

***Living Easy***

***With***

***Ayurveda***

***By Dr JV Hebbar***

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**About this book:**

*Ayurveda, the traditional and ancient Indian system of medicine emphasizes equally on maintaining good health and treating diseases. Ayurveda firmly believes that most of the diseases can be easily avoided by following a disciplined lifestyle. Starting from sleep, food habits, sex, daily routines, mental habits and seasonal routines, Ayurveda explains every aspect of life and how one can adopt natural techniques to live happily and healthily for long.*

*Ayurveda – The Science is so strongly built that it has stood the test of time for thousands of years.*

*This book is an attempt to help you enrich your life by adopting Ayurvedic principles into your daily routine.*

**Dedication**

*I dedicate this book to the Holy Feet of Dr A Chandrashekhara Udupa, Managing Director, Divine Park Trust ®, Saligrama, Udupi District, Karnataka, India. – [www.divinepark.org](http://www.divinepark.org)*

**Disclaimer:**

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 to self medicate / self-treat your diseases.

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. Many of the herbal products and concepts explained in this book have no clinical documentation. The herbs, their combination and Ayurvedic formulations are described based on rich Traditional Ayurvedic classical texts and author's own experiences.

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## **WHAT IS AYURVEDA? HOW CAN IT HELP WITH YOUR LIFE?**

Ayurveda - The Ancient Indian system of health and medicine has many dimensions. From whichever angle we see it, Ayurveda gives a refreshing look. If we sit and analyze the depth and reach of Ayurveda, we can differentiate many aspects of Ayurveda into different categories. Here is a personal attempt to explain Ayurvedic medicine system.

### **Different facets of Ayurveda:**

#### **1. Spiritual Ayurveda –**

Ayurveda has its roots deep in spirituality.

Ayurveda tells us the very purpose of life, about the karma, why we take birth, various theories about the formation of this entire universe and the simple and humble ways of human existence.

- The origin of Ayurveda was to help people live long so as to follow righteous path.
- Many diseases like skin disorders are said to be caused due to sin.
- In the Ayurvedic treatment of many diseases, like in selected types of fever, spiritual practices have been mentioned.
- In every ancient Ayurvedic text book, there is a separate chapter dedicated to righteous living.
- It is a well-known fact in Ayurveda that, as long as one is not mentally and spiritually healthy, his/her overall 'health aspect' is incomplete.
- Even in understanding health and disease, ancient Ayurveda scientists used to acquire the sacred knowledge of Ayurveda about health and disease through spirituality. Example: Sushruta used to do dissection of dead bodies to understand the anatomy and physiology of body thousands of years ago. He writes in a context – *“The parts of body that*

*can be seen through naked eyes are less, those that cannot be seen are infinite. The knowledge of those unseen parts can only be had by the eyes of meditation and eyes of knowledge!”*

## **2. Holistic Ayurveda**

The health science that gave the concept of holistic approach to health and disease is Ayurveda.

In Ayurvedic treatment, Ayurveda gives importance to,

- Strength of the disease,
- Strength of the patient's body
- Dosha body type of the patient
- Mental condition of the patient
- While treating a patient, Ayurveda not only concentrates on getting rid of the disease process or breaking the disease pathology, but puts light on overall recovery of all the aspects of health – spiritual, mental and physical.

## **3. Ayurveda as preventive healthcare system:**

If you open any Ayurveda book, the first few chapters are dedicated to explain how your daily routine should be, how your seasonal routine and rituals should be, techniques to secure and maintain good health etc.

There are two aims of Ayurveda.

1. To maintain the health of the healthy.
2. To treat the disease.

So, preventive healthcare is considered ahead of curative aspect.



Many aspects such as oil pulling, regular oil massage, and selection of hot or cold water bath are explained in Ayurveda, which emphasizes the importance of preventive healthcare.

#### **4. Curative aspect of Ayurveda:**

Set aside the aspects explained above, Ayurveda is a hardcore science of treating diseases. From the treatment of a simple fever to complicated cancers, Ayurveda books explain volumes and volumes of treatment options, surgeries, Panchakarma treatments, oral medicines, lifestyle changes, diet changes, home remedies and so on.

Sushruta is considered as father of Surgery even by Allopathic fraternity. He used to do surgery of cataract, kidney stones, rhinoplasty (cosmetic surgery of nose) etc. 2000 years ago.

In general, Ayurvedic treatment comprises of

- Panchakarma – 5 sets of detox programs
- Ayurvedic medicines
- Diet and lifestyle, to be followed, to avoid the disease as well as for quick relief from the disease.
- Rejuvenation program to gain back the original vigor and vitality.

#### **5. Ayurveda for health promotion:**

This special section comprises of aphrodisiac treatment, geriatric treatment to have high quality sexual life and old-age life.

Even the pediatric rituals called Samskaras (rituals to be followed at different stages of child growth) and pregnancy care can also be included in this section.

This section is about how to enjoy the extra benefits of health to have a successful and wholesome life.

## **WHAT IS A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE? HOW TO HAVE IT?**

The Healthy lifestyle is a process rather than a static moment. It is dynamic.

I would define Healthy lifestyle as follows –

“The healthy lifestyle is the one that

- Promotes your health
- Keeps you fit and active
- Makes you feel good about yourself, your body and mind
- Helps you keep a balance between work and family
- Helps you achieve and excel in your life
- Keeps you away from diseases.”

It includes mental activities, physical activities, food habits and daily routines.

## **HOW TO HAVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE?**

Adopting a healthy lifestyle is a gradual process. It requires effort, strong will power and perseverance. It can be achieved slowly and gradually. I have explained in the further chapters more about healthy lifestyle. I hope honestly that by the time you finish reading this book, you will be better oriented towards adapting a healthy lifestyle.

## **HEALTHY DAILY ROUTINE: SETTING UP BODY AND MIND RHYTHM**

The healthy routine is a very important step towards complete health.

The small right steps to improve your routines will make a big impact on your health in the long run.

Take smaller steps rather than giant leaps. It requires intelligent application of smarter modifications to achieve a big health reward on a long run. For example, a regular work out schedule of half an hour helps to maintain strong heart, body and mind.

The rhythm, in which the body works, differs throughout the day and in different seasons. If you set up a perfect body and mind rhythm, the hormones and enzymes of the body will also be released at proper times, leading to appropriate growth and development. This way, there will be less chance for the body to get afflicted with disease. There will be less chance for toxins to be accumulated in different organs and systems of the body.

For example, if you have a fixed time for eating, the enzymes of the stomach and intestines will be releasing digestive enzymes in scheduled times leading to proper maintenance of gastro-intestinal health. If we keep on changing the eating times and the quantities, the body will find it difficult to adjust its enzyme releasing times and quantities. So, sometimes when food is in the stomach, there will be no enzymes for proper processing, or when there is enough gastric juice, there will not be food in the stomach, leading to onset of gastric disorders.

This theory holds well not only for stomach, but for all aspects of body and mind. Hence secret of good health lies in systematic and rhythmic lifestyle. There is a direct relationship between psychological activities and healthy daily routine. For example, your mind will be happy and calm, if your room is neat

and orderly maintained. In contrast, if the room is not in order, a small stimulus of irritation will hurt your mind and irritates you exorbitantly. So a perfect health starts from having a healthy daily routine.

### **SETTING UP BODY AND MIND RHYTHM:**

Ayurveda has given us many health secrets for perfect health. Balance of good health and wellness is not only contributed by the food, dietary supplements or the medicines that we take, it is as much contributed by our other daily activities – Physical and mental.

### **Holistic health concept:**

There are natural products (and emotions) that are produced in the body and mind that needs to be thrown out at appropriate times. This is well-explained in Ayurveda. Ayurveda explains two principles in this regard.

1. Whenever there is a natural urge, it should not be withheld. For example, suppressing hunger.
2. Whenever there is no natural urge, it should not be voluntarily induced. For example, eating when not hungry.

Here are those natural urges which should not be induced voluntarily, at the same time, should not be held back.

**Flatus:** Releasing it in public is bit embarrassing. But from a health point of view, it is highly recommended.

**Urine and faeces:** Modern day rush leads us to voluntarily visit bath rooms to keep up with work. But it is not a good habit to visit bathroom without an urge and also to hold back when there is an urge.

**Cough, Sneeze, hunger and thirst:** Out of these, hunger is the most important. Lot of enzyme related imbalances, gastric problems, etc can be well-managed by eating only when hungry and not eating when not hungry. Same rule applies to cough, sneeze and thirst.

**Sleep:** While it is important to wake up early, it is equally important to sleep when eyes & body are filled with urge to sleep and wake up only when sleep is complete.

**Tears:** It is a good habit to cry out and weep during the time of depression, rather than fighting back the tears. Unexpressed bad emotions affect physical and mental health badly.

**Semen:** Since there is continuous production of sperm after onset of puberty, the rule that is explained above holds good even for semen. This helps to maintain good sexual health.

### **Why this concept is so important?**

There is a particular rhythm in the body. Our body has a natural mechanism for the maintenance of health and wellness. For example, when there is hunger, the digestive enzymes are released into stomach and intestines. At that time, if proper food is taken, the enzymes are used up in time, giving a negative feedback to brain to stop further enzyme production, till the time the food is completely digested. Thus, the biological clock will run very smoothly and timely. If we take food when we are not hungry, it upsets the rhythm. Similarly, if we do not take the food when we are not hungry, it also upsets the rhythm. The natural rhythm is called as circadian rhythm. This rhythm can be maintained with a disciplined lifestyle.

## **HEALTHY DAILY ROUTINE: A STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT**

### **For students:**

- Sleep for 7 – 8 hours. (10 pm to 5 am or 6 am)
- Waking up early in the morning, exercise or play game or do yoga for 15 to 30 minutes. More on sleep in the next chapter
- Bath, Pranayama, prayer
- Study for about an hour
- School
- In the evening, rest, refreshment, games and TV - all for about two hours.
- Study
- Sleep.

### **For working people –**

- Sleep for 7 – 8 hours. (10 pm to 5 am or 6 am) More on sleep in the next chapter.
- Waking up early in the morning, exercise or play any game or do yoga for 30 minutes to one hour
- Bath, Pranayama, prayer
- Work
- In the evening, rest, refreshment, games and TV - all for about two hours.
- Read good book, hobbies.
- Those, who could not include gym or exercise in the morning hours, can opt for evening time. But exercise for at least half an hour to one hour is a must
- Attending to family, friends.
- Sleep

**For elderly people –**

- Can be same as above, but sleep for one hour during the day can be added.
- Ayurveda advises sleep in the day time for elderly people.
- Mild exercise in the form of walking is recommended.



## **8 HEALTHY DAILY HABITS FOR A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE**

Setting up a healthy lifestyle requires you to take small steps and bring small changes into your daily routine. Hope these eight small steps will help you to move closer towards a healthy lifestyle.

**1. Drink 5 -6 glasses of water** – Keeps you well-hydrated, cleanses kidney and urinary bladder, and keeps skin well nourished, hydrated and moisturized.

**2. Taking light food at night** – This helps to keep the stomach light and keeps weight under control.

**3. Waking up half an hour early** – Waking up early in the morning, half an hour before your regular schedule energizes sense organs and keeps you active throughout the day.

**4. Drinking hot water at night** – Half a glass of hot water at night at bed time helps for easy bowel movement the next day.

**5. Donating a small amount** – Donating a small amount to the poor or having a social activity helps mind to relax and open for new ideas.

**6. Practice Silence for a few minutes** – Helps the mind to clarify and understand issues, helps to learn patience and makes you think before talking.

**7. Prayer in the morning** – Gives you extra energy to keep the day smooth and successful.

**8. Reading a page of self-help book or spiritual book at bed time** – Aids in sleep, keeps the mind calm and helps to inculcate noble thoughts and helps us to lead a successful life

## **CLOTHING TIPS - TIGHT CLOTHING OR LOOSE CLOTHING?**

Artists prefer loose clothing. It helps them to think creatively and let their imaginations take new colors. In an interview, Sachin Tendulkar told that he makes it sure that his gloves are tight-fitting. It helps him to concentrate harder.

Following are a few clothing tips to be considered, that suit your profession and body type.

### **Work place –**

- Obviously your clothing should suit your profession. If you are a tennis coach, you can not wear a suit while coaching tennis.
- If your job needs you to think freely, out of the box, creatively, loose clothing helps to open up your mind to fresher ideas.
- If your job needs you to stick to a timeline, finish projects as per schedule, needs you to follow specific predefined guidelines, tight clothing would help you.

### **Inside Gym -**

While working out, choose clothes that

- Help you in stretching
- Help drain off sweat easily, so that you won't feel sticky.

### **Cotton clothing -**

- Helps in summer to absorb excessive sweating.
- Suitable for people with Pitta body type.

### **Based on Dosha body type:**

### **For Vata Body Type -**

Tight fitting and warm clothes are suitable for you since they

- Help to keep frequent aches and pains at bay.
- Brings much needed stiffness and steadiness to your body.
- Help to keep the body warm.

### **Pitta body type -**

Cotton, loose fitting clothes, light clothes and clothes that do not retain heat inside are suitable for people with pitta body type. These kinds of clothes,

- Help to keep the body cool and let off the body heat.
- Help to lessen sweating and collection of sweat on the skin. This way, it makes you less prone to skin diseases.

### **Kapha body type -**

Loose fitting warm clothes suit you as it,

- Helps to maintain warmth of the body.
- Helps to move your body freely.
- Keeps you free from stiffness.
- Makes you feel active.

### **Based on disease –**

- **Skin diseases** – Wear cotton clothes to avoid excess sweating and accumulation of sweat.
- **Male infertility** - Make sure that the undergarments are loose fitting so as to let away the heat. Higher temperature in the testicles causes sperm death and lower sperm motility.
- **Cough and cold** – Better to cover ears with scarf.
- **Headache** – Keep the ears covered.

- **Blunt injuries** – Keep the area covered with a light cloth with mild pressure. This helps to relieve pain.
- **Pregnancy and lactation period** (not a disease condition) - Use a scarf to cover head and ears, wear warm clothing. This helps in vata balance.

## **MY BEST HEALTH ADVICE TO YOU – WATCH YOUR STOMACH**

If you ask me about the best health advice that I give to everyone, one thing which matters to your health the most, one thing which is so very easy to follow, but often neglected, that would be... **Concentrate on your Stomach.**

**Ayurveda Concept:** As per Ayurvedic principle, every disease process is related to stomach. It can be understood in two ways.

- Altered digestion and metabolism that takes place at the level of stomach and intestines causes most of the diseases.
- The symptoms that we can observe in our stomach, can hint towards underlying disease symptom.

