Ojas. A few examples of such herbs are Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*), Amla (*Emblica officinalis*), Shilajit (*Asphaltum punjabianum*)

etc.

This rule also applies to medicines with Rasayana effect. They also improve Ojas. For example -

Pippali rasayana - used frequently in digestion and liver care

Brahma Rasayana - used in cancer care

Narasimha Rasayana - for overall strength and hair care

Medhya Rasayana - for brain and mind care

Agastya Rasayana, Chyawanprash - used in respiratory care

Madhusnuhi Rasayana - for skin care

Interestingly there is a set of activities and lifestyle changes that you can adopt, which has a Rasayana effect and which increases Ojas. It is called

Achara Rasayana.

What is actually meant by Rasayana?

Rasayana means, that which helps you to live long with a healthy body and sound mind.

Any therapy or medicine or diet that ensures optimum quality of Ojas (immunity factor in the body), which ensures healthy functioning of all body tissues, organs, mind and brain is called Rasayana.

56. Why do some lean people never gain weight despite eating heavily?

Dr JV Hebbar:

The prime reason for this is low Agni or digestion strength. Even though a person consumes good amounts of nutritious food, the digestive strength is not capable of metabolising and absorbing nutrition.

This problem can be corrected by

- Improving Agni using Ayurvedic spices such as ginger, black pepper, long pepper etc,
- Including good amounts of ghee and sesame oil in diet / cooking,

- Moderate amount of exercise, for about 20-30 minutes per day,
- Good sleeping habits - sleeping for at least 7 hours at night,
- Undergoing oil massage and sauna at least once or twice a week,
- Practising pranayama for 3- 5 minutes, one or two times a day,
- Avoiding stress and
- Avoiding soda, junk foods, smoking, alcohol etc.

57. Generally, we consider pungent taste to be very hot but it is said that salt taste is more Pitta aggravating than pungent taste. How so?

Dr JV Hebbar:

According to Ayurveda, each of the six tastes is constituted by the combination of two Panchamahabhutas (basic elements)

Pungent taste (Katu rasa) is composed of air and fire elements. In the atmosphere, when air and fire combine together, a substance burns, but for a short duration of time. For example, when burning a piece of paper, due to the air, it burns strongly but it does not last long.

Salt taste (Lavana rasa) is composed of water and fire elements. Here, the liquid nature of water is like the liquid nature of oil. So salt taste can be understood as a combination of oil and fire. This combination makes the fire burn strong and for a very long period of time.

Due to this reason, even though the initial impact of pungent taste on Pitta is higher, the effect does not last long as in case of salt taste.

58. Can you suggest Rasayana herbal jams for Pitta and Vata aggravation?

Dr JV Hebbar:

The following herbal jam formulations have a Rasayana effect and are useful in Pitta and Vata aggravation -

Drakshavaleha - It is made primarily with raisins. It can improve nourishment and is useful in Pitta and Vata imbalance disorders such as

migraine, vascular disorders, acid peptic disorders etc.

Kushmanda Rasayana - It is made primarily with ash gourd. Kushmanda rasayana is useful in migraine, weakness after a chronic disease, improves body weight when taken in higher doses, keeps the mind calm, relieves depression, anxiety and anger outbursts caused by Vata and Pitta. This can be a suitable re-energizing remedy during post covid recovery patients who are extremely tired and are suffering with brain fog and confusion.

59. Can millets be taken during hypothyroidism?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Millets are useful to keep obesity under check, which is often associated with hypothyroidism. But there is some argument that millets may contain cruciferous vegetable particles, which can restrict iodine absorption. But this claim is over-exaggerated and does not hold much ground. Even if that is the case, you can include foods that are rich in iodine in your diet, like iodized salt, seaweed, cheese, milk, corn, boiled eggs, yogurt, banana etc.

Millets have lower glycemic index than rice. So, millets reduce the chances of diabetes, which is often associated with the risk of **hypothyroidism**.

60. During Virechana therapy, what if the number of bowel movements are less?

In **Virechana (therapeutic purgation)** Panchakarma therapy, the number of bowel movements is one of the criteria to judge the efficacy of the treatment.

- Heena shuddhi – ‘Heena’ means deficient or less; ‘Shuddhi’ means cleansing. Here the cleansing brought about by Virechana is less. 10 bouts of purgation or 384 grams of fecal material is expelled from the body.
- Madhyama shuddhi – ‘Madhyama’ means moderate; ‘Shuddhi’ means cleansing. Here the cleansing brought about by Virechana is

moderate. 20 bouts of purgation or 768 grams of fecal material is expelled from the body.

- Uttama shuddhi – ‘Uttama’ means superior or best; ‘Shuddhi’ means cleansing. Here the cleansing brought about by Virechana is considered the best. 30 bouts or 1,536 grams of fecal material is expelled from the body.

The number of bouts of purgation is just one among the many signs to determine if Virechana is good, moderate or poor. More than the number of bouts, the effect of Virechana on relieving your disease is more important.

If the bouts are less, then during the Virechana period itself, your Ayurveda doctor would give stronger medicine to increase the bouts of purgation. If the Virechana is already completed but with a smaller number of bouts, follow the diet and medicines prescribed by your doctor.

Make a note of Virechana medicine given. If the disease is not subsiding, then another Virechana treatment can be planned after a month, with a different medicine in a stronger dose.

61. What are the philosophical aspects of urges that should not be suppressed and urges that should be suppressed?

Dr JV Hebbar:

As per Ayurveda, urges are classified into two types -

1. Dharaneeya vega - urges that should be suppressed and
2. Adharaneeya vega - urges that should not be suppressed.

The urges that should not be suppressed or voluntarily initiated are -

Vata - flatus,

Vit - defecation,

Mutra - urination,

Kshavathu - sneezing,

Trut - thirst,

Kshudha - hunger,

Nidra - sleep,

Kasa - cough,
Shrama swasa - breathing on exertion,
Jrumba - yawning,
Ashru - weeping (tears),
Chardi - vomiting and
Retas - ejaculation.

Read related:

[Vega Dharana: Suppression of urges, types, symptoms, and management](#)

[Do Not Suppress Body Urges: Charak Samhita Sutrasthana 7th chapter](#)

Philosophical aspects behind this rule -

1. Improve body rhythm - When our body gives signals of hunger, we attend to it. The hunger is satiated and nutrition is well absorbed. Once this food is utilised completely, the person feels hungry again as the body needs a source of energy.
2. Helps to listen to the body keenly and act accordingly - The more we listen and observe the natural urges, the more vigilant our consciousness and body becomes towards internal signals. For example, if you observe your stomach growling, feel tired and find it difficult to concentrate on your work, you know that you are hungry and have to consume food.
3. Helps to avoid accidents or unexpected events in your daily routine - Once the urge is expressed, it should be attended to as soon as possible. For example, if a person feels an urge to micturate, he should attend to it. Instead if he controls the urge, it causes discomfort.
4. Helps the body to avoid Vata accumulation by timely emptying of bowel and urine - The waste products of the body are meant to be retained till a designated time. Early evacuation creates empty spaces that are filled up with Vata Dosha, leading to Vata disorders.
5. It helps the body to avoid Kapha accumulation and Agni depletion by early eating and untimely drinking of water. If we eat when there is no hunger urge, it is like adding untimely fuel.

6. In case of flatus, it is an urge that should not be suppressed, but in Sadvritta, a healthy code of conduct, it is told that when you are in public places, the flatus should not be let out with a loud noise. So though these rules regarding natural urges are to be followed judiciously, some adjustments are also warranted.

The Dharaneeya vega or urges that should be suppressed are -

Lobha - greed

Irshya - envy

Dwesa - hatred

Matsarya - jealousy

Raga - attachment

Philosophical aspects of urges that should be suppressed:

More the control we have over our emotions and reactions, the more controlled our mind will be. Controlling these urges help a person to lead a peaceful and organized life. One who controls his inner world controls the outer world as well!

Read related: [How to meditate by watching your mind?](#)

62. In one of the articles on millets, it says that consuming millets, grains with milk, curd or buttermilk may cause psoriasis. In Maharashtra and Gujarat there is a tradition of having buttermilk with lunch which includes grains millets. Please explain.

Dr JV Hebbar:

Millets and buttermilk becomes a wrong food combination only if boiled millets are consumed with buttermilk, without adding any other ingredients to the preparation.

If other ingredients are added, then the rule of wrong food combination does not apply there. When consumed as a meal, if millets and buttermilk are consumed along with other foods or is processed with spices etc, then it is not considered as a bad food combination.

63. Lekhana drugs like honey and warm water cause extreme dryness and have a scraping effect. Please elaborate.

In the morning we generally drink honey, lemon, in lukewarm water, for removing old waste matter, pitta etc.

Dr JV Hebbar:

Honey water is an extremely useful remedy for obesity and cholesterol. In these conditions, there is increased Snigdhatva or unctuousness / oiliness in the body, which is gotten rid of by the honey water remedy. This is exhibited by its 'lekhana' or scraping action. It imparts some amount of dryness to the body.

Hence this remedy is only recommended for people who are obese.

Please give examples of Grahi drugs

Dr JV Hebbar:

Grahi substances are those which can absorb the moisture. They do it by either improving the digestion component or by the virtue of their heat, or due to their porous nature or astringent properties. They are commonly used for the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome or in diseases where there is excessive water component, which requires to be removed from the body, as in case of water retention.

A few examples of substances with this property are -

Buttermilk, ginger, coriander, nutmeg, nut grass, lotus, giloy leaves, linseed and honey.

64. What is meant by Sookshma quality? Explain the action of such herbs bypassing the smallest pores in practical use.

Dr JV Hebbar:

Substances like neem oil, castor oil, rock salt etc. possess sookshma quality. It means that these substances, due to their minuteness, penetrate even the smallest channels of the body. For example, castor oil is helpful to unclog the nipples in lactating mothers suffering from clogging. It helps to penetrate the minute channels and clear them of any hardened milk.

Rock salt spreads through the body very rapidly to bring about its action. It can enter as deep as the bones and joints, both with oral consumption and external application. This is the reason why Saindhavadi taila is applied externally to loosen up the fat deposits in the stomach of an obese person or to relieve stiffness of the joints in case of rheumatoid arthritis.

Abhishyandi drugs like curds block the Rasa Vaha channels. Is it bad to consume such Abhishyandi foods daily? Which drug helps to open or clear the Rasa Vaha channels?

Dr JV Hebbar:

पैच्छिल्याद्गौरवाद् द्रव्यं रुद्ध्वा रसवहाः शिराः ।

धत्ते यद्गौरवं तत्स्यादभिष्यन्दि यथादधि ॥२४३॥

paicchilyādgauravād dravyaṃ ruddhvā rasavahāḥ śirāḥ |
dhatte yadgauravaṃ tatsyādabhiṣyandi yathādadhī ॥243॥

(Reference: Bhavaprakasha Purva Khanda, Mishravarga)

'Abhishyandi' is a property of some substances that cause body channels to produce excessively viscous, sticky secretions which can lead to blocking of body channels.