The above two concepts can be substantiated by the following points.

1. In most of the disease conditions, digestion power is hampered. Be it fever, cold, cough, infective disorders, digestion process is affected.
2. Digestion of food in gastro intestinal system further affects the metabolism of nutrients at the level of cell.
3. Most of the Ayurvedic medicines contain one or the other ingredient targeted towards improving digestion and metabolism. For example: Long pepper in Chyawanprash.
4. There is direct connection between stomach (and intestines) with brain and emotions. Example: Nearing exams, students tend to visit toilet more frequently. Irritable Bowel Syndrome and Ulcerative Colitis are related to stress and sensitiveness of stomach and intestines.

### **What to watch about stomach?**

Watch for simple subtle changes in stomach throughout the day and adjust your eating habits accordingly. Use simple home remedies then and there. It

goes a long way in avoiding bigger diseases. Let us learn about a few good common rules to follow.

### **1. Eat only when hungry – Do not fast when you are too much hungry**

This is the basic principle to be followed. It helps to maintain proper enzyme level production and usage. It helps to set up the whole body rhythm. This rule also applies to other parameters like sleep, thirst, etc.

### **2. Follow diet rules**

Eating is not only a physical activity. It also involves mind. Hence any diet rule should cover both mental and physical aspects.

Do not talk excessively while eating.

Drink water in between food rather than before or after having food.

### **3. Occasional fasting**

Fasting occasionally, depending on your strength is one of the very best practices.

Ayurveda explains that any disease has its origin in stomach and intestines. The initial stage of disease manifestation involves a condition called as – ‘ama’.

Ama can be told as a complex caused by undigested food and weak gastric juice. Ama is characterized by indigestion. It can be influenced by Tridosha – Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

#### **1. Bloating – Influenced by Vata**

Usually suggests towards Vata imbalance in stomach and intestines. If you do not have any symptoms other than bloating, just a simple Triphala churna – 1 teaspoon at night with warm water will help.

Do not have heavy food when you have bloating. Fiber rich fruits and vegetables are helpful to relieve bloating.

## **2. Stickiness, heaviness – Influenced by Kapha**

Stickiness, heaviness of stomach is a biggest threat to productivity. It brings about laziness. It also hints towards a hidden disease in the making. Taking Triphala powder with honey or including a little pepper or ginger in diet helps to relieve stickiness / heaviness.

## **3. Burning sensation in stomach – Influenced by Pitta**

It suggests towards inflammation in stomach (gastritis).

### **Stomach and sleeping habit -**

- The stomach health is greatly influenced by sleep.
- A sleep of 7 – 8 hours is required for a good stomach health.
- If you have skipped sleep previous night, and want to compensate for it on the next day, Ayurveda advises to sleep *before food*.
- People suffering from indigestion are advised for day sleeping.

### **Stomach and work load -**

- Keep those hard works when you feel lightness in stomach.
- Keep the first hour after lunch for light work which involves your brain lesser.

So, concentrate a little on your stomach and enjoy best of your health.

## **HAVE MUSCLE PAIN OR ARTHRITIS? PLEASE AVOID DIRECT AIR FROM FAN**

Vata Dosha has direct connection with air. Air element is a component of Vata Dosha. They both have lot in common. There is a famous simile – like Air moves the clouds around the sky, Vata Dosha moves Kapha and Pitta in the body. Kapha and Pitta are basically immobile. It is Vata that takes them all over the body.

**Vata Dosha and arthritis** – Vata is situated in all the joints. Movement is a quality of Vata and hence, Vata Dosha is directly responsible for joint movements (and all the other movements of body parts and fluids). So osteo arthritis, which is a degenerative disease of the joint is directly related with Vata Dosha.

**Vata Dosha and pain** – Pain is a characteristic symptom of Vata. In any disease, if pain is a symptom, then there is definite involvement of Vata.

**Vata Dosha and skin dryness** – Dryness (Rookshata) is again another characteristic symptom of Vata. In any disease, if there is skin dryness, there is definite involvement of Vata Dosha. Imagine a pond. Constantly blowing wind takes away all the water from the pond and leaves it dry. So Vata has characteristics of wind and dryness is one of its key qualities.

**Cause for Vata imbalance – direct wind** – Exposure to direct wind has been explained as a cause for Vata imbalance. Exposure to direct wind causes increase in the dryness and increase of pain, because pain and dryness – both are Vata symptoms.

So, people with Vata imbalance, those who are suffering from muscular pain, arthritis, myalgia etc., should avoid direct wind and direct air from fan. I am not advising to totally avoid fan. During summer, it is difficult to manage without fan. But you can maintain a distance, so as to avoid direct wind hitting your skin.



Similarly, while travelling, if you are of Vata body type or have any Vata dominant disease, you can avoid the direct wind by closing the windows. There is also another physical cause behind increase of Vata by direct wind exposure. When air is blowing directly at an organ, it is causing minute oscillating movements to the skin, muscle, ligaments, etc, pertaining to that organ / limb. When there is movement, there is Vata increase. Vata and movement are directly related hence, there will be increase in the pain. You may not notice the worsening of Vata symptom just by single episode of wind exposure. It may be a slow process and symptoms may worsen over a period of time. The impact will be gradual but certain.

In case of Vata imbalance, it is better to keep the affected part of the body covered with cloth. This is the principle behind crepe bandaging the limb to reduce pain, or to heal a bone fracture.

### **Hot water bath or cold water bath?**

The choice between hot water bath and cold water bath can make or break your health. The choice between these two is subjective. The choice needs to be made considering various points such as age, body constitution, season, the age-old practice, habit, disease condition etc.

### **How to choose between hot and cold water for bath?**

#### **What Ayurveda says?**

As a general rule, Ayurveda advises to use hot water for the body and cold water for head. Ayurveda opines that having hot water head bath is bad for eyes and hair.

#### **Based on Body type –**

- If you are of Pitta body type, then it is better to use cold water for bath rather than hot water.

- If you are of Kapha or Vata body type, then it is better to use hot water rather.

#### **Based on disease –**

- For patients with Pitta diseases such as liver disorders, indigestion, burning sensation etc, cold water bath is good.
- For patients with Kapha disorders such as respiratory diseases, allergies, cough, cold, etc and for Vata disease such as joint pains, foot pain, arthritis, etc, hot water bath is preferable.
- For patients of epilepsy, it is better to avoid both hot and cold water bath. Lukewarm water is good for them for bathing.

#### **Based on age:**

- For young children and for old people, hot water is good.
- For youngsters cold water is good.
- For students, who wish to dedicate more time for studies, with limited sleeping hours and increased alertness, cold water bath early in the morning is beneficial, provided they do not have any health complaints.

#### **Season –**

Hot water during winter and cold water during summer is good.

#### **Time in the day –**

If in the morning, cold water is fine, but if you take bath in the night, after a tiresome day, nothing is as refreshing as a hot water bath. The evening time is dominated by Vata, hence hot water is beneficial.

#### **Habits –**

- If you exercise regularly, then hot water is preferable.
- If you oil massage daily, then taking bath after half an hour of the oil massage is really good.
- If you are of lazy type and seeking a way to get rid of sleepy feeling, cold water is good for you.
- A few of the practitioners advise to take alternative hot and cold water baths.
- Irrespective of the above rules, or any other rules that exists, if you are accustomed for hot or cold water, over a period of time, it is the natural choice of your body and that is good for you.

**A quick tip:**

For good skin health, add a few leaves of neem, a little sandal wood to the water and leave it for a while and take bath.

## 6 QUICK NATURAL REMEDIES TO IMPROVE SINGING VOICE

As per Ayurveda, voice is controlled by Vata Dosha. For a good singing voice, you require regular practice and diet control. Along with that, these natural tips might help you improve your singing voice.

**1. Ghee** – Every morning, take half a teaspoon of ghee, before food and drink a small cup of hot water.

Avoid this during cloudy days, when you have cold, cough, fever or indigestion.

**2. Chew a small piece of Yashtimadhu** - Licorice is known to improve voice. Chewing a small piece of Licorice, for a minute or two, helps improve voice. However, it is best to avoid during pregnancy.

**3. Hot water drinking** – It helps to clear phlegm from the lungs and clears throat.

4. Use of **Amla** in diet.

5. Herbs like Gotu Kola, Manjishta also improve voice. You can have chutney with Gotu Kola, once a week, to improve voice quality.

Cinnamon is another herb which clears throat of secretions and sputum.

Regular use in culinary improves your voice.

### 6. Ayurvedic medicines -

- Srikara Amodini Pills help to clear the throat and brings in smoothness.
- Vyoshadi Vatakam, Ksheerabala 101 Thailam, Bharngi Guda help to relieve Kapha Dosha and balance Vata, leading to good voice.
- Chewing a small piece of nutmeg fruit helps to clear throat, sputum and improves voice quality.
- Take your doctor's advice before trying these (or any medicines).

## **6 MUST DO THINGS FOR WOMEN AFTER FORTY**

Till thirty years, the female body will be on the path of construction or build-up. The growth of body tissues will be complete. So the body will have its own power to fight back to normalcy, so is the mind. The strength will prevail till forty. It is at forty that there is a need of special care to reorganize the lifestyle for better living, because

1. This is the transition between growth and degeneration.
2. There is still good 5-6 years before menopause, where body and mind has to go through hormonal changes.
3. The body needs preparation to avoid BP, diabetes, cardiac problems and other health complications in future.

Considering the above factors, the following things are advisable to women over forty.

**1. Physical activity** – Be it in the form of Yoga & Pranayama, Gym, dance, sports or mere walking. It is high time to take up some or the other sort of physical activity.

Physical activity

- Improves glucose tolerance
- Keeps muscles active and toned
- Keeps the mind active and alert
- Improves heart health, keeps cholesterol in normal level.

**2. Pranayama** – Pranayama not only improves your breathing and respiratory health, but also boosts mind power and concentration.

**3. Stricter lifestyle** – Better late than never! Start following a fixed routine. For example, try to wake up early in the morning and have regular timings for food and sleep.

**4. Watch what you eat** – Curbing on too salty, spicy, oily and junk foods, aerated drinks is a must. Like I said, it is high time to prioritize health over every other thing.

**5. Have clear defined relationships** – It is time to calm down and get settled in life with friends and family. It is the time to stabilize your relationship and life. It is very necessary for a better life ahead.

**6. Hobbies** – Till now, you have been dedicating your life to your family members and friends, but in case if you have your own wish to start something afresh, to achieve anything... any unrealized dreams, it is the time to chase. It is to self-prioritize. Drawing, music, dance, arts, musical instruments? A blog about you know something very well? Writing, speeches and seminars? GO FOR IT!

## **ESSENTIAL LIFESTYLE CHANGES REQUIRED AFTER YOU REACH 30**

I am now 34 and a few health changes are more than evident already. High spicy foods have become less tolerable, so also the Sun, so also late night works and long journeys.

If we divide our lifespan into three, the first one third is dominated by Kapha Dosh and middle one third is by Pitta Dosh. So, once you reach 30, some lifestyle changes should be made to counter balance Pitta effect.

### **Avoiding direct sun light –**

When I go out, I avoid direct sunlight by wearing a cap or take an umbrella with me. Direct sun exposure directly increases Pitta. So, avoid it as much as you can.

**Less spicy food –** Spicy food increases Pitta imbalance. So, just cut it down a bit.

**Having a bit more of milk and ghee –** Ghee increases digestion strength and at the same time, decreases Pitta. Hence, it is ideal. It also keeps gastritis away. Hence, it is good for people with sensitive stomach. Both milk and ghee are said to have Rasayana effect (anti aging).

**Stop worrying –** The childhood days are over. Now your own child has taken your place at home, so time to be a grown up. Try to be more organized. Do planned work.

**Stop being angry** – Anger and Pitta are related, more you lose your cool, more will be the inside hotness (=pitta). Hence, try to avoid anger with the help of Yoga and Pranayama. Remember, during tensions.... breathe easy.

**Taking Amla** – Regular intake of Amla – Indian gooseberry helps to keep Pitta balance. Either amla powder or amla fruit are good to have at least a teaspoon / a fruit a day.

**Reduced fasting frequency** - I am not an ardent follower of fasting principle. Hence, reduced it a bit to keep stomach healthy. If you are a strict follower of fasting, then it is fine. Or else, go easy on this.

**Sleep and wake up on time** – Any amount of work lag, leftover at night, I just transfer it to the next day. Sleeping before 12 and waking up around 6 has become paramount. If we divide night into three, the first half is dominated by Kapha Dosha. Hence, going to bed at this time means getting good sleep. Sleep is influenced by Kapha Dosha. But if we postpone sleep to later hours, Pitta will be dominant by that time, leading to dizziness and headache the next morning.

**Including bitter substances in diet** - Coriander seeds, turmeric, curry leaves, neem leaves, anything that is bitter is good to have. Generally bitter, sweet and astringent tastes balance Pitta. We need to be a little careful with sweets. Though it balances Pitta, it may cause weight gain. Hence, betting on a few bitters is a better option.

**Apply coconut oil to hair regularly** – to avoid hair loss and grey hairs. Grey hair is due to Pitta imbalance.



**Avoid mustard oil for cooking.** If you are accustomed to it by birth, then no harm in continuing it. If it is replaceable, consider other options. Any other cooking oil is good to use.

**Stop smoking and reduce on alcohol** – Not related to me. Is it to you?

**Avoid sitting for long periods of time** – Now-a-days many reports say that sitting for long is as bad as smoking. Hence, I take a small walk in between my work.

**Avoid too hot water bath** - I have totally quit taking hot water bath. It is just lukewarm or cold water baths these days.

**Weekly oil massage** – I have made it a point to self massage with Maha Narayana taila. One can even use plain sesame oil. Though massage is not directly related to Pitta, it is very well related with Vata, which dominates after we cross 50. So, some precautions now are always good.

**Pranayama** – I was already doing it, but now more regularly. It helps to control anger. Anger is related to Pitta. I have clarity of thinking now and am more organized with my work on the days when I have done Pranayama than other days.

**Raisin and almonds** – At about 10 pm, soak 5 black raisins and 5 almonds in water. Next day morning, before having anything, peel the almond skin and eat it along with the swollen raisins. Both of these help to keep Pitta under check.

**Pitta diet** – Basically any fruit, vegetable or dietary item that is sweet, astringent or bitter that have calming effect over stomach (should not cause burning sensation in stomach) and should be more on nourishing side (than on cleansing side). Any such food is good for Pitta control.

So, these are a few changes that are worth considering after you reach 30. This will help to avoid Pitta symptoms like early grey hair, gastritis, piles, liver complaints, eye disorders, etc.