Curd prepared from buffalo milk is more Abhishyandi than the curd from cow milk.

Because of its Abhishyandi property, curd is not recommended to be taken on a daily basis. Instead, buttermilk can be used regularly.

Spices such as ginger, long pepper and astringent herbs such as Triphala helps to stop excessive secretions within the body channels. Usually, a combination of these two are used.

I read that old rice at least one year old, wheat, ghee, honey, is good for health. Is it true?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Yes. Freshly harvested cereals have some water or moisture in it, which makes it slightly heavier for digestion.

Both old or fresh ghee and honey can be used based on the purpose. For example, old ghee is more commonly used in the treatment of neuro-psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia and epilepsy. Fresh ghee is commonly used for culinary purposes.

They say that looking at the physical details of Mala, like colour, constituency etc one can tell the problems of the body. I have not read any of your articles elaborating on this. Please elaborate.

Dr JV Hebbar:

Examination of stool is one among the eightfold examinations explained in Ayurveda. It helps in disease diagnosis and prognosis, involvement of Doshas in a disease, state of digestive fire, stage of disease, presence of Ama etc.

Consistency of stools can be observed by inspection. A hard consistency as in constipation indicates Vata imbalance, indigestion, early symptom of hemorrhoids, prodromal symptom of diarrhea, bloating etc. Loose consistency of stools suggest Piita dosha imbalance, diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome due to Vata and Pitta dosha.

Colour variation of stools is observed when it is associated with vitiated Doshas in various disorders. For example, black stools indicate Vata dosha imbalance, incurability of jaundice, bleeding in the upper gastrointestinal tract or intake of iron supplements etc.

Yellowish stools indicate Pitta dosha imbalance, fever of Pitta origin, jaundice, early sign of anemia etc.

Whitish stools indicate Kapha dosha vitiation.

Reddish or blood mixed stools may be seen in bleeding hemorrhoids, fissure-in-ano, inflammatory bowel disease, lower gastrointestinal tract bleeding etc.

Examination based on odour of stools is also mentioned in Ayurveda. Stools is associated with foul smell in diarrhea of Kapha origin, anemia of Pitta origin and in association of stools with Ama. In conditions like intestinal perforation and hereditary type of hemorrhoids, smell of feces is compared to that of a dead body.

Stools can also be examined by touch. Stools which are hot to touch are observed in hemorrhoids of Pitta origin. Cold stools are seen in diarrhea of Kapha origin. Dry stools are observed in abdominal bloating and slimy stools in diarrhea due to Kapha dosha, irritable bowel syndrome due to Tridosha imbalance etc.

Examination of stools can also be done based on its quantity. Less quantity of stools are observed in anemia, diarrhea of Vata origin etc. More quantity of stools is seen in diarrhea of Pitta origin, diarrhea associated with Ama etc.

Increased frequency of passing stools is seen in diarrhea and irritable bowel syndrome of Vata origin. Decreased frequency is seen in gaseous distention of abdomen, ascites etc.

To read more about stool examination in Ayurveda, [click here](#).

65. Generally, are all bitters good for the liver? Do bitters act as blood thinners, anti coagulants?

Dr JV Hebbar:

'Bitters are good for the liver' is a generalized statement which is true, though some exceptions may exist. Pointed gourd (*Trichosanthes dioica*), Malabar nut (*Adhatoda vasica*), Giloy (*Tinospora cordifolia*), bitter melon (*Momordica charantia*), neem (*Azadirachta indica*), curry leaves (*Murraya koenigii*), turmeric (*Curcuma longa*), creat (*Andrographis paniculata*), Swertia chirata, Colocynthis (*Citrullus colocynthis*) all are bitter and good for the liver.

Bitters are usually drying in nature and can cause mild coagulative effects.

In Ayurveda what is the equivalent to mitochondria which acts as a powerhouse for cells?

Dr JV Hebbar:

We need not find Ayurvedic equivalent to every cellular component of our body. Mitochondria can sometimes act as a storehouse of Rasa dhatu, sometimes, it acts as Dhatu agni, Vata Dosha, Kapha Dosha etc.

Please enlist Ayurvedic drugs or herbs which act as anticoagulants or good for preventing lung fibrosis?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Various spices like black pepper, long pepper, ginger etc, Rasayana

medicines such as Cyawanprash, Agastya Rasayana, Pippali Rasayana, etc. helps to prevent lung fibrosis.

Are there well-known firms preparing Bhasmas from heavy metals, minerals etc in traditional methods to prevent negative effects on the body? Many people are reluctant to use Bhasmas as the pharmacies outsource from other companies and use it in their product.

Dr JV Hebbar:

Many companies produce their own metallic Bhasmas, as per traditional Ayurvedic textbooks. Shri Dhootapapeshar, Uma Ayurvedic Pharmacy, Baidyanath etc. are good.

66. Can you mention the expiry time of Ayurvedic products like powders, asava, arishta etc? Does it mean the effect is reduced or not at all usable?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Once a product expires, it means its quality has decreased, is unfit for use and is worth discarding. The shelf life of various Ayurvedic products are -

Churna or powders - 2 years

Tablets containing herbal and mineral ingredients - 5 years

Tablets containing herbal ingredients - 3 years

Tablets containing mineral ingredients - 10 years

Leha or herbal jams - 3 years

Lauha or iron containing medicines - 10 years

Ghrita or ghee - 2 years

Taila or oils - 3 years

Arka or distilled herbal extracts - 1 year

Salts and alkalis - 5 years

Lepa churna or herbal powder for external paste application - 3 years

Herbal dental powder - 2 years

Herbal syrups - 3 years

Kashaya or herbal decoctions - 3 years

Mineral preparations - quality increases with time

Ear drops or nasal drops - 2 years

Eye drops - 1 year

For more details regarding shelf life, explanation, factors causing loss of potency, signs of spoilt medicines etc, [click here](#).

67. Does isabgol weaken the intestine if used for a longer period or does it cause any other side effect?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Isabgol or Psyllium husk acts as a laxative by retaining water in the colon. This moistens and liquefies the fecal matter, leading to easy bowel movements. So, it has less action over the movement of colons. So, we cannot say that it weakens the intestines.

But in higher doses and if used for longer duration (for example, more than 2 months), isabgol can cause decrease in iron, phosphorus and calcium. Hence it is not ideal for long term use.

Patients with constipation can switch between Isabgol, Triphala, Haritaki, Indian Senna etc. once every two months.

Read related: [Isabgol benefits](#)

68. A person suffering from fever, indigestion, vomiting, cough, thirst, ulceration of mouth etc. (verse 4 of Ashtanga Hridaya chapter 2) should not brush his teeth according to Ayurveda. Can you please explain the reason behind this?

Dr JV Hebbar:

In old times, people were using bitter and astringent twigs such as the twigs of neem to brush their teeth. If the patient with above symptoms brushes, then he might vomit or induce a cough reflex due to the brush itself or worsen the mouth ulcer as the twig may touch the ulcers while brushing.

Hence, the advice to avoid brushing was given.

Sir, can men use kumkumadi tailam? Does it affect the growth of beard? Does it resist beard growth?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Men can use Kumkumadi tailam. It does not affect beard growth. Kumkumadi taila can improve skin complexion and reduce acne and blemishes.

How can millets be consumed to gain weight, without causing Vata imbalance? By adding milk to cooked Ragi powder, will it remove Vata dosha? For hypothyroidism, which millet is good and how should it be eaten for weight gain and in what quantity?

Dr JV Hebbar:

If you want to gain weight and improve body nutrition, then there is no reason to include millets in your diet. Cereals such as rice, wheat etc. are more useful to improve body weight. The purpose of taking millets is to reduce the amount of nutrition that the body is getting without feeling hungry all the time.

Ragi (Eleusine coracana) is Vata aggravating by nature. Adding milk to cooked Ragi will reduce its Vata aggravating effect.

Ragi Roti (pancake) can also be prepared by adding a little sesame oil, which would reduce the Vata aggravation.

69. 100 times washed ghee should not be used for oral consumption. But can it be used as moisturizer on lips?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Shata dhauta ghrita ('shata' means hundred, 'dhauta' means washed, 'ghrita' means ghee) is prepared by washing ghee with water and filtering it, for a hundred times. This adds a special cooling and moisturizing effect to the ghee. This is not suitable for oral consumption because, however carefully you may filter the water out, there will still be remnant water in the final product. This combination of ghee and water may cause severe indigestion related problems, if consumed orally.

However, there is no problem in applying this on the lips. It helps to make the lips glossy, heals ulcers if any, relieves lip dryness and acts as a natural moisturizer.

Even if a bit of **Shata dhauta ghrita** enters the oral cavity while

application on the lips, it is negligible and will not cause any problems as such.

70. Is coriander useful to lower cholesterol?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Many animal studies have shown coriander seed's benefits in controlling blood sugar and cholesterol levels. It is also a very good anti-oxidant and resists buildup of free radicals in the body. ([Source](#))

How should it be used?

To reduce cholesterol, 3 - 5 grams of coriander seed powder can be taken along with half a cup of honey water, once or two times a day. Honey water is prepared by adding a teaspoon of honey to half a cup of water.

[Read more about the benefits of coriander.](#)

How can fenugreek be taken without aggravating Pitta Dosha?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Fenugreek can slightly increase Pitta Dosha. However, it is not as hot and spicy as other herbs such as chilli, ginger, black pepper etc. Ghee can help to balance Pitta.

A teaspoon of fenugreek can be mixed with a few drops of ghee, made into a paste, and taken with a cup of lukewarm water, at night, before food.

This can be continued for a month.

[Read more about fenugreek remedies and benefits.](#)

71. How to measure each tissue (Dhatu) as per Ayurveda? Is there any way to assess tissues like we have Dosha prakriti analysis?

Dr JV Hebbar:

According to Ayurveda, health is a state wherein the Tridoshas, digestive fire, all the body tissues and components, all the physiological processes

are in perfect unison, and the soul, sense organs and mind are in a state of total satisfaction and content.

Master Charaka in Sutrasthana 21st chapter, verses 18-19, explains the features of robust state of a healthy human being as -

Proportionate musculature

Compactness of the body

Strong sensory and motor organs

Such a person cannot be overcome by the onslaught of diseases

Ability to withstand hunger, thirst and heat of the sun

Ability to withstand cold temperature and physical exercises

Ability to digest and assimilate food easily

Having a strong muscular body.

Signs of perfect health is the sign of healthy status of Dhatu.