## Basics of Tridosha

## **UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPLES OF AYURVEDA**

The Principles of Ayurveda are authentic and are becoming increasingly scientifically validated by each day. Ayurveda is certainly more than a mere collection of few home remedies. Let us know in detail about how Ayurveda is different from allopathy and how both the medical sciences can stand together for the betterment of health.

**The principles of Ayurveda** are quite different from the modern science. Ayurvedic system of medicine is prevalent since the time of Vedas, since thousands of years.

During those times, the tools and techniques available were different from those available now. But that does not make the Science of Ayurveda fragile, because the principles of Ayurveda are time tested and are universal in nature. According to Ayurveda, diseases occur due to the vitiation of 'tri-doshas' viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These three elements cannot be seen as such in any part of the human body, but exist throughout the body. They are responsible for functions like –

- power, mobility, oxygen transport etc (Vata),
- Digestion, metabolism etc (Pitta) and
- Body structuring, immunity, sustenance etc (Kapha).

The yester-year seers learnt Ayurveda in comparison with the external world. External world is ruled by wind, fire (light) and water, similarly, Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

During normal times, air, water and fire protect and help us. But during calamities, like tornadoes, floods and volcanoes, they harm us.

Similarly during normalcy, Vata, Pitta and Kapha protect our health. During illness, due to wrong diet and activities, Tridoshas tend to bring about diseases. Though air, wind and light is present all over the world, they are significantly present in certain place, like water in river.

Similarly, though Vata Pitta and Kapha (collectively known as Tridosha) are present all over the body, Tridoshas are present more dominantly in certain places of the body.

Vata is significantly present below umbilicus area – That is why, urination, motion, walking etc are controlled by Vata.

Pitta is significantly present in abdominal area – That is why, digestion is controlled by Pitta.

Kapha is significantly present in chest and above areas. That is why; respiration, salivation etc are controlled by Kapha.

## **UNDERSTAND DOSHAS BY QUALITIES**

One of the biggest task for any beginner in Ayurveda is to get a good understanding of Doshas – Vata, Pitta and Kapha. While it takes at least 3 months of Ayurveda learning to understand Tridosha very clearly, there are some shortcuts as well. Here is the easiest way to understand Doshas

### **How To Understand Tridosha?**

The best way to understand doshas is by its qualities. You can observe the qualities of Tridosha very easily in your own body. Here's how.

**Qualities of Vata Dosha** are – dryness, Laghu – Lightness, Sheeta – coldness, Khara – roughness, Sookshma – minuteness, Chala – movement

Dryness – Any symptom in the body, that is associated with dryness is influenced by Vata. For example – Dry skin. Dry and cracked foot, Dry eye syndrome, dry lips etc. All the skin diseases with dryness as a feature is due to Vata Dosha.

Lightness – Because Vata Dosha is composed of Vayu (air) and Akasha (ether), it is naturally very light. So, whenever you feel there is lightness in the body, you can blindly assume that Vata is influencing your body. For example, at the end of digestion process, your stomach will be feeling light. That lightness is due to Vata.

Coldness – Coldness and dryness are inter-connected. Like, during winter, your skin tends to feel dry. Notice that both cold and dry are Vata qualities.

Whenever your hands or legs are feeling cold, you can assume that there is

Vata increase. During winter, the sensation of pain will be more. Pain is a symptom of Vata, and coldness is increasing the Vata symptom.

Roughness – dryness and roughness exist with each other. Like roughness in lips, rough cracked foot, etc are characteristic of Vata activity.

Minuteness – Vata, being made of ether and air, it can penetrate through all the body channels, into deepest tissues.

Chala – movement – increase in movement is due to Vata.

- For example, in extreme cold, your hands start to shiver. Coldness causing increased movement of limbs.
- The movement of fluids, food, nutrients etc inside body, gastro intestinal track is due to Vata.
- Locomotion activities such as walking, limb movements is due to Vata.
- Anything that is related to movement is due to Vata.
- Excretion of feces, urine etc are due to Vata only.
- Vata body type person usually can not keep his legs still. He will be moving his legs continuously.

**Qualities of Pitta Dosha** – Sasneha – slightly oily, unctuous, Teekshna – piercing, entering into deep tissues, Ushna – hotness, Laghu – lightness, Visram – bad smell, sara – having fluidity, movement, drava – liquidity are the qualities of Pitta.

Pitta Dosha can be compared to fire.

Slightly oily, unctuous – For fire to burn, you would require some oil or ghee as fuel. If you add oil to fire, the fire would increase.

Piercing, penetrating – Because Pitta is made up of fire and water, it has the capacity to enter into deep body tissues.

Ushna – hotness – All the warm factors in the body is influenced by Pitta Dosha.

- For example, digestion, body temperature etc.
- All the metabolic activities also generate some amount of energy, and hence are influenced by Pitta Dosha.
- Whenever there is increase in temperature, as in fever, there is increase of Pitta in the body.

Lightness – because Pitta is made of water and fire components, and fire part is higher than the water part, lightness is also a quality of Pittha.

Bad smell – The bad breath problem is usually influenced by Pitta Dosha. The bad smell in feces and urine are also influenced by Pitta.

Fluidity, liquidity – are also qualities of Pitta. Pitta can be conceptualised as a liquid fuel burning.

### **Qualities of Kapha Dosha –**

Snigdha – oily, unctuous, Sheeta – cold, Guru – heavy, Manda – mild, viscous, shlakshna – smooth, clear, Mrutsna – slimy, jelly, sthira – stability, immobility are the qualities of Kapha.

Oiliness and unctuousness – the oily factor brings in lubrication.

- Hence all the lubrication factors in joints (synovial fluid), vertebral discs, cerebro-spinal fluid around brain, pleural fluid etc are Kapha factors.
  - Oily skin is due to Kapha
  - Generally all the oils, oily food stuff, deep fried food tend to increase Kapha.
- Cold – is due to both Kapha and Vata Doshas.
- Kapha is formed by water and earth matters.



- Cold is a nature of water, hence it is a quality of Kapha as well.
- Winter brings in respiratory diseases. Winter means cold, respiratory diseases are more commonly due to Kapha Dosha.
- Cold food stuff like ice cream, cucumber, frozen food stuff increase Kapha.

Heavy – Wherever you can observe heaviness, there is definite influence of Kapha. Like heaviness in head. Heavy body, or being overweight has influence of Kapha.

Mild and viscous – delay in expressing feelings, delay in understanding etc are features of Kapha body type. Person with such a body types will take a long time to make decisions. He usually walks slowly.

Smoothness, jelly – are qualities of Kapha.

Clear – clarity – is a quality of Kapha Dosha. Usually, person with Kapha body type, though may take a long time to understand and decide, his belief system will be very clear. He usually has a clear white sclera (white part of eye), without prominent blood vessels.

Stability and immobility are due to Kapha Dosha. Wherever there is stiffness, there is definite influence of Kapha. For example, in rheumatoid arthritis (Amavata), Kapha has influence.

In extreme cold, there will be body stiffness. Note here that both cold and stiffness are due to Kapha.

So, understanding the Tridosha theory becomes very easy, when you try to understand it by its qualities.

## HOW TO UNDERSTAND TRIDOSHA EASILY BY ITS FUNCTIONS?

Tridosha means the three factors of the body. They are three in number Vata, Pitta and Kapha Dosha. The balance of Tridosha leads to health and imbalance leads to disease condition. But it is very difficult to understand Tridosha. Let us try and learn about them by means of main functions that they carry out inside the body.

### Functions of Vata Dosha –

Vata is responsible for **all movements**.

- Movement of blood in blood vessels
- Movement of food and nutrients in gut
- Movement of air in and out of lungs
- Movement of hands and legs
- Neck and all other body parts
- Movement of eyeballs, etc.

For any type of movement, Vata Dosha is responsible. Hence a typical Vata body type person cannot sit at one place. She keeps her leg moving, her eyes will always be searching for something new, difficult to concentrate on one particular thing, etc.

Even at the level of a cell, the movement of nutrients, waste products etc are controlled by Vata Dosha.

Because Vata is involved with movement of air in the lungs, many of the respiratory diseases are influenced by Vata (along with association of Kapha or Pitta Dosha.)

In its normal state Vata causes **enthusiasm**, – Hence a Vata body person will be overly enthusiastic. He wants to do new things. He cannot settle at one

decision.

Vata regulates **activities of mind** like initiation of thinking, analyzing, understanding etc.

Vata regulates **speech**.

Vata is responsible for initiation of **natural urges** (tears, faeces, urination, sneezing, coughing, vomiting, yawning etc)

Hence, Constipation, difficulty in urination, excessive cough, vomiting etc are influenced by Vata Dosha.

Maintenance of the Dhatus (tissues) in their normalcy –

Vata is a transporter. It carries the nourishment from the gut to the body tissues. It also carries the waste products out of the body. Hence it controls the nourishment of all other body tissues.

proper functioning of **sense organs** – Because there is movement of signal from sense organs to brain, and from brain to sense organs and because Vata is responsible for movements, Vata Dosha controls all the sense organs.

### **Functions of Pitta Dosha -**

In its normal state Pitta causes digestion and metabolism

Pitta is like fire. We already have learnt how **Ayurveda explains process of digestion**. Hence Pitta is directly involved with digestion and metabolism. This is not only restricted to the level of stomach and intestines, it also extends to cellular level. Like using up of nutrients in the body, using it to produce energy etc are controlled by Pitta Dosha.

Maintenance of **body temperature** – Because Pitta means hotness. It keeps the body hot and healthy.

**Vision** – Pitta also means light. Vision is always correlated with light.

Causes hunger, thirst, appetite – Usually person with Pitta body type has more

hunger and thirst.

Maintains skin complexion and quality – Hence most of the skin disorders are influenced by Pitta.

Intelligence, courage, valour – The person with Pitta body type has more of these mental features.

### **Functions of Kapha Dosha -**

Kapha confers stability and compactness. The compactness and stability of the cells and tissues, of joints, stability in thought process of the mind, etc are due to Kapha.

A person with Kapha body type likes to sit and do one work for a long period of time (as opposed to Vata person).

A person influenced by Kapha does not like to travel much. He does not like changes.

Kapha Dosha confers lubrication, compactness (firmness) of the joints.

Kapha is slimy liquid type of thing. It brings about shock absorber effect in joints.

Kshama – It is the cause for mental capacity to withstand or withhold emotions, strains etc.

Kapha Dosha also imbibes forgiveness quality in a person.

Suppose you get angry (which is due to Pitta), you try to control and you succeed. That quality is because of Kapha.

## **UNDERSTAND VATA DOSHA BY ITS FUNCTIONS**

The simplest way to explain Vata dosha is – it is just like air, wind. The functions that wind carries out in nature, is quite similar to the functions of Vata Dosha inside the body.

### **Air in environment:**

Functions of wind in atmosphere can be enlisted as below –

Maintenance and sustenance of the earth,

Providing breathing air to all creatures

kindling of fire,

bringing about compactness and movement of clouds and water

creation of clouds, showering of rains, flowing of rivers,

At a micro level, air is responsible for maturity of flowers, fruits, shooting of plants, germination of seeds, growth of plants, brings about hardness and dryness to the grains.

Overall, for all kinds of transformation, growth and movement of anything, air is responsible.

Air is naturally coolant in nature. Hence, when associated with water, it imparts more coldness but when associated with fire, it kindles it.

### **Air and Vata Dosha –**

Air inside our body is called as Vata Dosha. The flatus, respiration, the air in the stomach, – these are all part of Vata Dosha itself. Hence, whenever you think of Vata Dosha, if you think of air then the imbalance symptoms, diseases and treatments will be very easy to understand.

**Qualities of Vata dosha** – To understand the functions of Vata, please keep these Vata qualities in mind.

Dryness, lightness, coldness, roughness, minuteness and movement.

**Functions of Vata Dosha in the body:**

Vata Dosha, when it is normal, sustains the functioning of all the organs of the body. It stimulates all organs and maintains smoothness of functioning.

Vata initiates all the actions of internal organs.

**Movement:**

Vata is responsible for all the movements of the body – like movement of hands, legs, eyes, tongue, breathing, movement of fluids, flatus, wind etc wherever you can imagine any type of movement, Vata is responsible.

**Speech:** Vata is responsible for speech. Speaking involves movement of air in and out of the voice box, for which Vata is responsible. A person with high Vata speaks more.

**Control of mind:** In the process of gaining knowledge, mind moves to and fro between the five sense organs and conveys it to intellect. This functioning of mind is also controlled by Vata Dosha. This is why, people with Vata body type are quite unstable and fast in their thinking.

Vata Dosha stimulates and controls all sense organs – Ears, eyes, nose, skin and tongue.

Vata Dosha maintains the compactness and unison of all the body organs.

Vata Dosha is the root cause for happiness and enthusiasm

**Digestion process:**

Wind is necessary for the fire to burn. Similarly, Vata dosha helps digestion power. It is also responsible for –

peristalsis movement of the oesophagus, stomach and intestines

Mixing of food with gastric and intestinal secretions

division of food into small particles

Assimilation of digested food essence part into blood and its circulation throughout the body.

**Vata controls Pitta and Kapha**

Pitta and Kapha Doshas are immobile. Vata guides them. As the clouds are moved from one place to the other by the wind, Vata guides Pitta and Kapha to different parts of the body.

**Respiration:** It involves air moving in and out of lungs so, definitely a Vata activity.

**Blood circulation** – Again, anything with movement is due to Vata, so also blood circulation, transportation of food nutrients, gases, waste products etc by the blood and so on.

**Evacuation of waste products:**

This is obviously a Vata activity. – Urination, excretion of waste products in the form of sweat, urine, respiration, defecation – all these are Vata activities.

Vata plays a major role in drying up excess moisture from watery stool in the large intestines and thus helps in proper stool formation.

### **Fetus growth and child birth:**

Fetus growth, division of cells, is due to Vata Dosha. Even the child birth process is a Vata Dosha function. Vata moulds and shapes embryo.

Wherever there is empty place, there is Vata Dosha. Hence, Vata forms all the micro and macro body channels.

### **Types of Vata Dosha –**

Though Vata is of only one type, based on its placement and specific action, and for easy understanding, it is divided into five types as below.

**Prana Vata** – Prana is located in the head and moves in the chest, throat. It regulates will power, heart, sense organs, intellect and vision. It is the cause for expectoration, sneezing, belching, inspiration and swallowing of food.

Prana Vata is considered as the force that takes care of functioning of heart, lungs and throat (swallowing, belching etc).

**Udana Vata** – The chest is the seat of Udana, it moves in the nose, umbilicus and throat; its functions are initiation of speech, effort, enthusiasm, strength, colour, complexion and memory.

Udana Vata is correlated with breath and process of respiration.

### **Vyana Vata –**

Vyana is located in the heart, moves all over the body in great speed. It attends to functions such as flexion and extension (locomotor action) opening and closing of the eyelids etc.

Vyana is related with blood circulation and muscle activities – flexion and extension.

### **Samana Vata –**

Samana Vata is located near the digestive fire. It moves in the gastro intestinal tract,



It receives the food into stomach, aids in digestion, helps in dividing the food into useful part and waste part, and moves these parts in their normal paths. Samana Vata's activities are limited to digestive tract, assisting in normal downward peristalsis movement.

**Apana Vata –**

Apana Vata is located in the Apana – large intestine, moves in the waist, bladder, genitals. It attends to the functions such as ejaculation, menstruation, defecation, urination and child birth.

Apana maintains all excretion process related with lower half of trunk.

So, all in all, Vata has its role, in full or in parts, in most of the physiological functions of the body.

## **UNDERSTAND PITTA DOSHA BY ITS FUNCTIONS**

Best way to understand Pitta Dosha is by comparing it to liquid fire. Fire burns fuel to generate energy. Similarly, Pitta in the form of digestive fire helps to digest food and yields energy to the body.

By the word liquid fire, I mean, like boiling water, molten metal, molten lava etc. This comparison is just for understanding Pitta better. Pitta is compared to liquid fire and not directly with the fire as such. This is because, actual fire is instantaneous. But liquid fire is more organized, the effect is longer.

So, whichever functions of the body, that is associated with fire (as in digestion), light (as in vision, body appearance, skin color) and temperature, Pitta is involved.

### **Digestion and metabolism:**

Pitta is directly involved with digestion and metabolism. This is not only restricted to the level of stomach and intestines, it also extends to cellular level. Like using up of nutrients at the the cellular level to produce energy etc are controlled by Pitta Dosha. So, all processes involving digestion and metabolism, at both digestive track level and at cellular level is performed by Pitta Dosha.

**Maintenance of body temperature** – Because Pitta means hotness, it keeps the body hot and healthy. Hence, all the conditions where there is increase of temperature, as in inflammation, fever, etc, there is Pitta involvement.

**Vision** – Fire is also related with light. Vision is always correlated with light. Hence, it is a Pitta function.

**Skin complexion and aura** – Pitta, blood tissue and skin are interconnected. the skin complexion, aura and skin health are directly controlled by Pitta

Dosha.

**Hunger, thirst, appetite** – Initiation of hunger and thirst and appetite control is handled by Pitta Dosha. Usually person with Pitta body type has more hunger and thirst.

**Intelligence, courage, valour** – Light is also compared with knowledge, as it takes away darkness / ignorance. Hence, all mental activities pertaining to intelligence, courage and valour are controlled by Pitta Dosha. The person with Pitta body type has more of these mental features.

### **Pitta, Digestive fire and health –**

So long as body maintains its temperature, life exists. So long as digestion process is happening smoothly, health exists.

There is a famous Ayurvedic verse, meaning – all disorders arise due to low digestion strength. If digestion and metabolism is healthy, then digestive system, immune system, blood, respiratory system – all are healthy. Hence, all efforts should be made to have proper Agni – digestive fire.

### **Types of pitta and their functions.**

Though Pitta is only one, based on location and functions, it is divided into five types.

Pachaka Pitta

Ranjaka Pitta

Sadhaka Pitta

Alochaka Pitta

Bhrajaka Pitta

### **Pachaka Pitta –**

It is located between stomach and large intestine (between Amashaya and

pakvashaya)

It is composed of all the five basic elements (Panchamaha Bhuta), it is predominant with fire element and less of water element.

It is called by the term Anala- fire because of its function of Paka – digestion and transformation of food materials.

It cooks the food, divides it into essence and waste,

It bestows grace and influence on other types of Pitta.

Hence, among all the types of Pitta, Pachaka pitta is the dominant one.

### **Ranjaka Pitta –**

The pitta located in the Amashaya- stomach – duodenum is known as Ranjaka.

It converts the useful part of the food essence into blood. Hence it converts Rasa Dhatu into Rakta Dhatu.

### **Sadhaka Pitta –**

The pitta located in the Hrudaya –heart is known as Sadhaka.

It attends to mental functions such as knowledge, intelligence, self-consciousness, etc, thereby helping the purpose – aims of life.

**Alochaka Pitta –** It is located in the eyes. It helps in vision.

**Bhrajaka Pitta –** It resides in skin and helps exhibition of color and complexions.

## **UNDERSTAND KAPHA DOSHA BY ITS FUNCTIONS**

Kapha Dosha can be likened to freezing oil or thick heavy viscous oil. A heavy, semisolid oil is usually cold, semi solid, viscous, heavy, has cushioning effect.

All these qualities can be attributed to Kapha.

### **Stability and compactness:**

If you imagine a cell, Kapha is responsible for holding all parts of the cell together, in its natural shape. If you consider joints, Kapha is responsible for stability and compactness of the joints.

### **Stability of mind:**

In the mind's thinking process, Vata helps you to explore all the options. Pitta helps to analyze which are the good options and which are bad, but Kapha helps to settle you down with that one option. So, even in the process of thinking, Kapha is the reason for stable thinking. Usually people with Kapha body type are well organized and stable.

A person with Kapha body type likes to sit and do one work for a long period of time (as opposed to Vata person).

**Kshama – forgiveness** - When you are betrayed by someone, Vata makes you think about options that you have. Pitta makes you to attack the person, but Kapha will ensure mental balance, to put things to perspective and forgive the offender (or to realize that it was your own mistake, as the case may be).

**Retention** is something associated with stability of thoughts, it is due to Kapha Dosha. Person with Kapha body type has good memory and retention capacity.

**Lubrication:** Oil avoids friction in engine, similarly Kapha ensures lubrication between joints and ensures smoothness and avoids friction by its shock absorbing action.

When food enters stomach, it is due to Kapha Dosha that the food particles are well moistened. It helps in easy breaking down of food into smaller particles.

Sturdiness, bulk, nourishment – these terms can be very well associated with Kapha Dosha.

### **Five Types of Kapha Dosha:**

#### **Avalambaka Kapha –**

It is located in the chest. By its innate strength and by the power of essence of food, it does lubrication, nourishing etc functions that are attributed to water element. It also influences the functioning of other types of Kapha.

**Kledaka Kapha** – Located in the stomach. It moistens the hard food mass and helps in digestion.

**Bodhaka Kapha** – It is located in the tongue. It helps in taste perception.

**Tarpaka Kapha** – It is located in the head. It nourishes sense organs.

**Shleshaka Kapha** – It is located in the bone joints. It lubricates and strengthens the joint.

So, for any physiological process related to stability, compactness, cushioning, etc, Kapha is responsible.

## **WHY KIDS LIKE SWEETS? WHY ACIDITY STARTS AFTER 30? AYURVEDA**

### **ANSWERS**

Kapha is dominant during childhood. When a Dosha is dominant, naturally body tries to suppress the Dosha with food and activities. Sweet taste increases Kapha Dosha. But still most of the kids like sweets and chocolates. Why?

### **Another related question –**

Usually spices are well tolerated during childhood and teenage. Why?

Once after we reach 30+ we tend to start getting acidity, burning sensation gas etc with the same spicy food that once we used to love. Why?

### **1. Kapha Dosha and childhood –**

Kapha dosha is dominant in first one third of life. So, it is dominant in first 20 – 30 years of life. Kapha dosha helps to build the body and mind.

The nature of sweet taste is – to increase body nourishment, to improve mood, to keep the mind happy, and to cause overall growth of body and nourishment. Because of dominant Kapha, children grow faster and they are a lot happier when compared to adults.

Sweet taste directly increases Kapha Dosha.

### **Now why they crave for more sweets, when they already have high Kapha?**

Usually, when a factor is more, body tends to balance it out, by craving for the opposite qualities. For example, in case of fever, body naturally hates sweet foods, because already digestion strength is depleted and more of sweet food will cause worsening of digestion strength and fever.

But in childhood, there is more and more need of mental and physical growth.

The sweet helps to keep the body and mind growth at proper pace.

Also, childhood is a physically active phase of life. Hence, more of carbohydrate supply helps to keep up with the energy needs of the body.

### **Why acidity after 30?**

Sweet taste also protects and promotes health of mucosa of stomach and intestines.

At 20s and 30s, sweet intake decreases, spices in food increase.

By 30s, Pitta takes the dominant position and hence there is tendency to develop acidity and gastritis.

Bad habits, not sticking to strict regimen, increasing stress also contributes to the stomach woes.



## Message

## **DOES MASSAGE WORK?**

Ayurveda explains oil massage (Abhyanga) as one of the daily routines that everyone should follow. It explains that daily massage has the following benefits –

*Abhyangam aacharet nityam sa jaraa shramavaataha |*

*Drushti prasaada pushti aayu susvapna twak daardhyakrut || – Ashtanga sangraha sootrasthana.*

Everyday, Abhyanga should be done by everyone, especially elderly and tired people. It improves eye sight, nourishes muscles, increases life expectancy and improves skin complexion.

Ayurvedic oil massage has good effect not only on the skin locally, but all over the body system. For this very reason, in many diseases, especially due to Vata imbalance, such as Arthritis (Sandhivata), Abhyanga is highly recommended.

### **How does massage work?**

Ayurveda explains that the herbal medicinal contents in the oil enters through the pores of the skin, become available for absorption at *Srotas* (end part of blood vessels) and get absorbed into the blood, reach the target area and exhibit its action. This theory is quite apt because the cell membrane is made of lipo-proteins (combination of lipids and proteins). Oils being a form of lipid, it is easy for the massaged oil to pass through the skin to the targeted area.

In case of Ayurvedic massage oil, applied directly over the target areas such as knees in case of arthritis, absorption and therapeutic action is lot quicker. This is the logic behind extensive use of massage as an effective Ayurvedic therapy in a number of diseases. In fact, even during Ayurvedic panchakarma treatment, massage is used as a part of preparation to the patient.

Oil massage helps

- To maintain good skin health

- To keep good muscle health
- To strengthen bones and joints
- To improve blood circulation to all the parts of the body
- To relax mind

#### **GOOD OILS FOR MASSAGE:**

##### **For strengthening bones and muscles –**

Mixture of half a cup of Bala ashwagandhadi taila and half a cup of gingelly oil.

##### **For good skin health and to improve skin complexion:**

One spoon of neem oil + five spoons of Chandanadi taila + half a cup of gingelly oil.

You can also add a pinch of ginger to the above combination.

##### **For pain relief:**

- Kottamchukkadi taila
- Maha Narayana Taila

It is good to have massage in the morning hours.

Hot water bath after massage is beneficial.

It is still better if you can go and get massage and steam therapy once a month in a good Ayurvedic centre.

## **AYURVEDIC MASSAGE RELIEVES ALL THE MUSCLE KNOTS. REALLY?**

A few Ayurvedic massage parlors claim that Ayurvedic massage will relieve all the deep muscle knots in the body. This is a misleading claim.

It is making people, with lipoma, believe that lipoma can be cured just with an Ayurvedic massage. Ayurvedic massage, with massage oils and massage powders are really helpful in many ways. In many health conditions, massage is used in Ayurvedic treatment –

- To relieve muscle pain
- To relax muscles and mind
- To strengthen ligaments, joints and tendons.
- To improve skin quality and skin complexion.

But it does not relieve any muscle knots as such.

## **WHEN TO AVOID MASSAGE?**

Ayurvedic massage therapy is an effective method of healing. Massage therapy is useful –

- To strengthen muscles, bones and joints
- To relieve stress
- To relax mind and body.

While these things are true, it is also important to know when not to go for massage, when not to massage a particular part of the body. Here are a few massage tips in this regard –

### **Avoid massage therapy during these instances –**

**1. During fever** – During fever or when you have an infection, according to Ayurvedic principles, there will be disturbance in Agni (digestive power) and body will not be in a position to take a massage. It disrupts the healing process. So it is better not to go for massage.

**2. During inflammation / swelling blunt injuries** – During inflammation and swelling due to blunt injuries, in early stages of rheumatoid arthritis, it is best to avoid oil massage. It is fine to apply Ayurvedic oil (taila). But massage might aggravate the pain.

**3. During abdominal pain:** If there is a pain that is arising due to a problem in the internal organs like gastric complaint, liver complaint etc, it is recommended to have a doctor's advice, before going for a massage.

**4. During wound and abscess** – Oil massage may cause increase in the pain. If the oil is not sterile, then it may add to the infection of the wound and wound healing may be delayed.

**5. During fracture** – Massage during fracture may cause displaced bone arrangement, leading to complications.

**6. During pregnancy** – Massage during pregnancy is fine. But to be on the safer side, it is better to undergo after expert opinion. Gentle oil massage is better than regular massage therapy.

**7. During a feeling of urgency** – If your mind is pre-occupied about a pending work, which is very urgent, better to avoid massage at that time. Set your mind free and then go for massage to enjoy maximum benefits.

## **NO TIME FOR MASSAGE? HERE IS THE SOLUTION**

If you have been to an Ayurveda clinic, many a time the Ayurvedic doctor would have encouraged you to undergo massage therapy. While taking a massage in an Ayurvedic spa is quite a relaxing and enjoyable experience, many of us might not have time and money to spend on it. Self massage is also an economic and effective option. Still, many may not have even 15 – 30 minutes everyday to spare for massaging. Here is a solution for this problem.

### **Daily massage Benefits:**

Massage with Ayurvedic oils has lot of preventive and curative health benefits. If you do it regularly, it will keep you away from arthritis, spondilitis and other similar degenerative disorders of joint tissue.

It strengthens the bones, relieves minor aches and pains quickly, keeps muscles well-toned, prevents stretch marks on skin, improves glow and skin texture.

### **Oil massage options for you –**

- The massage that we have been discussing so far refers to oil massage. The first and best option is to visit a spa or Ayurvedic centre for massage, at least once a week or once in 15 days.
- It is a good option to go for weekend massage packages that many centers offer.
- If that is not an option for you, next best thing is to ask someone in the house to massage you, at least once a week.
- If that is also not possible, go for self massage, at least once a week.

If that too is impossible, then do go for SSDM technique.

### **Short Self Daily Massage technique (SSDM):**

Check with your Ayurvedic doctor for a suitable oil for you to massage your body, daily. In case if you could not consult your doctor, Maha Narayana Taila can be used as general massage oil for any *healthy adult*. But it is always advised to get the opinion from your Ayurvedic doctor for the right choice of oil.