Ayurveda also mentions signs of increased and decreased tissues (vridhhi and kshaya lakshana) in the body. For example, an increase of fat tissue, called Medo dhatu vridhhi presents with fatigue, shortness of breath and sagging of buttocks, breasts and the abdomen. A decrease of fat tissue called Medo dhatu kshaya exhibits features like loss of sensation in the waist, enlargement of the spleen and emaciation.

Another concept explained in Ayurveda is 'Dhatu Sara Purusha' or excellence of a particular tissue in an individual, where a person is more dominant with one particular Dhatu (tissue).

For example, in an Asthi Sara purusha or a person with enriched bone tissue, his heels, ankles, knees, forearm, collarbones, chin, head, small joints and bones of the hands and feet, nails and teeth are big and strong. Such an individual has great enthusiasm, activeness, endurance, a well built, strong and stable body and longevity of life.

72. If someone wants to replace regular quantities of legumes with sprouted legumes, then how to calculate the amount of sprouts to consume?

Dr JV Hebbar:

As per Ayurveda, the sprouted legumes are fine to be consumed once in a while. For example, they can be taken once or twice a week.

If the normal legumes and grains are replaced with sprouted ones, then there can be some changes in the amount of proteins and fats ingested. I understand that some people are very particular about the amounts of nutrients that they take.

A research study done on four variants of Zambian bean varieties shows the below changes. The sprouting was done for six days.

Increase in protein in sprouted beans - 6.32 to 10.4%

Increase in crude fiber content - 1.9%

Increase in crude fat content 2.3 to 3.2%

So, this gives a general idea of the change in the nutrition levels before and after protein, based on which the adjustment in diet can be made.

Read related: [Ayurvedic View on Sprouts and Germinated Foods](#)

73. Is it not best if we take the medicine directly from the root, i.e. the plant/seed etc.? Because by the time it is placed in a capsule, it loses its effectiveness. If this is true, should we not use plants or medicine that is nearer to their origin?

Dr JV Hebbar:

If this question is further extrapolated, we may ask, why even take medicines? We can just take the raw herb directly. After all, the nutrients are fresh in the raw herbs.

The primary purpose why we manipulate herbs into the form of liquid medications or powder or capsule, is to present the required medicinal chemicals from the herbs to the body in an easily absorbable form.

This is why we do not eat the paddy or the rice as it is. We remove the husk, cook it and then only consume it with a tasty combination of sambar, gravy, chutney, rasam etc - *A south Indian bias on meals ;)* Bear with it. *haha ;).*

Similarly, the phytonutrients in most of the herbs are hidden deep within the herbs or are present in a complex form.

Turning them into Kashaya or decoction by boiling it in water,

Churna or powder by drying and pounding herbs,

Vati or tablet by binding the powder,

Asava or arishta by fermenting the decoction or infusion or

Arka by the process of distillation etc,

helps in easier absorption of the phytonutrients by the body and brings about a quicker action.

Which is better among Giloy Kadha (Kashaya) and Giloy Ghanvati?

Dr JV Hebbar:

We cannot argue that one form of medicine is better than the other.

Giloy is *Tinospora cordifolia*.

In a Kadha (Kashaya), Giloy is boiled with water and then filtered. The water-soluble medicinal chemicals of giloy are found suspended or dissolved in the water medium.

In the ghanavati form, the boiling process is further continued till the mass turns solid, and it is rolled into pills. This is the principle behind the preparation of kashayam tablets.

Kashaya or decoction form of Giloy cannot be stored for long. If we want to store it for a long time, we have to add preservatives to it.

Ghanavati tablets / Kashayam tablets require very less amount of additives, can be stored for a longer period of time, are easy to swallow by avoiding the bitterness of Kashaya and makes dose-fixing easier.

But the phyto-chemical availability and absorption rates are higher in kashaya than in tablet forms.

So, both these two forms of medicine have their own advantages and minor disadvantages as well.

Read related: [**Kashayam Tablets – innovative Speciality Products**](#)

I am not saying that all herbs should be modified before consuming. For example, we can avoid taking these nutrients like alpha-linolenic acid, ferulic acid, isoquercetin, lutein, niacin, neoxanthin, thiamine, riboflavin, pantothenic acid etc., individually, by just eating an apple fruit as it is. Other fruits like Amla, mango, jamun fruits etc. are also good to consume in its raw form.

Sometimes, modern scientists overdo this chemical extraction process. For example, coconut oil contains lauric acid, which is very good for the brain and has potential to treat many different neurological disorders such as

Parkinson's, Alzheimer's etc. Likewise, coconut oil has many other alkaloids, glycosides and terpenoids that are useful to improve our health. So why bother taking lauric acid extract from coconut oil, when you can enjoy a teaspoon of coconut oil every day?

Read related: [Why So Many Dosage Forms In Ayurveda? Six Scientific Criteria](#)

74. You mentioned that low production of digestive acids/enzymes coupled with overeating causes formation of Ama. What causes the digestive system to get compromised in the first place and hence not produce adequate amounts of digestive acids and enzymes? If you can speak more about the root cause, that may help with understanding what can be done as a preventive measure.

Dr JV Hebbar:

There can be many causes for decreased production of digestive juices - Overeating beyond one's actual digestion capacity, eating continuously, diseases such as fever, excessive day sleep, napping soon after lunch, worries, stress, depression, anxiety, sedentary lifestyle habits, avoiding exercise, not fasting from time to time, excessive consumption of heavy to digest foods, wrong food combinations, not including a variety of tastes in the food, not including spices in the diet, junk foods, sodas, smoking, alcohol, drugs, weak immunity due to aging or a chronic illness etc. are a few causes.

Read related: [How To Know That Your Digestion System Is Working Fine?](#)

75. If a person's Prakruti is Vata 1-Kapha 2- Pitta 3 and Vikruti is Pitta 1-Kapha 2- Vata 3, should we look at decreasing Pitta or should we also try to decrease the vata by massage and other vata pacifying activity.

The person is having all the symptoms of Vata kshaya but in your [Tridosha book](#) there is no mention of how to treat Vata kshaya. Please advise.

Dr JV Hebbar:

In most cases, kshaya (decrease) is not given any treatment.

The vikruti (disease) analysis is done primarily to identify the disease and to know the place of disease manifestation, to finally lead to disease diagnosis.

Mere Dosha imbalance analysis does not help in identifying the actual disease.

In the present case, Pitta 1, Kapha 2 and Vata 3, symptoms and disease pathology will be completely different if it affects the skin or digestive tract or cardio-vascular symptom etc.

To answer your question, in this case, Vata and Kapha treatment, done together could be useful, with spices, sesame oil massage and oral intake etc.

Please read - **how to balance Kapha and Vata Dosha together?**

<https://www.easyayurveda.com/2013/08/08/how-to-balance-kapha-vata-dosha-6-factors-to-consider/>

76. Is it correct to assume that,

- **Janma prakriti expresses itself in our astral body**
- **Deha prakriti expresses itself in our physical/causal body**
- **Manas prakriti expresses itself in our mental body?**

Dr JV Hebbar:

The term Janma prakriti simply means natural traits of the body at birth. This is what Prakriti is all about.

So, there is no separate version of Prakriti as Janma Prakriti.

At the time of our birth, we have our set of features, which unfurl and exhibit as we grow, which is known as a person's Prakriti or Janma Prakriti.

This Prakriti is formed by the said four factors –
Mother's food and lifestyle habits during pregnancy,
Quality and health of sperm and ovum,

Combination of five basic elements (Mahabhuta) and
The atmosphere and reproductive health of the mother.

This Prakriti exhibits in two forms - on the body as Deha Prakriti and on the mind as Manas Prakriti.

Many mental traits are also explained in the category of Deha Prakriti such as - jealousy, stealing tendency (Vata Prakriti feature), aggressiveness, intimidating character (Pitta Prakriti features), calm and composed nature (Kapha Prakriti).

Despite these mental features overlapping in the Deha prakriti, the Manas Prakriti is explained separately to understand the roles of Satva, Rajas and Tamas in a more elaborated, sophisticated way.

[Buy Prakriti video course of Dr JV Hebbar](#)

77. Are there any Ayurvedic references for vaccination?

Dr JV Hebbar:

'Ancient Ayurvedic method of vaccination - Swarna Prashana'

I heard this inference from a famous Ayurvedic doctor, Dr Ravishankar Pervaje.

Swarna Prashana is the administration of calx of gold in minor quantities to the infant as a way to boost immunity. Calx of gold is called Swarna Bhasma and is known to treat poisonous conditions.

Honey and ghee in equal quantities is considered as a poison, but in Swarna Prashana, honey and ghee are given in equal proportions.

[Read more about Swarna Prashana here](#)

In the context of wrong food combinations, their poisonous effects on the body and how to treat them, [Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 26th chapter](#), verse number 104 explains that one of the remedies to toxic effects of wrong food combination is -

तथाविधैश्च द्रव्यैः पूर्वमभिसंस्कारः शरीरस्येति।

tathāvidhaiśca dravyaiḥ pūrvamabhisamskāraḥ śarīrasyeti|

This means that the body should be previously exposed to ingredients very similar to toxic wrong food combinations, but in a small way.

This is the method followed even in vaccination.

In Swarna Prashana, the ghee and honey are administered in equal quantities along with Swarna Bhasma. The Swarna Bhasma, which possesses anti-toxic qualities, is used in treating poisonous conditions and to improve immunity. Here, ghee and honey in equal quantities act as a very mild tolerable poison given to the child, and Swarna bhasma acts as its antidote. So, in a way, Swarna prashana exposes the child to a poisonous combination in a minute form to develop immunity against it.

This is very similar to modern vaccination, wherein a weakened or dead microorganism is introduced, so as to create antibodies against it in the body. This helps in preventing many diseases.

78. It so happens that some girls are very thin and weak with low appetite and irregular hunger till their puberty hits. All these look like Vata symptoms. But after puberty, their hunger, appetite and overall health improves and then remains like that. All these characteristics look like Pitta Type. How do we know what the prakriti is- Vata or Pitta?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Let us try to understand this with an example -

Consider a person who has Vata prakriti by birth. We shall represent it as V+.

During childhood, for all persons, irrespective of their Prakriti by birth, Kapha dosha is dominant. So, now, the same person with V+ now has some Kapha dominance V+ K+.

Let us assume that he likes spicy foods. Due to this habit, there is constant increase of Pitta Dosha. Now he has V+, K+ and P+.

In this way, the Dosha dominance across different life stages varies based on age, lifestyle, diet, work environment, exercise, bad or good habits etc. Of them all, the influence of Prakriti Dosha is more powerful on the person than other factors.

The Prakriti of a person does not change. But other Doshas that may become dominant due to factors like age, season etc., may also slightly alter the influence of Doshas on the body.