Massage the whole body with a big spoonful of the oil (apply a thin layer), 10 minutes before bath. If not possible, you can massage just joints. Do not miss weight bearing joints.

One can also massage the following parts locally.

**Forehead** - To relieve occasional headaches, to keep the mind calm, throughout the day.

Note; If the oil irritates the eyes, extra precaution should be taken. Avoid eyes.

**Front and back of the neck** – Neck bears the 7+ kg of weight of head. In case you have excess head weight, neck has to work extra hard. It is prone to stiffness, twitches, sprains, pains and cervical spondylosis. So do not miss to massage your neck.

**Shoulders** – You will be moving them throughout the day, while walking, swimming, bowling, dancing etc. So they need daily lubrication.

**Elbows** – In a normal day, you may lift heavy objects, could it be a cooker in the kitchen or bucket of water in the bathroom. So your strained elbows need some oiling.

**Wrists** – You might be playing badminton, or spanking your little kid, feeding grains with pigeons in your backyard, playing rapid fire chess games, your wrists are at work all the time. Give them a gentle massage.



**Hip and lower back** – They bear the weight of your upper body. So definitely they need some extra strength.

**Knee joints** – It is another weight bearing joint. Increasing its strength by applying oil, helps to improve your jogging speed

**Calf muscle** – Nothing special here. But just because you have already bent down to apply oil to knee, show a little mercy on calves also to have more strength and lessen the pain.

**Ankles** – A must, especially if you have the habit of using high heeled foot wears.

Apply a thin layer of the oil to these joints, do a gentle rubbing for 10 seconds each for each joint, leave it for 2 – 10 minutes, then have bath, preferably with luke warm water.

Since you have applied only a very thin layer of oil, just a regular bath will be enough to get rid of the oil from your body.

If you are comfortable, you may apply the oil, just before doing a workout, this way, the massage benefits will be enhanced. But it should not make your hands and legs slippery, making you prone to injuries.

## **CAN MASSAGED OIL BE LEFT OVERNIGHT? WHAT IS SKIN ABSORPTION TIME?**

### **A. How much time does the oil take to get completely absorbed by skin?**

The time for skin to get the oil, completely absorbed depends on many factors.

#### **1. Nature of the massage oil -**

Ancient Ayurvedic scholars have used a term "*Teekshna*" –meaning piercing, deep penetrating. If the ingredients of the oil contain more herbs with Teekshna property, such as onion, cinnamon, mustard, long pepper, ginger etc, then oil will take less time to penetrate into the skin.

#### **2. Oil Temperature –**

Any oil will be better absorbed when it is lukewarm. If it is very cold, the absorption time will be much longer. Hence it is a good idea to heat the oil slightly before using it for massage. Over-heating or re-boiling the oil is contra indicated, as it may cause destruction of phyto-chemicals in the herbal oil. The best way to heat the massage oil is on a water bath. Take a bigger vessel, fill water in it. Take your bowl of oil, place it in the water and heat it for a few minutes. Here, the oil is getting heated by the hotness of water, not directly by fire.

#### **3. Weather –**

As per Ayurvedic principles, massage is done to balance Vata Dosha at various levels such as skin, muscles, joints, bones, ligaments etc. Main purpose of oil massage is to relieve pain, strengthen joints, relax muscles, rejuvenate body etc., which are targeted against Vata Dosha.

Hence, between June to September and during winter, when there is Vata increase in the body and also in atmosphere, the oil gets easily absorbed into the body.

#### **4. Skin texture and body type –**

In people with Vata body type, with features like dry skin, dry organs, rough hair, thin body with prominent veins, brown eyes, etc, the oil absorption will be fast.

In contrast, in people with Kapha body type, with oily skin, with well nourished body, the oil absorption will be slightly slower because oil has similar properties to that of Kapha. A Kapha body type means, well oiled body. Since there is already naturally configured good oil component in the body, when external oil is applied, the absorption is bit slower.

**5. Age** – Usually oil absorption is faster in elderly people, as Vata predominance is seen at later stages of life.

### **6. Digestive fire (Pitta)**

The oil absorption from skin is directly influenced by a type of Pitta called '*Bhrajaka Pitta*'. Oil absorption by skin is also a type of digestion, which occurs at the level of skin. Usually oil massage is not indicated when there is indigestion. Hence, in person with good digestion strength will have quick oil absorption.

### **6. Disease and body actions –**

- Stressed mind means high Vata imbalance. So absorption of oil is good, when applied over head as in treatments like Shirodhara, Shirovasti etc.
- Not-so-stressed mind – Lesser rate of absorption, when compared to stressed mind.
- Person, following a good exercise schedule, with well built muscles – Active Vata advantage – good rate of absorption and usage of oil.
- Person without good exercise – lesser active Vata – lesser absorption.
- Body with pain and arthritis – Faster absorption. Body without pain and arthritis – lesser rate of absorption.

### **7. You massage it or not.**

As a general rule, if massage is done after oil application, rate of absorption will be higher. Because

- Slight heat generated due to massage, aids in absorption.
- Massage leads to uniform distribution of oil over the body, leading to better absorption rate.

So based on these factors, the skin absorption time for the massaged oil may vary from 15 minutes to 1 hour.

### **B. Can the oil be left overnight?**

It is not a good idea to keep the massaged oil overnight without washing it off. Evening part of the day is naturally dominated by Vata. Hence it is a good idea to get oil massage at evening time.

But if it is left overnight, the first part of night is dominated by Kapha and the oil is naturally having Kapha favoring qualities. So, both the factors together will lead to increase of kapha in skin, leading to itching and other skin complications.

Hence it is advised to wash off the massaged oil after an hour in the evening with water.

## **HOW STEAM THERAPY AFTER OIL MASSAGE IS BENEFICIAL?**

A reader asks – Is it very important to take steam after the Abhyanga and how it works on body?

Steam helps to get rid of the massaged oil from the skin. But benefit of steam therapy or heat treatment after oil massage goes beyond that.

### **In Panchakarma,**

Say, when you have cough with sputum or sinusitis, inhaling steam helps easy expulsion of sputum. Right?

Panchakarma is a procedure to expel out vitiated Dosha (morbid matter) from the body. Imagine this morbidity stuck in some organ and in some channels. Oil massage makes the Doshas soft. Steam therapy after massage makes the Dosha even softer and detaches the Doshas from the inner linings of channels of the organs. Thus, it initiates the expulsion of Doshas from the body.

After steam therapy, patient is induced with vomiting or purgation. By this, the morbid matter is expelled out of body through oral or anal route.

### **To balance Vata Dosha:**

Dryness and coldness are two qualities of Vata. Oiliness (unctuousness) is the opposing quality. So, when there is Vata dominance, applying oil helps to relieve Vata, hence helps to relieve pain. Further to it, if steam is given, heat is caused. Heat acts against coldness of Vata. It further relieves Vata Dosha and brings about muscle relaxation.

### **To avoid joint stiffness**

Joints are the places where Kapha is dominated (along with Vata). While Vata is responsible for movement of joints, Kapha ensures compactness,

smoothness and cushioning of joints. If just the oil is applied without steam therapy, then in some cases, Kapha increases in the joints (because oiliness is a Kapha quality). It may lead to increased stiffness. It does not happen in all cases, but it happens in early stage of rheumatoid arthritis. If steam is given, then it balances out Kapha, because Kapha has cold quality.

So, in osteo-arthritis, and degenerative disorders or in a normal person, for regular massage, steam therapy or some sort of heat application or at least hot water bath is highly recommended after oil massage (Abhyanga)

**Avoid steam in high Pitta conditions:**

Whenever there is an active inflammation, as in case of fresh blunt injury or flared up stages of rheumatoid arthritis or gout, heat / steam application should not be done. This is because, active inflammation with redness, swelling etc, indicate Pitta increase. Hotness is a Pitta quality. Hence, if steam is given, it further increases Pitta, hence, further worsens inflammation.

**Steam after Shirodhara:** Mild steam therapy after shirodhara helps in further relaxing mind and brain. But it should be very mild, sufficient to cause Vata balance and eyes should be avoided.

So, steam therapy / heat treatment after massage is necessary, but only in selected conditions, for specific short period of time.

## **HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY HAIR OIL? AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Applying oil to hair is a great way to improve hair strength and hair quality as per Ayurvedic principles. Apart from improving hair quality, applying hair oil also has other benefits such as – sleep improvement, calmness of mind, remedy for headache etc. Based on the desired effects, the time and method of application of hair oil will change.

### **How and when to apply hair oil to improve quality of hair?**

- If you wish to improve the quality of hair, to promote hair growth, to prevent early grey hairs, and split-ends of hair, etc, it is better to apply hair oil at night and take warm water head bath on the next day morning.
- Suppose you are taking head bath twice in a week, according to this rule, you may apply hair oil, twice a week, on the nights before the head bath.
- Applying hair oil on the same day of head bath is not desirable because, the oil may attract dust over the hair, when you go out in Sun.
- But if you are at home and love applying hair oil during day, only a minimum quantity of one teaspoon is sufficient. Apply directly to hair roots.
- For the purpose of hair growth, the oil can be applied to the hair root, scalp and to the length of hair.
- Some people heat the oil in water bath, before application, which is perfectly fine, provided it is only mild hot.
- People with headache, red coloured rashes on the scalp, and people with pitta imbalance should not opt for hot oil hair treatment.
- If you are accustomed to applying hair oil daily, then a little quantity of hair oil can be applied daily in the morning. As a general rule, it is better

not to expose hair to direct sunlight or dust, especially after applying hair oil.

### **How and when to apply hair oil for dandruff –**

If you are using hair oil particularly for dandruff or for scalp conditions, if the oil is processed with neem and other herbs having bitter odour, then it can be applied half to one hour before head bath. Hot water head bath is helpful. The oil can directly be applied to hair roots and the whole of scalp.

### **Oil to relieve headache –**

If your Ayurvedic doctor has advised oil for headache, then it makes sense to apply the hair oil in the evening time, around 5 – 6 pm, because usually, the headache is associated with Vata. If we divide a day into three parts, last part is dominated with Vata. Hence, when the Vata is just getting the dominance, it makes sense to apply the oil for headache.

### **Hair oil for a good night sleep –**

Hair oil for a good night sleep is better to apply after food at night. It will be better to do a gentle massage over the head after hair oil application.

### **Sesame oil head massage:**

Though coconut oil is very popular, sesame oil massage is what the traditional Ayurveda recommends. In many people, applying coconut oil may cause / worsen headache, sinusitis, cold and cough.

### **Benefits of sesame oil head massage:**

One who applies sesame oil on his head regularly does not suffer from headache, baldness, greying of hair, nor does his hair fall. Strength of his head and forehead is enhanced; his hair becomes black, long and deep-rooted; his



sense organs work properly; the skin of his face becomes brightened; applying sesame oil on the head produces sound sleep and happiness.

**Coconut oil for people with cold and sinusitis –**

Hair oils with coconut oil base may worsen sinusitis and cold in a few. If you still wish to enjoy benefits of coconut oil, take 100 ml of the oil, add 5 grams of pepper powder to it and heat it in mild heat for five minutes and filter the oil when it is still hot. Use this oil for applying to hair.

## **PRECAUTIONS AND BENEFITS OF MASSAGE IN PREGNANCY**

Massage during pregnancy is called Prenatal Massage, which has physical and mental benefits. It promotes relaxation of body and mind of the pregnant woman. While there are many benefits of massage during pregnancy, there are a few but important precautions to be taken care of while massaging.

### **Massage in pregnancy- Is it safe?**

Yes, massage in pregnancy is safe, if done with due caution. In some cases, massage in first trimester is not recommended. It is advised to consult your doctor for an opinion. However, except for few rare conditions, it is completely safe.

### **When to not massage during pregnancy?**

There are certain conditions when massage is not recommended.

- **Massage during first trimester** – During first three months of the pregnancy, for any new venture, doctor's consultation is highly recommended. The same rule applies to massage as well.
- Some massage techniques (E.g. deep tissue massage) are not good during pregnancy.
- Special care must be taken while massaging abdomen. I would say, just gentle application of oil is more than good for abdomen.
- After an oil massage, usually a few drops of oil will be spilt, making the floor very slippery. Pregnant lady should take very good care to avoid stepping on it.

### **Massage position in pregnancy**

Body needs to be positioned very comfortably and care should be taken so that no pressure is put on abdomen and chest. Soft pillows and padding should be used, if required. Some feel comfort in sitting position and some in lying position.

### **Benefits of massage in pregnancy:**

- **Back massage** with oil helps to relieve back pain in pregnancy. Mild to moderate pressure can be applied over back.
- **Breast massage** helps to avoid stretch marks and keeps up the breast tone.
- **Foot massage** helps to induce deep relaxation and avoid foot pain.
- **Head massage** helps in relaxing mind and relieving anxiety.
- **Body massage** helps in relaxation and strengthening of muscles, joints and bones. Relieves aches and pains.
- **Calf massage** helps to relieve leg cramps.
- If massage is done everyday from early days of pregnancy, stretch marks due to pregnancy can be avoided.
- By using proper Ayurvedic oils for massage, itching sensation and dark skin discoloration can be avoided.

### **Conclusion**

- Anyone with normal pregnancy can have prenatal massage.
- It is advised to consult a doctor before going for massage.
- It is always recommended for pregnant ladies to get massage done from qualified massage therapists.

### **Which oils are good?**

Sesame oil (Gingili oil) is the best and safest oil to use. There are other Ayurvedic oils such as Maha Narayana oil, Bala Aswagandhadi oil etc, which can be used after consulting with your healthcare practitioner.

## **11 MISTAKES TO AVOID WHILE DOING OIL MASSAGE TO BABY**

Oil massage is one of the must do things for babies. As per Ayurveda, it is recommended for healthy children of all age. The selection of Ayurvedic oil depends largely on the baby's skin tone, overall built and general health. Hence it is better to consult an Ayurvedic doctor for an advice. However, there are certain mistakes to be avoided while doing oil massage to babies.

**Applying too much of pressure:** It might cause pain and discomfort to the baby. Very gentle pressure or just smearing the oil over the skin is good enough.

**Contact to eyes:** Many of the herbal oil ingredients will be hot in potency and may irritate eyes of the baby. So oil should not come in contact with eyes.

**Entry into mouth:** May induce throat irritation and vomiting, if oil enters mouth. So precaution should be taken.

**Holding the baby in your hands:** Instead of holding the baby in your hands, make her lie on a mat or a soft towel. Since the oil is slippery, this will prevent the baby from slipping out of your hands.

**Allowing the baby to crawl around after massage:** After applying oil, don't leave the baby unattended. The baby may slip and fall.

**Massaging while baby has cold and fever:** Avoid massage if the baby has cold and fever. It will worsen the condition.

**Using cold water for bathing** – After massage, only lukewarm water should be used for massage. Otherwise, the applied oil might remain back on the skin and may cause itching.

**Leaving the oil on the body for more time:** Ideally, 10 – 15 minutes gap between oil massage and bathing is good enough for babies.

**Massage soon after or just before feeding** – This may cause indigestion or vomiting. Ideally, there should be a minimum gap of 30 – 45 minutes between feeding and massage.

**Using very cold oil for massage:** If you live in a cold area, or during winter, it makes sense to heat the oil to 40 degree Celsius before using for massage.

**You, watching TV, Facebook / twitter while massaging:** Oil massage to your baby is a good way to promote body strength and immunity, if done in the right way. Therefore it is always recommended to concentrate on the baby while massaging.

**Oils suggested:**

(consult your doctor first)

Nalpamaradi Oil

Eladi oil

Bala Ashwagandhadi oil

Maha Narayana oil

Usually sesame oil and any one of the above oils are mixed in equal quantities, warmed slightly to 40<sup>0</sup> C and applied.

**Question:**

**I live in a cold country. My baby is four months old. Can I use Nalpamaradhi thailam for him? Is it okay to use, as the climate here s cold? Also I was advised that not to use any soap for baby so is it must that I should wash off this thailam using soap. I am now applying coconut oil and don't use any soap.**

**Answer:**

You can use Nalpamaradi tailam even in a cold climate country.

But I suggest to wash off with some mild baby soap or at least Chickpea flour (gram flour / Besan), while bathing.

It is very important to get rid of the oil while bathing, or else baby may catch cold.

I do not think just hot water wash will get rid of the applied oil.

**What is the ideal age to start baby massage?**

15 days after birth, baby massage can be started.

## **Panchakarma and related procedures**

## **AYURVEDIC PANCHAKARMA TREATMENT: SIMPLE EXPLANATION FOR EASY UNDERSTANDING**

Panchakarma treatment is the main way in which Ayurvedic treatment is carried out. The total Ayurvedic treatments can be divided into three main divisions.

- Ayurvedic Panchakarma treatments
- Accessory Ayurvedic treatments such as oil massage, steam therapy etc.
- Ayurvedic medicines prescribed depending on the diseases and to promote health.

### **The basic principle behind Panchakarma:**

According to Ayurveda, due to the effect of atmosphere, weather, improper diet and lifestyle habits etc, the toxins in the body are accumulated. These toxins, in Ayurvedic term are called as 'Ama'. Toxins can be of two types –

- The toxins that enter into the body due to improper food / lifestyle – such as exposure to micro organisms through food, air etc.
- The toxins that our body generates due to seasonal variations, improper diet etc – such as high fat consumption leading to excessive cholesterol, old age causing wear and tear in joints causing arthritis etc.

Any disease manifestation can be explained in terms of toxins and the related effect that it exhibits on Doshas, and on the body (and mind) and its function.

In Ayurveda, toxin is termed as Tridosha. – They are Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

When they are normal, they support the body and maintain health. But when they go abnormal, they cause diseases.



- Tridosha – when all the Doshas are in harmony with each other. This means good health.
- Tridosha imbalance – one or two or all three Doshas grow up hugely, which causes diseases.
- Now, either we have to bring back these hyper activated Tridosha into normalcy or we have to throw the imbalanced Doshas out of the body.
- To bring the Doshas into normal levels, we use massage, diet changes, we use oral medicines. It is helpful when Dosha imbalance is only minor.
- But if they have been vitiated to a large extent, better to get rid of them. This is done by Panchakarma treatment.
- Ayurvedic treatment aims to relieve the body of these toxins by means of Panchakarma treatments.

### **What is Panchakarma?**

Panchakarma refers to five sets of Ayurvedic treatment procedures.

They are –

**1. Vamana – Emesis treatment** – This refers to removing the toxins by means of vomiting. Vamana treatment is given after preparative procedures. Vamana treatment is usually given to a person with Kapha imbalance diseases. Vamana treatment may take 3 – 7 days.

**2. Virechana – Purgative treatment** – This refers to removing the toxins by means of purgation. Virechana treatment is also given after preparative procedure. Virechana treatment is usually given to Pitta imbalance diseases. Virechana treatment may take from 3 – 7 days.

**3 & 4 – 2 types of Basti – rectal enema** – The Ayurvedic enema is quite different from the regular enema, given to relieve constipation. Here, the purpose is not limited to regularize bowel movements. The real purpose is to balance Vata Dosha, thus treating many Vata imbalance disorders such as Paraplegia, Gout, Arthritis, etc. There are two types of Basti – Basti with oil – Anuvasana Basti

Basti with a mixture of herbal decoction, honey, salt etc - Niruha Basti.

**Principle behind Basti treatment** – There are a few set of herbal active principles that do not undergo digestion, when given through oral route. Either these herbal active components are destroyed due to acid in the stomach or due to metabolism of these components by liver (hepatic first pass effect). Thus, the Ayurvedic experts of ester-centuries found out the rectal route to administer the herbs, by which the herbal active components are directly made available for absorption at the level of intestines.

**5. Nasya treatment** – Instillation of powders or Ayurvedic liquids through nose is called Nasya treatment. It is usually prescribed for diseases of ear, nose, throat, headache etc.

### **Which Panchakarma Ayurvedic treatment suits you?**

There are five types of Panchakarma Ayurvedic treatments. The choice of Panchakarma treatment is usually made by your Ayurvedic Doctor. These Ayurvedic treatments are chosen based on

- The age, nature and the body type of the healthy person
- The strength and body type of the patient.
- The strength of the disease.

- Dosha dominance in the patient and in disease.

The choice of Panchakarma Ayurvedic Treatments is left to the Ayurvedic doctor. Though a particular Panchakarma therapy is mentioned for particular disease, the Ayurvedic doctor may decide on his own criteria. These indications of Panchakarma therapy is according to Ayurvedic textual reference.

**Vamana treatment:**

Vamana treatment is suitable for diseases like respiratory conditions (cough, cold, Asthma), tumours, growths, diabetes, indigestion, toxic condition, excessive salivation, lack of taste, psychiatric diseases, anaemia, obesity, abscess, unhealed wound etc.

**Vamana treatment should not be done in** patients, who are weak, injured, very obese, very lean, children, aged, tired, hungry and thirsty, with heart disease, who are on fast, etc.

**Virechana treatment** –It is good for patients with fever, skin diseases, diabetes, piles, fistula, tumours, bloating, anaemia, skin infections, indigestion, lack of taste, liver diseases, psychiatric diseases, abscess, unhealed wounds, eye and nose related diseases, etc.

**Two types of Basti** – Different types of basti, and combinations are used by the Ayurvedic doctor to treat various diseases. It is best to leave it to the Ayurvedic doctor to decide.

**Nasya treatment** – Usually given in diseases related to ear, nose, throat, teeth related diseases, grey hair, hair fall, headache etc. One of the main herbal oil used for nasya treatment is Anu Tail.

## **Questions and Answers**

### ***What is Panchakarma treatment?***

Panchakarma treatment is a set of five treatment procedures followed in Ayurveda in Ayurvedic treatments. They are –

1. Vamana – (Emesis therapy)
2. Virechana – (Purgation therapy)
- 3 & 4. Basti – (two types of rectal enema)
5. Nasya (Nasal drops)

### ***Can anyone have Panchakarma treatment?***

Except a few categories of people like too elderly people, children, pregnant woman, anyone can have Panchakarma treatments.

### ***Can a normal person without any diseases have Panchakarma treatments?***

Even in a healthy person, the Doshas undergo imbalance due to slight diet changes, seasonal changes, etc. Hence, even a healthy person can have Panchakarma treatment for proper health maintenance for a long time.

### ***Can I do Panchakarma myself?***

Self medication is dangerous, be it any medicine system. Panchakarma is carried out by specialists. Hence it is to be had under the supervision of an expert Ayurvedic doctor.

### ***Does it require hospitalization? Do I need to get admitted to Ayurvedic hospital to have Panchakarma treatment?***

You need not necessarily get admitted to Ayurvedic hospital to have Panchakarma treatments. You can come to the Ayurvedic clinic / Ayurvedic hospital when the Ayurvedic doctor calls you and go back home after finishing the treatment.

### ***Can I go to work, while I am on Panchakarma treatment?***

If your work does not involve much of physical activity, then you can definitely go to work, while you are on Panchakarma treatment. Generally a person undergoing Panchakarma would need some amount of rest.

### ***Can I decide about the choice of Panchakarma?***

Choosing the effective Panchakarma treatment is the job of a specialist Ayurvedic doctor. So, you can enjoy the treatment rather than worrying about the selection of the treatment.

### ***What is the preparatory procedure to Panchakarma treatment?***

There are very simple preparatory procedures to Panchakarma treatment such as -

Pachana Therapy - correction of digestive power

Snehana – oleation treatment – Here, a specific amount of medicated ghee is administered to the patient from 1 – 7 days. This helps to soften and liquefy the sticky imbalanced Doshas deep down the tissues.

Swedana – sweating treatment - Here the person is made to sweat. It is done after an oil massage. This helps to mobilize the vitiated Doshas from the site of disease to the gastro intestinal tract (gut). Once after it reaches the gut, it is expelled out by Vamana (vomiting) or Virechana (purgation) treatment.

### ***What is the post Panchakarma procedure?***

After undergoing Panchakarma treatment, there is a set of diet and lifestyle rules to be followed for a period of 3 – 7 days to enjoy the maximum benefits of Panchakarma. This regimen is very easy to follow and the main purpose is to restore digestion strength and physical strength of the patient.

### ***Does Panchakarma alone will cure disease?***

By Panchakarma treatment, more than 50 – 60 % of Ayurvedic treatment gets completed. But to treat the disease completely, Ayurvedic medicines will be required for a specific amount of time.

***Do I require to undergo all the five Panchakarma procedures?***

- If you are suffering with a disease and your doctor decides on one or two of the five Panchakarma treatments, then that is sufficient.
- If you are a healthy person, then consult a doctor and get his advice. In most of the cases, not all the five are required.
- Usually one or two Panchakarma treatments are advised.

***How long does total Panchakarma therapy last?***

Depends upon your health, disease condition and doctors advice. Usually 5 – 15 days.

***Generally who cannot have Panchakarma therapy?***

Pregnant woman, kids, elders are advised not to have Panchakarma treatment.

***For a healthy person, what are the benefits of Panchakarma?***

For a healthy person, Panchakarma treatment helps to

- Gain or lose weight (based on the person's needs),
- To get rid of pimples or other seasonal skin infections
- To get rid of seasonal respiratory conditions like common cold, fever etc.
- Improve immunity
- Helps in rejuvenation and relaxation.
- Relieve from any body toxins, free radicals etc.
- Improves the health of sense organs.
- Supports normal hormonal balance etc.

- Useful in grey hairs, hair fall and such other cosmetic issues.

## **AYURVEDIC WAY OF TEETH BRUSHING AND TONGUE SCRAPING**

Since thousands of years, Ayurveda recommends brushing teeth. In ancient India, people used to use twigs of herbs as tooth brush. Even now, in many parts of India, you can see people using twigs of certain plants and trees for brushing. We often see that the incidence of dental caries is lesser in them than those who use regular pastes and brushes. Let us find out the benefits of ancient method of brushing teeth.

### **Twigs -**

During ancient times, twigs of trees were used as tooth brush. There was no need of any paste because the twig itself carried all the required medicinal qualities. The edge of the twig was chewed to form bristles. The bristles were sufficient to reach all the corners of mouth and clean teeth. The medicinal qualities of the herb are sufficient to prevent caries and plaque forming. The plants selected were of astringent, pungent or bitter taste.

- Bitter tasting herbs like Neem, Asana (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) have potent antimicrobial property, which is very beneficial for oral hygiene. Also, bitter taste helps to improve taste and fight bad breath and anorexia.

- Pungent tasting herbs improve salivation, helping to flush out toxins from mouth.

Astringent herbs such as Khadira (*Acacia catechu*) help to heal gum wounds and oral ulcers. This also helps to fight bad breath.

### **Plants for dental brush:**

- Nimba – neem twigs



- Karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*)
- Khadira – *Acacia catechu*
- Arka – (*Calotropis gigantea* R.Br.ex Ait)
- Malati (*Aganosma dichotoma* K. Schum)
- Kakubha – Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna* W.&A)
- Asana (*Terminalia Tomentosa* W.&A)
- Tejohva – toothache tree
- Vata (*Ficus benghalensis*) – Bengal fig.
- Yashtimadhu – Licorice (only the one, which is sweetish, but yet mentioned as tooth brush).

To use the twig as tooth brush, the thickness of the twig should be approximately equal to the tip of one's little finger. It should be 12 Angula in length (approx 22.6 cm). The tip of the twig should be chewed to make it as brush.

#### **Interesting fact about meswak :**

Meswak – Peelu / Pilu – *Salvadora persica* – this herb is marketed now-a-days as the twig of choice for tooth brush of ancient times. But quite interestingly, this herb has not been enlisted as the tooth brush of choice both in Chakara Samhita and Ashtanga Hrudayam, though this herb is mentioned by both for many other purposes, on many other occasions, except for brushing teeth. That does not mean that meswak does not make a good tooth brush. It just might be the case that it was not commonly used for the purpose of brushing teeth.

#### **Tooth powders:**

I rate tooth powders (herbal or otherwise) higher than tooth paste. At least, they are solid enough to reach the corners of teeth angles which, any brush of

any number of grooves and sizes fail to reach.

Example for traditional tooth powder –

- Dashana samskar churna
- Dasanakanti Choornam

**Tongue scraping:**

- Tongue scrapers, which should not be sharp edged and are curved, are to be made of metals like gold, silver, copper, tin and brass.
- The dirt, deposited at the root of the tongue, gives rise to foul smell. So the tongue should be scraped regularly.

**References:**

Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 5th chapter

Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutrasthana 2nd chapter

## **TAMBUL – PAN CHEWING – RIGHT METHOD AND BENEFITS**

Tambul is called pan or betel leaf. Pan chewing is part of ancient Indian custom. It is also mentioned as a part of healthy daily routine both by master Charaka and Sushruta. Needless to say, it comes with its own bunch of benefits.

### **Ingredients of paan – Tambula –**

Tambula leaf – fully grown, fresh – one or two.