79. Which oil is good for massage for obesity?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Oil massage can be an effective tool to liquefy and mobilize fat but keep in mind that oil massage alone might not be useful to cure obesity.

While explaining about oral medicines for obesity, a lot of spices and hot potency herbs are mentioned, such as Trikatu (a combination of ginger, black pepper, long pepper), Guggulu etc.

Read related: [Trikatu benefits, side effects](#)

Even for external application, the oil should have these qualities. Hence, oils with hot potency like sesame or mustard oil are best suited as the base. Coconut oil cannot be used as it is cold in potency.

Mustard oil can be used for oil massage but some people may find it extremely hot and may end up having burning sensation and skin diseases. It does not mean that mustard oil cannot be used on skin at all. It is in fact used as a base in Marichadi taila, used for treating eczema, allergic dermatitis, and tinea. In that case, it is only applied on the patches of skin where there are lesions.

In obesity, oil massage is done on a larger area of the body including the abdomen and buttocks, thighs, arms etc. Hence the use of mustard oil is also not recommended.

Now we are left with sesame oil. It is the default oil for massage and oral consumption. Master Vagbhata in Ashtanga Hridaya Sutrasthana 3/56 explains -

स्थूलानां कर्शनाय च ।
sthūlānāṃ karśanāya ca |

It means that, sesame oil is useful to decrease weight in obese people.

So, sesame oil is the best oil for massage in obesity.

[Read more about sesame oil benefits](#)

Salts are known for their melting, penetrating and decongesting nature. They are hot in potency and are an ideal contender for combination with sesame oil.

So, if you are preparing a massage oil for obesity, then 100 ml of sesame oil can be mixed with 10 – 15 grams of rock salt or table salt and 100 ml of water. Boil till the water evaporates. You can use this oil for massage over areas of the body where there is fat collection, leave the oil on the body for 30 minutes and then wash off with lukewarm water and soap.

Alternatively, [Saindhavadi taila](#), an herbal oil with rock salt and sesame oil as the main ingredients is available in the market, which can be used for massage.

80. How are millets useful for women after menopause?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Women tend to suffer from mood variations, obesity, sagging of skin and weak bones after menopause.

Read related: [Perimenopause Symptoms, Ayurvedic Treatment Lifestyle Tips](#)

Millets are good sources of protein and vitamin B complex. They are also rich in calcium and magnesium. This helps to improve bone strength. Millets are naturally cool and hence, are useful to control hot flashes.

Methionine and lysine amino acids found in millets are known to decrease skin sagging and improve skin strength.

Millets are also rich in another amino acid called tryptophan. It is known to reduce appetite, hence useful to prevent obesity. Tryptophan gets converted to serotonin in the brain. Healthy amounts of serotonin in the brain is useful to prevent or treat depression and mood variations.

Owing to these qualities, millets help women to fight the adverse effects of menopause.

One side effect of millets is that they are 'rooksha' or drying in nature. So while consuming it, one can include sesame oil or ghee in the diet to prevent excessive dryness. Some amount of salt can also be added to the diet to counter the Vata increasing effect of millets.

[Read more about millets and their benefits as per Ayurveda](#)

81. Can you please mention oil, ghee, food supplements or lehyam to promote weight gain in a Vata-Pitta combination prakruti person?

Dr JV Hebbar:

People with Vata-Pitta Prakriti are usually slightly underweight, more so, with a Vata body type person.

The good news is, there are umpteen numbers of Ayurvedic medicine options to improve weight. One thing to remember is, these medicines in higher doses contribute to weight gain, whereas these in lower doses, do not cause weight gain.

1. Kushmanda Rasayana – Made with winter melon and ghee which contribute to weight gain along with certain spices such as ginger, cinnamon, black pepper etc, this herbal jam improves weight and also increases appetite and digestion capacity. A higher dose of 10-20 grams, once or twice a day for 2 – 3 months is good to improve body weight.

2. Ksheerabala taila 101 – This unique herbal oil is made with sesame oil, milk and Sida cordifolia. This is indicated very specifically to balance Vata and Pitta Dosha. So, taking 2-3 ml of oil twice or thrice a day before food for 2-3 months can contribute to weight gain. It is also available in the form of a capsule. Two capsules 2 – 3 times a day can be helpful to gain weight.

3. Regular intake of ghee – Ghee has an inherent ability to balance Vata and Pitta Dosha. So, including 3 – 4 teaspoons of ghee in the diet or taking medicinal ghee preparations such as Brahmi Ghrita, Kalyanaka Ghrita, **Maha Kalyanaka Ghrita** relieve stress, depression, keeps your mind happy and thereby improves body weight. A daily dose of at least 3-4 teaspoons is needed to improve body weight.

If one develops indigestion due to high dosage of ghee, then including a small quantity of spices in the diet such as black pepper, cumin and ginger is useful.

4. Bhringrajasava – This is a fermented cold infusion product, with the main content being the famous herb Bhringraj (Eclipta alba). It is known to improve hair quality. In a dose of 10-20 ml, once or twice a day, it improves body nourishment and can be useful in gaining weight.

5. Ashwagandha lehya / Balashwagandhadi lehya / Ashwangandharishta – These Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) products, in higher doses are useful to improve weight but they can slightly increase Pitta Dosha. So, these products are not very ideal for a Vata-Pitta prakriti person.

82. Is Chyawanprash useful in treating male and female infertility?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Chyawanprash is mentioned in the Rasayana chapter of Charaka Samhita, the chapter which explains about anti-aging and rejuvenative measures. So, the primary purpose of Chyawanprash is to delay and reverse the process of aging.

This medicine works best or bestows maximum benefits to the body, when Panchakarma detoxification is done prior to the administration of Chyawanprash.

Master Charaka has mentioned the following benefits of Chyawanprash -

- क्षीणक्षतानां वृद्धानां बालानां चाङ्गवर्धनः

kṣīṇakṣatānāṃ vṛddhānāṃ bālānāṃ cāṅgavardhanaḥ

Chyawanprash is useful in reviving the tissues and organs of the injured, old people and children.

- स्त्रीषु प्रहर्ष - strīṣu praharṣaṃ - Chyawanprash acts as an aphrodisiac

- शुक्रस्थान् दोषान्धाप्यपकर्षति - śukrasthān doṣāṃśca apyapakarṣati – Chyawanprash relieves the toxins or defects of the Shukra – male and female reproductive systems.

These lines clearly indicate that Chyawanprash is useful in treating male and female infertility.

This effect of Chyawanprash can be logically explained both from Ayurvedic and modern point of views.

Ayurvedic explanation:

In the human body, the first tissue to be formed from food is called Rasa Dhatu. It is the nutritious part of food that gets absorbed by the gut and starts circulating all through the body.

The menstrual cycle and factors responsible for it are explained as 'Arthava'. Arthava is explained as a sub-tissue of Rasa Dhatu – the circulating nourishing fluid (derived from food digestion).

लाभोपायो हि शस्तानां रसादीनां रसायनम्॥८॥

lābhopāyo hi śastānāṃ rasādīnāṃ rasāyanam॥8॥ (Charaka Sahmita, Chikitsa Sthana 1/1/8)

The purpose of Rasayana is to improve the quality of Rasa Dhatu and other tissues of the body.

So, with anti-aging medicines such as Chyawanprash, the quality of Rasa dhatu gets upgraded. Along with it, its sub-tissue, Arthava – the female fertility factor will also get nourished.

Chyawanprash and male infertility:

We just have learnt that Chyawanprash improves the quality of Rasa etc. body tissues.

Shukra, the male and female reproductive system is also one among the Dhatus / tissues of the body.

So, with good quality nutrition circulating all over the body, the blood, muscle, fat, bone etc. tissues and even the reproductive tissues also get

nourished and rejuvenated, with Chyawanprash.
This is how Chyawanprash is useful in male infertility as well.

Modern explanation:

New research on anti-aging animal studies have concluded that anti-aging therapy with molecules such as Dasatinib, quercetin etc. are proven to slow down and in some instances reverse age - related fibrosis of the uterus.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7041753/>

In one of the anecdotal instances, recorded by Harvard genetics professor, Dr David Sinclair, resveratrol etc. products administered as anti-aging supplements in a post-menopausal woman brought her menstrual cycles back, though lab investigations ruled out any type of cancer-causing uterine bleeding.

This clearly hints that anti-aging therapy can reverse the age-related changes in the female reproductive system.

Resveratrol, an anti-aging molecule, has shown protection against reduction of fertility with reproductive aging in mice.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23293221/>

All these suggest that anti-aging therapies of Ayurveda, through Panchakarma and anti-aging medicines such as Chyawanprash are definitely helpful in treating male and female infertility.

83. Is it better to have mung plain or as sprouts? Does soaking improve nourishment?**Dr JV Hebbar:**

Soaking of mung beans (green gram - *Vigna radiata*) causes the nutrients to get dispersed in the water medium. It makes the digestion of the beans easier.

Read related: [Green Gram \(Mung bean\) Qualities, Uses](#)

Sprouts are known to be richer in proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins etc. compared to their normal counterparts. But Ayurveda recommends using sprouts sparingly and has said that sprouts are not good to be used on a daily basis.

There is an underlying principle behind this statement -

If we consider the example of grains such as rice, wheat etc, Ayurveda recommends storing these grains for at least a year after harvest, before it is used as food.

नवान्येव हि योज्यानि द्रव्याण्यखिलकर्मसु ।
विना विडङ्गकृष्णाभ्यां गुडधान्याज्यमाक्षिकैः ॥ ४४ ॥

navānyeva hi yojyāni dravyāṅyakhilakarmasu |
vinā viḍaṅgakṛṣṇābhyāṃ guḍadhānyājyamākṣikaiḥ || 44 ||
(Sharangdhara Samhita, Madhyama Khanda, 1st chapter)

All substances should be used afresh, within a year, except for Vidanga (Embelia ribes), Krishna (long pepper - Piper longum), jaggery, **dhanya – grains**, honey and ghee.

In one year, the nutrients and phytochemicals in these grains settle well and when administered, get readily absorbed into the body. So, the ancient masters have advised to wait for a year before using grains so that the nutrients are consolidated.

Most of the fruits are eaten when fully ripe. Nutrition in the fruits condenses and concentrates in the fruits. We wait for the nutrients to concentrate and then we consume the fruits (this is applicable in case of most fruits).

Mature leaves, fully grown mature stems, and roots are used in medicine preparations. The idea is to wait for the nutrients and phyto-chemicals to fully ripen, concentrate and settle and then use it for health improvement.

So, it is very clear that we give more value for well-settled, concentrated and consolidated nutrients.

But in sprouts, though they are rich in nutrition, the nutritional components are transitioning from the seed to the newly budding plant. Here, the nutrition is not settled.

The higher proportion of nutrients in sprouts does not necessarily mean that they are more beneficial than the normal beans.