Half a teaspoon (small spoon) of powder of Nutmeg

Edible camphor

Betel nut

Clove

Cardamom

Kankola (Piper cubeba) – These are the ones that are mentioned by master Charaka and Vagbhata.

Now-a-days, many other ingredients like fennel, mint, etc are added along with lime powder, to make it tastier.

### **Time of administration:**

It is administered after meals, once or twice a day.

### **Benefits of pan chewing:**

- It helps to mask the bad breath caused by indigestion, gastritis, due to foods with strong smell like onion and garlic.
- It helps to absorb out excess secretion of saliva. It brings about clarity of mouth.

- Soon after finishing meals, there will be Kapha Dosha dominance. Pan leaf with the above said spices helps to keep Kapha in balanced condition.
- It helps in digestion of food taken.
- In ancient times, at night, wife used to prepare special Tambula for her husband because of ingredients like camphor, tambula also acts as aphrodisiac.
- It brings about pleasant sensation in sense organs. It strengthens them.
- It is useful against sore throat, cough and toothache. Chewing Pan is one of the best home remedies for toothache.

**Pan chewing side effects:**

- Because of its aphrodisiac effect, it is not recommended for students.
- Excess of lime powder should be avoided. It may cause burning sensation in tongue.
- It is avoided in children, because they feel difficulty in speaking after having pan.
- Avoid excess sweet ingredients. Pan now-a-days is made excessively sweet. But it is undesirable as it may increase kapha and suppress the Kapha balancing effects of cardamom and camphor. Excess sweet takes away the digestive nature of pan.
- Usually pan is taken at night. Highly sweet pan is especially bad at night, because excess sweets are better avoided during night.

## **HERBAL SMOKING – BENEFITS, RULES, SIDE EFFECTS, BLENDS TO TRY**

Herbal smoking is one of the daily routines as per Ayurveda. It helps to balance Vata and Kapha Dosha. It is used for both preventive and therapeutic purposes. The person, who wishes to be healthy, should inhale herbal smoke daily to treat or to prevent the onset of diseases, affecting the parts above the shoulders (ear, nose, throat, eyes, brain) which is caused due to increase of kapha and Vata.

### **Person unsuitable for inhalation -**

Inhalation of smoke should not be given to the person,

- Who is suffering from bleeding diseases like nasal bleeding, menorrhagia
- Who has just undergone Virechana therapy (purgation treatment)
- Patients of ascites, intestinal obstruction, diabetes, urinary tract disorders, blindness, Flatulence, bloating, diphtheria, Anaemia and jaundice.
- Who has just been administered enema
- Who has just eaten fish, wine, curds, milk, honey, fats and poison.
- Who is injured in the head
- If he/she is awake the whole night.

### **Appropriate time for herbal smoking –**

- After sneezing
- After yawning
- After defecation
- After urination
- After having sex
- After surgical operation
- After bouts of laughing
- After brushing teeth

- After bathing
- After having food
- After vomiting

#### **Method of herbal smoking –**

- The patient should sit straight, attentive, with his mouth open and inhale the smoke through each nostril alternatively.
- While inhaling from one nostril, he should close the other.
- Inhalation should be done thrice. Inhaling the smoke and letting it out together form one bout. Three such bouts should be done each time, with three times inhaling and three exhaling alternatively.
- Smoke should be inhaled through the nose first if the imbalanced Doshas are localized in the nose and head.
- When the Doshas are localized in the throat – inhalation should be done first by the mouth and later by nose.
- The smoke inhaled (either from mouth or from nose) should be let out ***only through the mouth***; if let out through the nose, it may cause loss of vision.

#### **Here are few simple combinations that can be tried.**

Take Guggulu, pound it well. Add neem, turmeric, saffron and black gram.

Make it into the form of a wick. Add ghee for lubrication. If you burn this wick, it should easily catch fire and yields smoke.

If Guggulu is not available, you can simply make the combination with the other herbs, as per availability, put on a hot pan and inhale the smoke.

**Alternate method of herbal smoking –** A burning coal / charcoal is placed inside an earthen pot. Powder of herbs is sprinkled over it and covered with

another vessel, with a hole at its centre. A tube is connected to the hole, through which the smoke is inhaled.

### **Herbal smoking blends –**

You can use any of the following available herbs / combination of herbs.

Yava (Barley), Tila (sesame seed), oil, Masha (black gram), Aguru, Guggulu, Musta (Cyperus rotundus), Kumkuma (Saffron), Nalada, Usheera (Vetiver), Valaka, Varanga, Kounti, Madhuka, Bilvamajja, elavaluka, Shrivestaka, Sarjarasa, Dhyamaka, Madana, Plava, Shallaki, Kunduruka, obtained from fruits and pith of trees, fat, Marrow, muscle- fat and ghee.

### **Herbs mentioned by Charaka –**

Chandana( Sandalwood),

Patra ( Cinnamomum tamala Nees and Eberum ),

Twak ( Cinnamon)

Ela – Cardamom – Elettaria cardamomum

Usheera – Vetiver,

Madhuka – Licorice – Glycyrrhiza glabra

Mamsi – Nardostachys jatamansi

Guggulu (Commifora mukul Engl.),

Aguru (Aquilaria agallocha Roxb. ),

Sharkara (Sugar),

Harenuka (Pisum sativum Linn),

Priyangu – Callicarpa macrophylla Vahl.

Prithvika ( Nigella sativa Linn),

Keshara ( Mesua ferrea Linn),

Nakha – Capparis sepiaria,

Hrivera (Pavonia Odorata Willd),

Padmaka – Wild Himalayan Cherry – *Prunus cerasoides*  
Dhyamaka( *Cymbopogon Schoenathus Spreng* ),  
bark of Nyagrodha (*Ficus bengalensis Linn*),  
Udumbara(*Ficus racemosa Linn*),  
Ashvattha (*Ficus religiosa Linn*),  
Plaksha (*Ficus locor Bunch- Ham*), and  
Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*)  
Vanya (*Cyperus tenuiflorus*),  
Sarjarasa (Resin of *Vateria indica Linn*).  
Musta (*Cyperus rotundus*)  
Shaileya ( *Permellia perforata*),  
Kamala(*Nelumbo uncifera Gaertn*),  
Utpala (*Nymphaea alba*),  
Shrivestaka (resinous extract from *Pinus roxburghii Sargent* ),  
Shallaki (*Boswellia serrata Roxb.*)

**Signs of proper herbal smoking:**

- Clarity of mind, clarity in thinking process
- Clarity in throat, absence of mucus collection in throat
- Clarity in sense organs
- Lightness of head

**Benefits of smoke therapy-** Smoke therapy is beneficial against following diseases.

- Cough, Dyspnoea, Rhinitis, Disorders of voice, bad smell of nose and mouth



- Pallor of the face, disorders of hairs and hair loss
- Discharges, itching and pain in ear and nose
- Loss of function of the ears, mouth and eyes
- Headache, migraine, eye pain, toothache, excess drowsiness
- Strengthens sense organs, excess sleep
- Stupor and hiccup do not affect the person who inhales smoke habitually.

### **Side effects of herbal smoking;**

Doing Dhumapana at improper time or in excess leads to,

- Bleeding disease
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Excessive thirst
- Fainting Or loss of consciousness
- Delusion.

You can see that all these are symptoms of Pitta increase.

For this cold regimen should be adopted.

**Signs of insufficient smoking** - Impairment of voice, presence of Kapha(phlegm) in the throat and heaviness of head are the features of insufficient smoking.

**If one smokes in excess**, his palate, head and throat get dried up and becomes lot. One feels thirsty and may faint; there may be excessive bleeding, dizziness and hotness in sense organs.

### **Treatment of complications of herbal smoking;**

If complications due to untimely and over smoking arise, you need to consult an Ayurveda doctor immediately. Here are a few treatment options:

- Intake of ghee – this helps to relieve burning sensation, and excess of dryness caused due to wrong herbal smoking.
- Administration of Nasya (nasal drops) with oils like Anu Thailam. This helps to soothen the inflamed nasal mucosa and also helps to strengthen the sense organs.
- Collyrium and demulcent drinks are prescribed.
- The medicines should be unctuous drugs in the event of vitiation of Vata Dosha (associated with pain)
- If the symptoms are associated with Pitta (burning sensation) then herbs of cooling nature should be selected for treatment.

## HOW TO DO AYURVEDIC NASYA TREATMENT AT HOME? NASAL DROPS FOR LONG LIFE

Nasya treatment means putting nasal drops. You might already know about the usage of nasal drops to relieve nasal congestion, but Ayurvedic nasya therapy is quite different from this usual practice. The process of putting the drops into nostrils remains the same. But the purpose of this treatment varies in Ayurveda.

Although there are many types of Nasya treatments, there is only one type which can be done on a daily basis for the overall improvement of health and to prevent diseases.

### **Definition:**

Ayurvedic texts define nasya as-“Oushadham oushadha siddha sneham va nasikayaam deeyate inti nasyam”

It means, procedure where the medicated drugs or oils are administrated through the nostrils.

**Note:** There are many types of Nasya, E.g. nasya using powders, juice extracts, decoctions, herbal fumes etc., which are used for therapeutic purpose. Here I am only concentrating on the one that everyone can use on daily basis. This type of Nasya that can be performed by anyone (except a few contra indicates, explained below) is called as Pratimarsha Nasya.

Nasal medication is prescribed for the treatment of diseases of the parts above the shoulders.

Nose is considered as the gateway for the head, spreading through which, the nasal medication reaches all the parts of the head and neck and cures the diseases of respective region.

**Indication:**

This type of Nasya is applicable to all healthy people. Specifically it is helpful in people suffering from,

- Stiffness of head, teeth, neck, jaw, shoulders
- obstruction of the throat
- Rhinitis – running nose
- Uvulitis
- Tonsillitis
- Nasal, Ear, and Corneal disorders
- hyper pigmentation, freckles
- Migraine and other types of headaches
- Diseases of the oral cavity, Gingivitis and loose teeth
- Eye disorders
- facial paralysis
- Motor neuron disorders and Convulsions
- Goitre
- Hoarse voice and Slurred speech
- Neuro-muscular disorders

One who practices nasal therapy on time, according to the prescribed method, will never have grey hair and will not experience hair fall. Instead his hair grows well. His eyes, nose and ears will not be affected by any morbidity. Being nourished by inhalation, his veins, joints, ligaments and tendons of head and neck gain greater strength. His face becomes cheerful and plump, and his voice becomes sweet and stable. All the sense organs become clear and there is considerable strength.

The person, who practises nasal therapy, will not suffer from diseases related

to head and neck. His hair does not turn grey with age. (Reference: Charaka Sutrasthana 5th chapter)

**When not to do Nasya treatment:**

- Nasal medication should NOT be administered immediately after consumption of food, water, alcohol, artificial poison (Garavisha – chronic poisoning) and fat (as part of Snehana therapy). Also, these shouldn't be consumed immediately after administering nasal medication.

**Contra indications for Nasya treatment:**

- Nasya should not be administered to those who are less than seven years old and more than 80 years old.
- Should not be administered to someone who is suffering from indigestion, excessive thirst, and excessive hunger or severely tired. It is not advisable to someone who has natural urges, like urge to urinate, defecate etc.
- It is not recommended for people if they have high fever, acute cold, acute rhinitis and people who have had blood letting therapy or severe bleeding – as in case of heavy periods, nasal bleeding, ulcerative colitis etc., patients of dyspnoea, Asthma, cough and infective Rhinitis.
- Ideally, there should be a minimum gap of 30 minutes between bath and Nasya treatment.
- Should not be administered to woman who has delivered 3 months ago or less.

- Should not be administered to those who have undergone purification (Panchakarma) therapies and who have been given Basti treatment recently.
- People with low hearing capacity, in whom the Doshas are greatly imbalanced and moving from place to place;

### **Right time for Nasya therapy –**

- Nasal medication should be administered in morning – if Kapha is increased.  
Mid day – if Pitta is increased  
Evening – if Vata is increased.
- During Sharath (Autumn) and Vasantha (Spring), it should be given in forenoon.
- During winter, it should be given in midday.
- During summer in evenings.
- During rainy season, when there is sunlight.

**Pratimarsha nasya** – The below mentioned type of Nasya is called as Pratimarsha Nasya.

It can be applied,

- After head massage
- After Gandusha (gargling)
- After Anjana – collyrium
- After defecation
- After brushing teeth
- After bouts of heavy laughing

**Procedure for Nasya treatment –**

- Before starting the treatment, attend to your nature calls and finish off your necessary routines.
- Take sesame oil and do gentle massage over the entire face and neck. Other than sesame oil following oils can be used for massage.
  - Maha Narayana oil, if you are targeting headache and sinusitis.
  - Nalpamaradi taila / Kumkumadi Taila – for good facial skin and complexion.
  - Bala Ashwagandhadi Taila / Ksheerabala taila – to improve strength of sense organs.
- While massaging, avoid eye lids and eyes.
- After massage, give hot fomentation. You can do this by mopping the face with a towel dipped in hot water / washing the face with hot water / giving hot fomentation with a cloth pack of salt, heated on a pan. Hot fomentation should be given to face and neck, avoiding eyes and eye lids.
- Lie on a cot in a room devoid of breeze or excess sunlight. You can use a thin pillow below neck. Lie straight with face upwards, extending arms and legs.
- **Anu Tailam** – a type of medicated herbal oil is used for Nasya procedure. Just before the procedure, Anu Taila is slightly warmed in hot water bed. Two drops of the oil are instilled into each nostril. This can be done by another person because while self administering, one may miss the target.
- After instilling, soles, neck, palms, ears etc. should be mildly massaged.
- After about 30 minutes, sputum along with medicine may come out. You have to spit it all out.

- If you feel excess of heat / burning sensation, then wash your face with cold water.
- After this procedure, one should lie with face upwards for 2 minutes.
- Then smoke with medicated herbs should be inhaled. This procedure is called as Herbal Smoking, explained in a separate chapter.
- The person should gargle with hot water thoroughly to cleanse the throat.

#### **Symptoms of good Nasya procedure –**

- Breathing without difficulty
- Good sleep
- Improved strength of sense organs

#### **Symptoms of inadequate Nasya –**

- Vision problems
- Emaciation, dryness of nose and mouth
- Feeling of emptiness in head

If you feel these symptoms, then repeat the procedure of Nasya.

#### **Symptoms of excess Sneha nasya –**

Itching, heaviness of the head, excess salivation, Anorexia and Rhinitis are signs of excess Nasya.