This could be an explanation for why the sprouts are not advised on a daily basis, as per Ayurveda.

There is a similar theory in the modern world called 'xenohormesis'. 'Xeno' means cross species and 'Hormesis' means what doesn't kill you or which makes you live longer.

By the intake of herbs, we are eating cross species molecules that plants make. Plants make these molecules better when they are in adversity. For example, to get good quality oranges, farmers drive nails into the bark of the tree, before they harvest it. The same method is used in grape cultivation. Resveratrol component in the grapes is typically high when the grapevines are more exposed to dry weather, less water and fungus. That's because these plants make these colorful xenohormesis molecules that make themselves resistant, bring in similar immunity improving and resistance building qualities to our body. This is proven by modern research.

So, the Ayurvedic theory of preferring grains with well-settled nutrients holds good.

From these theories, we can conclude that sprouts are good but only when taken occasionally.

[Read related: Ayurvedic View on Sprouts and Germinated Foods](#)

84. I saw you praising Kayam Churna for constipation but some famous Yoga personality said it is bad for health. Is it a good product? Or is Triphala better than Kayam Churna?

Dr JV Hebbar:

All Ayurvedic products have their own herbal combinations and their own utility. If we know the utility of a product, we can use it and if we do not know, then we may not use it. Of course, there can be good and bad products in Ayurveda, based on the quality of ingredients, use of adulterants, unnecessary chemicals etc. But an Ayurvedic product cannot be termed bad just because it uses certain ingredients.

There are two types of Ayurveda medicines – one is classical Ayurvedic medicines – like Chyawanprash, Dashamoolarishtam, Ksheerabala,

Mahanarayana oil etc. which are manufactured by hundreds of manufacturers, by using the ingredients and preparation methods mentioned in the ancient classical texts. So, competition is huge and often the one with lower manufacturing price and more advertisements win the market.

Another type is Proprietary Ayurvedic medicine. Here, the company comes up with the formula, tests in the lab, does clinical trials, gets it approved by the drug authorities and then sells it.

A pharmaceutical company gives more importance to the quality and efficacy of these proprietary products as these represent the company and no one prepares the same product with the same name.

Kayam churna is one such proprietary product.

[Read more about Kayam churna benefits, side effects](#)

The ingredients of Kayam churna are -

Senna leaves - Cassia angustifolia

Black Salt

Nishoth - Trivrit – Operculina turpethum

Ajwain – Carum capticum / Trachyspermum ammi

Himej - Haritaki - Terminalia chebula

Svarjika Kshara – a type of alkali preparation

JethiMadh - Yashtimadhu - liquorice - Glycyrrhiza glabra.

From the above list, Trivrit, Haritaki and Senna are very good laxative / purgative herbs.

Trivrit acts by increasing the intestinal motility and retaining the water in the colon, thus making the feces watery and inducing loose stools.

Haritaki and Senna are also known to reduce water reabsorption from the colon and thus make the feces watery and induce loose stools.

Triphala contains Haritaki (Terminalia chebula) and Vibhitaki (Terminalia bellirica) which have a laxative action but Amlaki (Emblica officinalis), the third fruit of Triphala does not have any laxative action.

[Learn more about Triphala uses and side effects](#)

So, compared to Triphala, Kayam churna is a strong laxative / purgative.

Kayam churna, because of strong ingredients such as Trivrit, Swarjika Kshara etc. is not ideal for long term usage. It is best to use it for a month or two and then give a gap of a month.

Triphala is considered Rasayana or anti-aging and is safe to use for longer periods of time.

As Kayam churna contains Trivrit (*Operculina turpethum*), it can cause mild twitching type of pain in the abdomen, but this pain is negated by other ingredients such as licorice and ajwain.

Triphala does not cause any abdominal discomfort.

For a person with constipation, it is a good idea to take Kayam churna, ½ - 1 teaspoon at night for a month and then a teaspoon of Triphala at night for two months. This type of rotation can be useful and safer to relieve constipation.

Hence, Triphala is safer for long term use with lesser side effects but Kayam churna is more effective in relieving constipation.

[Learn more about natural methods and remedies to constipation](#)

85. Why should you fast? When should fasting be done?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Whenever a cell or a tissue is weak or damaged, it starts sending signals to other parts of the body to notify of a danger. For example, if one falls and has a leg injury, the weak and injured tissues in and around the injury start sending signals to other parts of the body. This response by the injured cells first triggers an inflammation (swelling). With inflammation, the body starts getting rid of the damaged cells and waste tissues and starts a healing process. This is a natural process that happens in all of us.

With aging, some of the body cells become very weak. They start dividing, but do not die. Such cells are termed as senescent cells. These weak and damaged cells naturally create inflammatory chemicals such as cytokine. This causes sudden inflammation in the body, leading to redness, increase of temperature, body ache etc.

The solution to this is fasting, once in a while. When we fast, the body is in need of energy but because there is no food to digest and assimilate, the body starts to self-degrade its own tissues. This process is called Autophagy (Auto - self, phagy - eating).

When the body starts self-degradation, the senescent cells will be destroyed first, because these cells are already weak. So, when senescent cells are broken down by our own body, the unnecessary inflammation created by these old weak cells stops. Whatever the cell structures that are drawn out of these dead senescent cells are used by the body as a source of energy.

This is beautifully explained in Ayurveda as –

आहारमग्निःपचतिदोषानाहारवर्जितः।

धातून्क्षीणेषुदोषेषुजीवितंधातुसङ्क्षये॥९१॥

āhāramagniḥpacatidoṣānāhārarjitaḥ |

dhātūnkṣīṇeṣudoṣeṣujīvitaṁdhātusaṅkṣaye || 91 ||

(Ashtanga Hrudaya, Chikitsa Sthana, 10/91)

Agni (digestive fire) digests the food. In the absence of food (as in fasting), it digests the Doshas (weakened cells, unnecessary toxins).

But when the Doshas are also digested, if fasting is still continued, then the Agni digests the Dhatus (tissue). When the Dhatus become depleted, it digests (cuts shorts) the life itself.

Here, the Doshas can be understood as inflammatory toxin producing senescent cells.

This also gives a clear hint that fasting is good but it should not be overdone. This is why, in Hindu custom, we fast on the 11th day of a 15-day cycle, called Ekadashi and also on certain festivals such as Shivaratri and Navaratri. This shows that fasting is good to be practised 2 – 3 times in a month.

86. Do the side effects of Pranayama go away on its own?

Dr JV Hebbar:

If Pranayama is done hurriedly, inhalation and exhalation periods are

wrong, done in a room with poor ventilation or a wrong choice of Pranayama technique etc., it can lead to many side effects such as headache, breathing difficulties, anxieties etc.

If you observe any side effects just in a matter of 5 to 10 days from starting your Pranayama practise, you can expect most of these side effects to go away on their own, within a few days.

But if the side effects are caused due to wrong Pranayama, done for a long period like several months, then mere stopping of such Pranayama might not be sufficient.

Read more about side effects of Pranayama – reasons and solutions

What to do under such circumstances?

Consult a Yoga master, stop the old Pranayama and start new Pranayama or Yoga exercises under his/her guidance.

If you cannot do that, you can just stop the Pranayama that you are currently doing.

If you feel compelled to do some form of Pranayama, then you may want to follow this simple Pranayama technique -

Sit straight in a well ventilated room, read thoroughly about inhaling, holding and exhaling periods etc. and try to correct your Pranayama methodology.

Pranayama is one among the 8 steps of spiritual elevation. So, if you have been too much attracted and oriented towards worldly matters, a self-analysis and increasing emphasis on -

Living frugally,

Cutting down on desires,

Fasting once in 1-2 weeks,

Reducing / stopping intake of non-veg foods,

Bhajan singing, Om chanting,

Practising some form of religious / spiritual practice such as visiting a temple, reading holy books such as Shrimad Bhagavat Geeta,

Helping needy people,

Speaking only truth or at least avoiding lies,

Stop making false, unrealistic promises,

Waking up in Brahma Muhurta (between 4-6 AM) etc. can certainly minimize the adverse effects of a wrong pranayama technique.

If side effects such as dizziness, increased blood pressure, nausea, breathlessness etc. occur, Ayurvedic medicines for a short period of 4- 6 weeks can be useful. The choice of Ayurvedic medicine depends on the type and extent of side effects.

87. How to reverse mental aging?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Many people, with a rough start in their lives, mentally age very early. We see many sports team captains or presidents of countries start ageing rapidly after being at the helm for a couple of years.

There are many ways by which early mental aging can be avoided -

Leading a disciplined life, decreasing or avoiding habits like alcohol, smoking,

Following celibacy, waking up early in the morning, fasting once or twice a month,

Including a teaspoon of ghee and coconut oil in the diet,

Having a wholesome diet, with a variety of fruits, vegetables, cereals, legumes and pulses,

Exercising for at least 20 minutes a day,

Yoga, pranayama, religious and spiritual practices etc.,

Regular habit of reading books, biographies, learning new things such as new recipes, language, computer, technology, etc.

Ayurvedic herbs such as Brahma (Bacopa monnieri), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera), Shankhpushpi (Convolvulus pluricaulis), Gotu kola (Centella asiatica) etc. are useful.

Panchakarma therapy, massage, sauna therapies, Ayurvedic Rasayana therapies with medicines such as Chyawanprash, Medhya Rasayana etc.

help to stop and reverse mental and physical aging.

[Read more about Rasayana therapy](#)

How to know if one is mentally aging rapidly?

“I know enough”

“I do not need new learning”

“What I have is enough”

“This new technology is interesting, but not for me”

Take an example of a 55 year old woman who wastes a lot of her time chopping vegetables in her kitchen. Her son gives her an electric vegetable chopper. The woman thinks the chopper is too complicated and does not use it although it is just a matter of pushing a button.

A person in the 60s hesitates to operate a smartphone. If the hesitancy comes with an underlying illness, say for example, weak eyesight, then that is understandable, but some people in their 50s and 60s think *"I have raised a good family, all my children are settled, so I do not have anything to achieve, and I will completely retire"*.

With anti-aging science rapidly becoming popular, such a person still has 30-40 years ahead to live. So, what he knows and what he has achieved already might not be enough in the long term.

In most people, rapid mental aging accelerates physical aging as well and causes the person to die early.

As long as you are open to learning new things, you are doing just fine. Do not let go of the habit of learning new things. Be curious, be adaptive.

88. Why do almost all Ancient Ayurveda treatises explain meat?

Dr JV Hebbar:

I request you to kindly read the full text before jumping to conclusions.

Like today, even in ancient times, there were both meat eaters and vegetarians. Small to moderate amounts of meat consumption, "in the meat eaters" has some benefits. Ayurvedic medicines with meat are also

used in certain Ayurvedic treatments and medicines. These medicines are useful for those who are accustomed to consuming meat.

The prime example of the utility of meat in treatment is present in Sushruta Samhita. Master Sushruta writes -

परिशुष्काल्पमांसानां गम्भीराणां तथैव च ॥८१॥

कुर्यादुत्सादनीयानि सर्पिष्यालेपनानि च ।

मांसाशिनां च मांसानि भक्षयेद्विधिवन्नरः ॥८२॥

विशुद्धमनसस्तस्य मांसं मांसेन वर्धते ।८३।

pariśuṣkālpamāṃsānāṃ gambhīrāṇāṃ tathaiva ca ॥81॥

kuryādutsādaniyāni sarpīṃṣyālepanāni ca ।

māṃsāśināṃ ca māṃsāni bhakṣayedvidhivannaraḥ ॥82॥

viśuddhamanasastasya māṃsaṃ māṃsena vardhate ।83।

(Sushruta Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana 1/81-83)

This verse is from 'Dvi Vraneeya Chikitsita Adhyaya', where Acharya Sushruta explains about the management of wounds associated with muscle and blood loss.

The verse means -

pariśuṣka – In a person with very dry, emaciated, debilitated body,
Alpa māṃsānāṃ - in a person with very less muscle mass (due to injury, wounds, war, accident etc.,)

gambhīrāṇāṃ tathaiva ca - as well as in a person with serious injuries,
kuryāt utsādaniyāni – gentle massage with palms (using nourishing herbal oils such as mahamasha taila, masha taila etc and herbs such as Apamarga, Ashwagandha etc.) should be done.

sarpīṃṣyālepanāni ca – Ghee should be applied all over the body,
māṃsāśināṃ ca – in those who are accustomed to eat meat,
vidhivat māṃsāni bhakṣayet naraḥ - meat should be given to eat, with proper procedure (after proper cooking).

viśuddha manasaha – The patient should have a pure mind, remain devoid of fear, anger, depression etc.

tasya māṃsaṃ māṃsena vardhate – By doing this, his muscle tissue improves by the intake of muscle (meat).

In this explanation, the phrase '*māṃsaṃ māṃsena vardhate*' is very famous among Ayurveda physicians. It means, by eating meat, a highly debilitated, meat habituated person's muscle strength improves.

Two things are important to note here.

This is not a general statement for all. This indication is only for people who are accustomed to non-vegetarian food.

In case of muscle mass scarcity, meat is good, says Acharya Sushruta. But in this day and age, for most of us, over-eating and food abundance is the main problem, not the food scarcity.

We have learnt that meat improves muscle tissue.

But what happens if meat is consumed in excess?

The same meat, if eaten excessively can cause vitiation of muscle tissue in the body.

अधिमांसार्बुदांशोऽधिजिह्वोपजिह्वोपकुशगलशुण्डिकालजीमांससङ्घातोष्ठप्रकोपगलगण्डगण्ड
मालाप्रभृतयो मांसदोषजाः

adhimāṃsa arbuda arśo adhijihva upajihva upakuśa galaśuṇḍika alajī
māṃsa saṅghāta oṣṭhaprakopa galagaṇḍa gaṇḍamālā prabhṛtayo
māṃsadoṣajāḥ (Sushruta Samhita Sutrasthana 24/9)

Acharya Sushruta again explains, that vitiation of muscles lead to

adhimāṃsa - excessive growth of muscles,
arbuda – cancerous tumors,
arśa – hemorrhoids,
adhijihva - adenoids,
upajihva - salivary cysts,
upakuśa - gingivitis,
galaśuṇḍika – enlargement of uvula,
Alaji - corneal ulcers,
Mamsa sanghata - tumor of the palate,
Oшта prakopa - lip inflammation,

Gala ganda - goitre,
Gandamala - cervical lymphadenitis etc.

Excessive consumption of non-vegetarian foods leads to cancerous growth. We are in a world of food abundance especially in developed countries. There are numerous research papers which directly link meat consumption to cancers. One example -
<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-meat-death-risks-idUSKBN18L2UG>

Reducing meat and including more vegetables in the diet is linked with longevity. There are again countless research papers on this fact. Here is one example -
<https://academic.oup.com/ajcn/article/78/3/526S/4689992>

Excess meat consumption is also associated with other issues such as climate change – **National Geography report**
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/article/commission-report-great-food-transformation-plant-diet-climate-change>

Considering all this, it is high time we reduce or stop our meat consumption and adopt a healthy vegetarian diet with lots of nuts, beans, fruits, grains etc., avoiding processed and refined foods.

For a meat-eater, it is not advisable to quit meat all of a sudden. Many of my clients who quit meat suddenly have complained of extreme fatigue and loss of strength.

Acharya Vagbhata offers a solution for this problem -

पादेनापथ्यमभ्यस्तं पादपादेन वा त्यजेत् ।
निषेवेत हितं तद्वत् एक द्वि त्रि अन्तरीकृतम् ॥
अपथ्यमपि हि त्यक्त शीलतं पथ्यमेव वा ।
सात्म्यासात्म्यविकाराय जायते सहसाऽन्यथा ॥४९॥

pādenāpathyamabhyastam pādapādena vā tyajet |
niṣeveta hitam tadvat eka dvi tri antarīkṛtam ||
apathyam-api hi tyakta śīlatam pathyam-eva vā|
sātmyāsātmya-vikārāya jāyate sahasā'nyathā||49||

(Reference - Ashtanga Hridaya Sutrasthana, 7/48-49)

It means, unhealthy food habits should be reduced gradually by a quarter, (for example, week after week / month after month) and healthy food habits should be adopted in the same manner (week after week / month after month).

For example, a person consuming 1000 grams of meat a week should initially reduce it to 750 grams. This amount should be consumed in the 1st week / month. In the 2nd week / month, the amount should be reduced further to 500 grams. In the 3rd week / month it should be reduced to 250 grams.

Sudden stoppage of unhealthy foods, for which the person is already accustomed to, leads to many diseases.

89.Should Doctors Be Paid For Prescribing Medicines?

Dr JV Hebbar:

In an ideal world, as we advance in healthcare with a lot of tools, heart, pulse monitoring devices, invention in innovative gadgets, medical apps, research on nutrition, dietetics, etc., developing rapidly, the reliability of medicines to treat diseases should go down rapidly, including Ayurvedic medicines.

But the system is rigged in such a way that doctors are encouraged to prescribe more and more medicines. In the U.S., doctors get commission on the medicines prescribed (<https://www.propublica.org/article/doctors-prescribe-more-of-a-drug-if-they-receive-money-from-a-pharma-company-tied-to-it>).

In India, Medical Council of India has a guideline to punish doctors who take benefits from Pharma companies (<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/doctors-who-take-gifts-from-pharma-firms-to-be-punished-mci-guidelines/>)

This practice was previously present even in the Ayurvedic medical field as well. It is unwise to put the blame on the doctor. There are systems and rules in place and doctors are following them.

Stopping the commission for doctors from Pharma companies is a step in the right direction. The commission encourages the doctors to prescribe more medicines and death by prescription medicine is the fourth leading

cause of death in the US (<https://health.usnews.com/health-news/patient-advice/articles/2016-09-27/the-danger-in-taking-prescribed-medications>).

Instead, as Dr Michael Greger writes, in his book "How not to die," there can be some form of incentive on the successful cure for the disease, though it is a bit hard to measure it.

In ancient times, the Ayurvedic doctor himself prepared medicines for his patients. He was entitled to retain a certain percentage of the medicine so that he can give these medicines to the poor and needy for free. This system was called Dhanvantari Bhaga.

Later, as the Ayurveda system evolved, there were medical stores / pharma companies, which were giving a percentage of medicines to the doctor, based on the number of medicines prescribed to patients. This percentage was called Rudrabhaga. And it was one eleventh part of the medicines prescribed (9.1%).

Here again, the purpose of giving medicines to doctors was to help the poor and needy.

Read related: [Commissions From Patients, Medical Stores For Ancient Ayurveda Doctor!](#)

90. Does Guduchi Cause Liver Damage?

Prof. MB Gururaja and Dr JV Hebbar:

During the first wave of Coronavirus, Indians went back to drinking Kadha (herbal decoction). In ancient India, it was a common part of daily routine to have Kadha, especially when one was suffering from fever and respiratory illnesses. Among the many ingredients to prepare Kadha, Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) is probably the most popular. It is the most preferred anti-fever Ayurvedic herb. So, millions of people were consuming Kadha. Probably this was one of the reasons why the first wave of coronavirus did not hurt India to a great extent. (The

second wave hit us badly as people let their guard lose, that is a story for a different day). A few days ago, a research report was published stating that six patients taking Guduchi kadha developed liver damage. It was not a clinical research study. It was just a [case study of six people](#). The collected data was insufficient and the brazen conclusion that Guduchi was the pinpointed reason for their liver damage was outrageous. This false news was picked up by many newspapers. Guduchi is one of the Rasayana herbs, as explained by Master Charaka. The Rasayana herbs are usually safe for long term use. There are many research reports stating that Guduchi has a protective action on the liver tissue. When all these Ayurvedic research reports point towards the safety of Guduchi, the attack on this humble Satvic herb during this time of the pandemic is definitely uncalled for. The Department of AYUSH, of Government of India, rightfully [came forward and trashed](#) the case reports.

So, if you are wondering how to make Guduchi Kadha, Take half a tablespoon of guduchi powder. Mix it with half a tablespoon of black pepper, ginger, cumin, turmeric or any other spice that you get in your household.

Add this to two cups of water. Boil it for a few minutes. Filter and consume when it is still hot. To make it more palatable, you can add a little bit of jaggery. If you want to add honey to it, you need to allow the kadha to cool down. A quantity of half a cup is good for one adult per day.

Make sure that the herb is Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*). Buy it from an authentic source. Consult your Ayurveda doctor before taking this or any other remedy.

[Read more about this wonderful herb Guduchi and its remedies](#)

91. Can Tulsi be Chewed? Does it Cause Mercury Toxicity?

Prof. MB Gururaja and Dr JV Hebbar:

Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) is a famous Ayurvedic herb used extensively for its antiviral, antitussive properties against cold, cough, allergies, fever etc. ([research](#))

There is a superstition attached to this holy herb that its leaves should not be chewed.

From an Ayurvedic point of view, this argument does not hold any ground. Master Sharangdhara describes

पीतो मरिचचूर्णेन तुलसीपत्रजो रसः ।

द्रोणपुष्पीरसो वापि निहन्ति विषमज्वरान् ॥

pīto maricacūrṇena tulasīpatrajo rasa: ।

droṇapušpīraso vāpi nihanti viṣamajvarān ॥

(Sharangdhara Samhita, Madhyama Khanda, Swarasa chapter).

He explains that 6 - 12 ml of juice of Holy Basil mixed with 1 - 3 grams of black pepper powder is very beneficial in the treatment of recurrent fevers.

So, if Tulsi can be crushed to prepare juice, why can't it be chewed and consumed?

There is a rumor that if Tulsi is chewed, mercury content enters the body. This is also not true. If Tulsi or any herb is contaminated with mercury, no matter how you take it, mercury will enter your body.

[Read more about Tulsi remedies and health benefits](#)**92. What are the tips for a healthy heart?****Dr JV Hebbar:**

These are the general rules to follow if you think you are vulnerable to heart diseases -

1. Eat what your grandma was feeding your father. Seriously, those were the days of unrefined, unprocessed foods that were grown in natural conditions, lots of fruits, vegetables and grains grown without chemicals. No restaurants, no home delivery or take-away outlets but loads of physical activities.

A **Chinese study** concluded that they are moving away from traditional diets and thus are suffering from a sharp rise in diet-related chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease etc.

In a **research study**, it was proven that Japanese who migrated to the USA and started an American diet and lifestyle aged their hearts early by 20 years!

I have only love for Americans. Good for them that they are rapidly adopting Yoga, spirituality and healthy lifestyle these days.

2. Include garlic. Include 2 - 4 garlic cloves in your daily diet. It is known to effectively reduce bad cholesterol. A study has shown the **effect of garlic on serum lipids**. There are many garlic capsules or tablets available in the market, but why take the tablet when you have natural garlic in your kitchen.

3. If you are a vegetarian, do not go non-vegetarian. In a **study**, vegetarians who transitioned to non-vegetarian food increased the risk of heart disease by 146%.

4. Have sour foods. 'Amlo hrudyaanaam' declares Acharya Vagbhata. It means that sour foods are naturally cardio-protective.

A little bit of tamarind, Amla, or any other naturally sour ingredient of your choice will provide you with Vitamin C, which is an antioxidant.

Sour foods like cherries also keep the blood thin and avoid atherosclerosis (cholesterol, clot deposition in heart arteries). In a **study done on diabetic women**, sour cherry juice was found effective in reducing cholesterol.

Sour buttermilk, sour curds, sour pomegranate and lemons are also good food choices.

5. Consider using **rock salt (Himalayan Pink Salt)** instead of regular salt. As per Ayurveda, rock salt, being rich in minerals, is Hrudya (Dhanvantari Nighantu).

6. Asafoetida, coriander, cumin, sour mango, dates and raisins have also been explained as Hrudya. Include these in your diet.

7. The American Heart Association released a "**simple 7**" rule-set for a healthy heart -

- a. Control your blood pressure ([Learn Ayurvedic natural measures here](#))
- b. Quit smoking
- c. Avoid being overweight ([Follow these tips to reduce obesity](#))
- d. Walk for at least 20 minutes a day
- e. Eat healthier (A variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, berries, grains, avoid fizzy drinks, refined and processed products)
- f. Have below average cholesterol
- g. Have normal blood sugar levels

93. Can Ashwagandha increase muscle bulk? Can it be used as a gym supplement?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) can definitely be used as a gym supplement. It can be consumed along with a gym shake that you might use in the gym.

When we look into the indications of Ashwagandha, there are references to show that it improves muscle strength.

अश्वगन्धाऽनिलश्लेष्मश्चित्रशोथक्षयापहा ।

बल्या रसायनी तिक्ता कषायोष्णाऽतिशुक्रला ॥१६२॥

aśvagandhā'nilāśleṣmāśvitraśothakṣayāpahā ।

balyā rasāyanī tiktā kaṣāyoṣṇā'tiśukralā ॥162॥ (Bhavaprakasha Nighantu)

Ashwagandha has the following properties -

anila śleṣma - Balances Vata and Kapha Dosha

śvitra - useful in leucoderma

śoṭha - is anti-inflammatory, brings down muscle inflammation very quickly. Heals the muscles fast and thus can enable you to spend more time in gym without getting tired

kṣayāpahā - useful in muscle and body weakness, tissue loss

balyā - improves strength

rasāyanī - is anti aging

tiktā - is bitter

kaṣāya uṣṇa - is astringent and hot and

atīśukralā - is aphrodisiac.

So Ashwagandha is useful to improve muscle strength, energy and stamina. Read more about [Ayurvedic Gym / Yoga supplements](#).

This effect of Ashwagandha is even proven by modern research. In an 8 week randomized prospective, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical study, 57 young male subjects (18–50 years old) with little experience in resistance training were randomized into treatment. Subjects in the treatment group consumed 300 mg of Ashwagandha root extract twice daily, while the control group consumed placebos.

Muscle strength size, body composition, serum testosterone and muscle recovery were measured.

The group treated with Ashwagandha had significantly greater increase in muscle strength, size increase in the arms, chest and legs. They also had significantly greater reduction of exercise-induced muscle damage. So, muscle healing, nourishing and building happens with Ashwagandha supplementation. ([Research](#))

How should Ashwagandha be consumed to improve muscle bulk?

1 teaspoon of Ashwagandha powder 1 tablet, consumed once a day is a healthy adult dose. This can be taken continuously for a period of 2- 3

months. Milk, ghee or water are good adjuvants. Ashwagandha powder can even be boiled with half a cup of milk and consumed.

But a healthy diet is also important to go along with it.

To improve muscle bulk, you would need

Magnesium which helps in muscle relaxation and healing,

Iron to improve blood pumping,

Zinc to improve testosterone and thus help in muscle building and

Proteins.

Black gram has all these components and can be ideal to improve muscle bulk and strength when included in the diet by gym goers and body builders.

You could also mix a teaspoon of Ashwagandha to any black gram dish that you prepare.

This is just one among many food items that can improve muscle strength and bulk. Including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, seeds, dry fruits and pulses will make the diet wholesome and will provide all the nutrients that your body needs.

94. You mention that Pitta is fire and you compare it with the Sun. So, according to your view, is Pitta the same as Agni or is there a difference?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Pitta and Agni are different.

Agni is the digestive and metabolism factor of the body. It is a separate individual physiological component in the body. It is a kind of hardware.

But to run this hardware, the Tridosha software is required.

Out of the three Doshas, Pitta plays the major role.

It is safe to say that the status of Pitta can determine the strength of Agni.

But Vata and Kapha also have an effect over Agni.

Wind is required for blowing on fire, so that it keeps on burning.

Unctuousness in oil and ghee helps the fire or a lamp to burn for long and hard.

But Pitta has a direct influence on Agni.

If Pitta is the same as Agni, what about Pancha Mahabhuta, what is your view on digestion of 5 elements in the liver? Which Pitta does that? If only one Pitta digests and breaks down all of the 5 elements, how do you distinguish between elements which are not digested properly? Some other sources mention the existence of Nabhasa Agni, Vyavana Agni, Apo Agni etc. what is your view on this please?

Dr JV Hebbar:

There are 13 types of Agni.

- Jathara Agni - which performs most of the digestive functions in the gastrointestinal tract,
- 7 tissue level Agnis - These are involved in conversion of digested food (Ahara Rasa) into the respective body tissues. For example, Rakta dhatu Agni - selects the ideal nutrition that the blood requires from the food nutrition to form blood tissue.
Mamsa Dhatu agni - selects nutrition from absorbed food juice and builds good muscles,
Medo Dhatu agni - takes care of fat absorption and so on.
- 5 Panchamahabhuta agnis -
These are the five types of Agnis, corresponding to the five basic components - Panchamahabhuta - earth, water, fire, air and ether. All things in this world are made up of these five components, including the food we consume and all our body structures. So, the respective Agnis in the body help to absorb the respective food component into the respective parts of the body. Some authors opine that this process happens in the liver. Hope this gives you an outline of "digestive fires" work in the body.

These two articles here might be useful to understand Agni better.

<https://www.easyayurveda.com/2016/04/19/agni-types-functions-concept/>

<https://www.easyayurveda.com/2013/04/04/understanding-digestion-power-as-per-ayurveda/>

95. How to use Gotu Kola for skin care?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Gotu Kola (Centella asiatica) is a herb, used widely in Ayurveda. In Sanskrit, this herb is known as Mandukaparni.

Master Charaka writes –

मण्डूकपर्ण्याः स्वरसः प्रयोज्यः... आयुःप्रदान्यामयनाशनानि बलाग्निवर्णस्वरवर्धनानि।
मेध्यानि चैतानि रसायनानि मेध्या विशेषेण च शङ्खपुष्पी ॥३१॥ (इति मेध्यरसायनानि)।

maṇḍūkapaṛṇyāḥ svarasaḥ prayojyaḥ... āyuhpradānyāmayanāśanāni
balāgnivarṇasvaravardhanāni|
medhyāni caitāni rasāyanāni...||31|| (iti medhyarasāyanāni)|
(Charaka Samhita Chikitsa Sthana 1/3/30-31)

It means that

maṇḍūkapaṛṇyāḥ svarasaḥ - the juice extract of Gotu kola
prayojyaḥ - should be used.

āyuh pradāni – It improves life expectancy,

āmaya nāśanāni – relieves several disorders,

bala agni varṇa svava vardhanāni – improves strength, digestion capacity,
skin health and voice.

Medhyāni – It promotes intelligence.

This clearly indicates that Gotu kola improves your skin health.

Even the textbook Bhavaprakasha mentions that Gotu Kola is useful in diabetes related skin diseases and anemia.

Gotu Kola is a well-known anti-bacterial and anti-fungal herb ([Research](#)). Its oral intake in the form of powder or leaf juice extract, 2 - 4 grams or ml per day is useful to relieve fungal infection. The powder can also be mixed with other antifungal creams or oils such as Neem oil, **Gandhaka Malahara** or **Mahatikta lepam** and applied on the skin lesions.

Wound, scars, keloids:

Gotu Kola is also useful in preventing or healing scar tissues caused on small wounds, burns, psoriasis and scleroderma. It promotes fibroblast

proliferation, increases collagen and intracellular fibronectin content. It improves the tensile strength of newly formed skin. Gotu Kola also reduces the inflammation associated with burns and wounds.

For this purpose, Gotu kola powder can be mixed with Ayurvedic wound healing agents such as **Nimbadi taila**, Jatyadi taila or **Jatyadi Ghrita** and applied externally.

Read more about how to use **[Gotu kola and its other benefits here](#)**.

96. Why is saffron milk given on the first night?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Saffron (*Crocus sativus*) is an ancient Ayurvedic spice used for relieving headache, depression, freckles, acne, abdominal pain during menstruation, heavy periods etc.

In the Hindu custom, after marriage, on the first night, the newlywed couple are given a cup of milk mixed with saffron. There are scientific reasons for this.

Saffron is known to elevate mood in healthy adults. It was proven by a four weeks, double-blind, parallel, randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial ([Study](#)).

Saffron is also useful to relieve depression. It works against depression by improving serotonin levels. In fact, a systematic review of six studies that involved placebo-comparison trials, demonstrated that saffron has similar effect on depression, compared to modern antidepressants. It is due to its serotonergic, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, neuro-endocrine and neuroprotective effects. ([Clinical trial review](#))

It means, in case of depression, the chemicals that transfer signals from one nerve cell to the other are afflicted. Saffron boosts these chemicals and ensures proper signal conduction, thereby relieving depression.

Read related: **[Depression Causes, Ayurvedic Treatment, Tips And Remedies](#)**

So, now we know that saffron elevates mood and relieves depression. Hence, it is given on the first night so that the newlyweds can feel relaxed and elated without any depression or anxiety.

Saffron is also administered in and around menstruation. This is useful to avoid foggy mood and depression and also to check excessive menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia). For this, 1-2 strands of saffron are given mixed with a teaspoon of honey after food.

Even the smell of saffron is useful in menstrual distress. A study found supportive evidence of physiological and psychological effects of saffron odor in women. This is useful in treating PMS, dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation) and irregular menstruation ([Details regarding the study](#))

Saffron infused ghee is used for Ayurvedic Nasya therapy (nasal instillation of drops) to treat migraine.

How should saffron be consumed?

Sprinkle 1 – 2 strands of saffron over your favorite dishes, or consume saffron added to milk. You can also take it along with honey or ghee. Taking saffron mixed with honey is good for Kapha disorders like weak digestion, obesity, depressed mood etc.

Saffron with ghee is useful in Pitta disorders like burning sensation, menorrhagia, skin diseases, dull skin, freckles etc.

Saffron with milk is useful in Vata disorders like muscle aches, pains, anxiety, abdominal pain, cramps etc.

Read related: [25 Tips To Manage PMS \(Premenstrual Syndrome\) Through Diet And Lifestyle Changes](#)

97. I know I overeat. How can I overcome this problem?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Abundance brings in a sense of comfort that leads to excesses of life, filled with worldly attractions and an insatiable hunger to have more.

How to know whether you are overeating?

Feeling heaviness all the time

Feeling heaviness of stomach

Considerably increased volume of feces

You have forgotten the last time you really felt hungry before eating.

You eat because it is the time to eat. You do not wait for hunger to fully manifest.

Increase in body weight week after week.

Feeling heavy, tired, fatigued, lack of interest in work.
Feeling sleepy all the time, despite a good night's sleep.
Frequent burping with the smell of previously taken food, all throughout the day.

Read related: [Obesity: Pathology, Signs And Symptoms As Per Ayurveda](#)

How to overcome it?

If you are into cheese and processed foods, their quantity might be less but the calories will be very high. This problem also exists with meat. Consider adding more fiber rich foods, nuts, cereals and pulses. These will be bulky, so that even if you eat a lot, you don't add more calories to your diet. Fiber-rich diet also makes the stomach full very quickly. Bran, cauliflower, cabbage, berries, green leafy vegetables, celery, squash, banana, beans, mushrooms, oranges etc are good to be consumed.

Eat only when you feel hungry. Wait till hunger gets fully manifested. Sometimes we get false hunger. This could be due to our mind tricking ourselves to get into the comfort of eating. So, when hunger pang strikes, wait for half an hour. If the hunger subsides, it was not a true hunger signal. If it worsens, it means that it's time to eat. If you are bound to eat thrice a day, then consider decreasing the quantity of breakfast or lunch. Or just have a salad.

Drink a lot of water. This is not good advice for a fit and healthy person. But this can help to lower hunger in an obese person habituated to overeating.

Maintain a gap of 2 hours between dinner and sleep.

Make a rule that you will not refill the plate with a second serving of food. Whatever the food that is there in the first serving, that is all that you'll be eating.

Ultimately it is a mind and tummy game. You need to be patient and practice it gradually for several months, before getting it right. Self-discipline, self-observation, self-restraint, fasting once or twice a month, meditation, spiritual orientation in life, Yoga, Pranayama, practicing minimalism - all these contribute to your efforts of eating less.

Read related: [Effective Obesity Treatment, Remedies, Ayurveda Tips](#)

98. Can tulsi, onion and garlic be consumed everyday by a healthy person?

Dr JV Hebbar:

Tulsi leaves (*Ocimum sanctum*) are used to perform Hindu religious rites. Tulsi water is poured over the divine idol and it is consumed by the devotees. The purpose of this is to

- a. Absorb the divinity of the Deity into our body and minds
- b. Tulsi, being hot in potency, improves our health.

But because of its hotness, a very high dose of 5-10 leaves or more per day, in a healthy individual, for more than 15 days can cause excessive body heat and burning sensation.

5 – 10 ml of tulsi water per day is helpful to improve immunity and metabolism.

Onion and garlic -

These two are considered as Rajasik (worldly) and hence said that it is not suitable if you want to improve Satvik quality of mind. Satvik quality of mind improves intelligence, courage, concentration, peace, wisdom and knowledge. When used in a very small dose for cooking, it does not cause any problem.

For this reason, if you are a spiritual seeker or if you are a student, it is advised to avoid excessive intake of onion and garlic. It is also observed that excess garlic consumption slightly alters the pronunciation capacity in Sanskrit learning children.

For a healthy person who is not on a spiritual path, including limited quantities of onion and garlic does not cause any harm.

Both onion and garlic are explained as aphrodisiacs.

For a diseased person, both garlic and onion come with immense health benefits.

Garlic decreases cholesterol and relieves Vata Dosha and is useful in treatment of paralysis, skin diseases, intestinal worms and bloating.

Onion is useful in Vata disorders and relieves aches and pains.

So, for a patient, the question of whether an ingredient is Satvik or not, holds no significance, because the primary goal in a patient is to relieve him from his disease.

So we can conclude that, in a healthy patient, taking small quantities of tulsi, garlic and onion is health promoting. Spiritual seekers may avoid garlic and onion.

99. How to tackle knee pain in diabetic patients?

Dr MB Gururaja, Dr JV Hebbar:

In diabetic patients, knee pain can be felt more because of two reasons - Increased oxidative stress on the knee joint and Persistent mild inflammation in the vulnerable, weight bearing parts of the body, including the knees.

Ayurveda explains that all the three Doshas - Vata, Pitta and Kapha are involved in the pathology of diabetes.

Because knee joints are dominant in Kapha Dosha and Vata Dosha, these two should be tackled efficiently.

The primary target is the disease diabetes itself. Treating diabetes with suitable medicines, remedies and Panchakarma helps to lower the oxidative stress and inflammatory effect on the knee joints. Read related: **[Diabetes: Ayurvedic Treatment, Remedies, Prevention Tips](#)**

Next, for the nourishment of knee joints, oil massage with Mahanarayana taila or Dhanwantaram taila is very suitable. These are prime Ayurvedic oils that can be used for daily massage, available worldwide.

If these oils are not available, then sesame oil is also good for application.

How to apply?

Take a few drops of the oil on to your finger tips and apply the oil over the knees. Leave it on for 10-30 minutes and then wash off with lukewarm water. Do this, once or twice a day, for best results.

If the pain is continuous, cotton swabs can be dipped in these oils and can be placed on the painful joints. This ensures that abundant quantities of oil are placed on the painful areas for maximum absorption and action.

Adding 5 grams of camphor powder to 200-300 ml of sesame oil can make a good oil to relieve pain instantly by creating a healthy mild burning sensation.

You can also add 5 grams of camphor to 200-300 ml of Mahanarayana oil for creating a counter-irritant effect, which helps you to *forget* pain easily.

Along with that, thigh strengthening exercises and Yoga poses can help to stretch the knees and release the pressure. A few examples are -

Pada Hastasana - hand under foot pose

Paschimottanasana - seated forward bend pose

Bhujangasana - cobra pose

Paste application of anti-inflammatory Ayurvedic herbal powders is very good. For this, ginger, Guggulu (Commiphora mukul), Devadaru (Cedrus deodara), Dashamoola (group of ten roots), Shallaki (Boswellia serrata), etc. herbs, based on availability, can be taken, made into a fine powder, added with a few drops of Mahanarayana oil and applied locally.

Oral Ayurvedic medicines such as Ksheerbala taila and Gandha taila are useful to soothe the nerves and to strengthen bones, muscles, tendons and ligaments of the knee.

A healthy diet with anti-inflammatory ingredients such as garlic, ginger, broccoli, walnuts, olive oil, onion, green tea etc. are very useful for both diabetes and knee pain.

There are a set of medicines used for external use, called liniments, which evaporate on application. These liniments can relieve pain very quickly.

Example -

Arthorub liniment,

Rhukot liniment

Apart from these, there are numerous Ayurvedic therapies for relieving

pain and improving strength, such as **Janu Basti** (oil pooling on the knees), Panchakarma treatment etc.

100. Are there any remedies to extend or decrease menstrual cycles?

Dr JV Hebbar:

I will explain two natural remedies to extend or to shorten periods cycle but before that -

This method is useful, but might not work as expected every time because, menstrual cycle is influenced by various factors such as mood ([Read research on mood shifts and menstrual cycle](#)), hormones, obesity ([Read about research on relationship between obesity and menstrual disturbances](#)), food habits, alcohol, smoking, sleeping late at night, nutritional status, etc. So, if you have a function to attend and want to extend the cycle, this may not work as expected all the time.

Duration of an ideal menstrual cycle is 28-30 days. It may vary from 21-40 days in some people. In the early years after menarche and nearing menopause, there will be ups and downs.

The below technique may work when you have a 25 days cycle and want to extend it a bit or if you have a 35 days cycle and want to shorten it a bit.

Shortening the menstrual cycle:

10 days ahead of the expected cycle - consider doing one, two or all of the below.

- a. Include 1 teaspoon of **horse gram** (*Dolichos biflorus*) in your diet, per day.
- b. In the morning, on an empty stomach, take 1 - 2 teaspoons of sesame seed powder along with a teaspoon of jaggery.
- c. **Papaya** fruit is beneficial in inducing periods. She can have it once a day.
- d. **Aloe Vera** - Aloe vera juice or dishes prepared using Aloe vera may shorten the menstrual cycle.

Read [Physiology Of Menstruation, Menstrual Cycle – Ayurvedic Perspective](#)

Extending the menstrual cycle:

These measures may help to extend the menstrual cycle by a few days -

a. Flaxseeds are known to extend the menstrual cycle. They have phytoestrogens, which helps to reduce the effect of estrogen hormone produced by the body. A tablespoon of flaxseeds a day is known to delay the menstrual cycle by one day.

b. Along with it, healthy amount of rigorous exercises are also known to extend the periods (Read about the [relationship between physical activity and menstrual cycle](#))

Read [Ayurvedic Diet And Lifestyle During Menstruation \(Periods\)](#)

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