#### **Benefits of Nasya treatment –**

- The skin and face becomes bright and chest becomes well developed.
- The body parts and the sense organs become strong.
- Gradually, grey hair will reduce and eventually disappear, if nasal medication is administered regularly.



### **How it works?**

The medicaments administered through the nostrils pervade into the nervous and venous system present in and around the nostrils. Then they evacuate the morbidity present or distributed in nearby area. Thus it relieves the blockage of the channels and the diseases are cured effectively.

### **Rationality of nasya therapy:**

It is a well known that the olfactory centre is located in the temporal lobe of the brain. The filaments of first cranial nerve, Olfactory nerve arise from the upper parts of the nasal mucosa, from where the minute fibrils pass to meet with the fibres from olfactory bulb. This nerve passes the Cribriform plate present over here and joins the olfactory centre in the temporal lobe of the brain.

As mentioned earlier, the numerous capillaries embedded in the nasal mucosa absorb the medicinal principles administered through nasya and produce various kinds of local and systemic effects by mechanical and chemical reactions.

The discharge secreted contains the blocking morbid and are evacuated through nasal route.

Thus the pathological condition is reversed and the disease is relieved.

## HOW TO DO OIL PULLING IN GENUINE AYURVEDIC WAY? 9 TIPS

Actually, the procedure is called mouth gargling using oil. Not only oil, but many types of liquids can be used for this purpose based on desired benefits.

Ayurveda explains two types of similar procedures.

**Gandusha** – Let us call this as oil pulling. (Though other liquids than oils are also used). Here, there is no gargling. The liquid is filled to the capacity of mouth and it is held inside the mouth for specific amount of time.

**Kavala** – It is actually mouth gargling. Here, lesser quantity of liquid is used to rinse mouth for specific amount of time. Later, it is spit out.

### Types of Oil pulling –

**Lubricating** with oils and fats – for Vata imbalance disorder; It is done by using the oil, processed with herbs of sweet, sour and salt tastes.

**Palliative** for Pitta imbalance disorder; It is done by herbs of bitter, astringent and sweet tastes.

**Cleansing / purifying** – for Kapha imbalance disorder. It is done with herbs of bitter, pungent, sour, salt tastes and possessing hot property.

**Healing** – It is done with herbs of astringent and bitter taste.

### Different liquids used in oil pulling

- Fats – oil, ghee milk
- Honey with water
- Fermented gruel
- Wine
- Juice of meat / meat soup
- Cow urine distillate
- Dhanyamla – Fermented grain liquid

The liquids may be mixed with a kalka (herbal paste).

The liquids may be cooked or raw.

The liquids should be comfortable to touch and to hold in the mouth.

### **A few practical examples –**

**Sesame seed paste with water** – A tablespoon of sesame seed is made into paste. Add this to a cup of luke warm water. Use this mixture for gargling. It is useful in relieving tingling sensation in teeth, tooth weakness, disease of the mouth caused by Vata (which involves pain as a symptom).

For daily use, oil pulling with **sesame oil / meat soup**

### **Benefits of oil pulling-**

- **Sesame oil** (can be used daily) gargling is beneficial for the strength of jaws, depth of voice, flabbiness of face, excellent gustatory sensation and good taste for food. One will neither get dryness of throat, nor do his lips ever get cracked; his teeth will never develop caries and will be deep-rooted; he will neither have any toothache nor will his teeth set on edge by sour intake; his teeth can chew even the hardest eatables.

### **Reference: (Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 5)**

- **Ghee and milk** are very useful for oil pulling, when there is local or general burning sensation, ulceration and wounds caused by foreign bodies, poison wounds, alkalis (Kshara) and burns by fire.
- **Honey** - Holding honey in the mouth removes the sliminess of the mouth, heals the ulcers quickly, relieves burning sensation and thirst. It is also useful in quick healing of oral ulcers.
- Holding **Dhanyamla** – Fermented grain liquid in the mouth removes distaste, dirt (of teeth and tongue) and bad odour from the mouth.
- **Dhanyamla without salt**, used cold, is best to remove dryness of the mouth.

- Holding **Ksharambu** – water containing alkalis (like Yavakshara) in the mouth quickly breaks up the accumulation of Kapha.
- Holding **warm water** in mouth brings about lightness and cleansing of the mouth.

#### **How to do oil pulling methodically –**

- The person should sit in a place devoid of breeze but in mild sunlight.
- His shoulders and neck should be massaged with plain sesame oil / Maha Narayana Taila / Bala Ashwagandhadi Taila / Ksheerabala oil. Massage can be given for 5 – 10 minutes.
- After gentle massage, fomentation is given for 2 – 3 minutes. It can be just washing face and neck with hot water, or wiping face with towel dipped in hot water or exposing the face to steam. Eyes should be covered with cold cloth, during fomentation.
- After fomentation, oil pulling is done.  
Keeping his face slightly lifted up, one should hold the liquid in mouth till the mouth gets filled with Kapha (sputum / slimy liquid) or till the nose and eyes start secreting liquid. Usually it takes between 5 – 20 minutes.
- Then the contents of the mouth are spat out.

Usually, this will be followed with herbal smoking (explained in a separate chapter)

#### **Kavala – mouth gargles –**

It is used in treating,

- Diseases of the neck, head, ears, mouth and eyes
- Praseka – excess salivation, diseases of the throat
- Dryness of the mouth, nausea
- Tandra – stupor
- Aruchi – anorexia

- Peenasa – rhinitis

The procedure is similar to Gandusha, but here, lesser quantity of liquid is taken into mouth and rinsed for 5 – 20 minutes.

## **STEAM THERAPY AFTER MASSAGE**

**Question:** Is it very important to take steam after Abhyanga and how it works on the body?

Steam helps to get rid of the massaged oil from the skin. But benefits of steam therapy or heat treatment after oil massage go beyond that.

### **In Panchakarma,**

Say, when you have cough with sputum or sinusitis, inhaling steam helps in easy expulsion of sputum. Right?

Panchakarma is a procedure to expel out vitiated Dosha (morbid matter) from the body. Imagine this morbidity is stuck in some organ and in some channels. Oil massage makes the Doshas soft. Steam therapy after massage makes the Doshas even softer and detaches the Doshas from the inner linings of channels of the organs. Thus, it initiates the expulsion of Doshas from the body.

### **To balance Vata Dosha:**

Dryness and coldness are two qualities of Vata. Oiliness (unctuousness) is the opposing quality. So, when there is Vata dominance, applying oil helps to relieve Vata, hence helps to relieve pain. If steam is given, heat is caused, further relieving Vata and bringing about muscle relaxation.

### **To avoid joint stiffness**

Joints are the places where Kapha is dominant (along with Vata). While Vata is responsible for movement of joints, Kapha ensures compactness, smoothness and cushioning of joints. If just oil is applied without steam therapy, then in some cases, Kapha increases in the joints (because, oiliness is a Kapha quality). It may lead to increased stiffness, especially in the early stage of rheumatoid

arthritis. If steam is given, it helps to balance out Kapha, because Kapha has cold quality.

So, in osteo-arthritis, and degenerative disorders or in a normal person, for regular massage, steam therapy or some sort of heat application or at least hot water bath is highly recommended after oil massage (Abhyanga)

**Avoid steam in high Pitta conditions:** Whenever there is an active inflammation, as in case of blunt injury or in cases of flared up stages of rheumatoid arthritis or gout, heat / steam application should not be done, because active inflammation with redness, swelling etc, indicate Pitta increase. Hotness is a Pitta quality. Hence, if steam is given, it further increases Pitta, further worsening the inflammation.

**Steam after Shirodhara:** Mild steam therapy after Shirodhara helps in further relaxation of mind and brain. But it should be very mild, sufficient to cause Vata balance and eyes should be avoided.

So, steam therapy / heat treatment after massage is necessary, but only in selected conditions and for specific time.

## **WHY SHOULD YOU SWEAT? TO TREAT DISEASE, FOR BETTER HEALTH**

In the movie “Wolf Of Wall Street”, Jordan Belfort installs a steam therapy machine into his house. He was a drug addict. Everyday morning he gets a steam therapy to expel out all the remnant drugs that he took previous night, so that he can start his day afresh. So, if he can expel out all the drugs, sweating can expel many toxins out of your body as well. Sweating is a form of therapy, explained in Ayurveda. It is also known as fomentation therapy.

### **Who should not try sweating treatment:**

- If you already sweat a lot.
- Who consume alcohol on daily basis – Because they already sweat a lot.
- Pregnant woman – Sweating is a kind of cleansing procedure, it takes away some strength out of the body. Hence, it is not ideal for pregnant women.
- Those suffering from bleeding disorders such as nasal bleeding, rectal bleeding etc. Bleeding disorders are associated with Pitta Dosha. Sweating increases Pitta, hence, not ideal for them.
- During periods and women with heavy periods problem – Pitta is dominant
- People with Pitta body type
- If suffering from Diarrhoea, dysentery – already the body is losing water, hence, sweating is not ideal.
- People with excessive dryness. Sweating in them might cause bleeding.
- Chronic urinary disorders, diabetes – Pitta will be involved in them.
- Inflammation and prolapse of the rectum, burn injuries, toxic conditions
- Those who are fatigued, unconscious



- Very obese people, who are very thirsty, hungry, – already they will be sweating or Pitta will be aggressive.
- Who are suffering from anger and anxiety
- Those suffering from jaundice, abdominal diseases, Vatarakta (gout)
- Those who are weak, debilitated and dried up and whose Ojas has been reduced – because sweating involves strain and it is a cleansing procedure.
- Wounded, injured
- Patient with herpes, other skin disorders involving redness, bleeding and burning sensation
- Shosha – emaciated
- Who have recently consumed milk, curds, fat
- Who have just undergone Virechana treatment
- Who are tired, suffering from anger, grief, fear, liver diseases, anaemia.

#### **To whom sweating is ideal to follow –**

- Disorders involving Vata and Kapha Dosha
- Cough, COPD, Asthma – in them, sweating helps to expel the sputum out pretty easily.
- Pratisnyaya – running nose, allergic rhinitis – it is basically a Kapha dominant condition, sweating in them helps to improve lung strength and keep allergies at bay.
- People with hiccup, bloating, constipation, altered voice, hoarseness
- Diseases of Vata imbalance – such as neurological disorders, body ache, stiffness in lower back, flanks, back, abdomen and jaws
- Enlargement of the scrotum, contractions of toes and fingers, tetanus sprains, dysuria, obstruction to the flow of semen and urine, thigh

stiffness – all these involve Kapha and Vata Dosha. Sweating which has hotness quality helps to relieve the coldness quality of Vata and Kapha Dosha.

- Heaviness of the body for people who are not obese
- Pain in the ear, neck and head – indicate Vata imbalance
- Paralysis
- Excessive yawning,
- sciatica, pain and stiffness of feet, knee, calf, oedema, spondylosis,
- Ama – diseases due to impaired digestion and metabolism,
- In chills and shivering,

### **How to do sweating treatment?**

There are basically two types of sweating treatments.

**Dry sweating** – Here, sweating is done without oil massage. It is useful in stomach related disorders and in pure Kapha disorders. For example: extremely stiff joints, cough with profuse sputum production, indigestion, chills, shivering, chronic respiratory conditions, severe asthma etc.

**Oil sweating** – Here, the person undergoes oil massage first, and then undergoes sweating. In Vata- Kapha disorders or in all Vata disorders, oil sweating is recommended. Example: paralysis, spondylosis, yawning, aches and pains, etc.

If it is for painful conditions such as arthritis, muscle pain etc, then oil massage with Mahanarayana taila is ideal, before undergoing sweating treatment.

**Local sweating:** In case of joint stiffness, or local areas of pain, – local sweating is ideal.

This can be achieved by boiling water in a closed vessel, and directing the heat

to the local area with the help of a pipe.

Application of hot poultice is also a way of local sweating.

**Whole body sweating:** This is achieved by different means such as –

- Hot water bath (avoiding head and face)
- Exercise in a room with minimal ventilation
- Experiencing hunger and thirst
- Experiencing fear
- wrestling
- Exposure to sunlight
- Residing in a warm chamber
- Sweating chambers
- Wrapping with heavy sheets

**Level of sweating—**

- Fomentation should be avoided over testicles, heart and eyes.
- Even if it is very necessary to administer, it should be of mild type.
- Over groins it should be moderate.
- Fomentation on other parts of the body could be according to the individual needs.

**How long to sweat?**

When you are doing this treatment on your own, ideally, it is best to stop it within 5 – 10 minutes.

**Signs of Ideal fomentation:**

Fomentation is to be administered until there is,

- Complete recovery from coldness and pain

- Relief from stiffness and heaviness of the body
- Softness or tenderness in the body parts.
- Diminution of cold and pain and softness of the organ.

### **After sweating treatment:**

You should abstain from exercise on that day. After wards the body should be massaged slowly, given bath in warm water and allowed comfort as prescribed in lubrication therapy.

### **Effects of excess Sweating:-**

Aggravation of Pitta and vitiation of blood,

thirst, loss of consciousness, weakness of voice and body,

Delusion, Dizziness

Pain in the joints ,

fever, appearance of black- blue, red patches on the skin, and vomiting are caused by excess of Sweating therapy;

fainting, fatigue, excessive thirst, burning sensation, weakness of the voice and limbs.

### **Treatment for excess sweating –**

- Ice packs over head, or on the local areas.
- Cold water bath
- Drink cold water and sweet fruit juices.

All in all, sweating is a good way to treat diseases and for maintaining health.

But it should be done carefully, considering the diseases and body type. If you

can consult an Ayurveda doctor and get advice on which type of sweating is ideal and follow that, you will be immensely benefited.

## **Mental and physical exercise**

## **EXERCISE IN THE MORNING OR AT NIGHT?**

Whether to exercise in the morning or in the evening? The simplest answer would be - The time convenient to us will be the best time.

**Traditional Ayurvedic Concept** – Most of the Ayurvedic text books explain morning as the best time for work out.

### **Tridosha concept -**

**Effect of exercise on Dosha** – Exercise helps to calm Kapha and increase Vata Dosha. Exercise when done in Pitta dominant time (afternoon) causes Pitta increase along with Vata increase.

### **Tridosha in a day -**

If we divide a day into three equal parts,

- The first part of the day is dominated by Kapha Dosha (That is why you tend to be calmer during morning hours, and prefer silence.)
- Second Part of the day is dominated by Pitta Dosha (That is why you tend to be aggressive and active during afternoon hours)and
- Third Part of the day is dominated by Vata Dosha. (That is why you tend to be active socially or tend to be more talkative, during evening hours.)

Kapha Dosha dominance refers to strength and stability. So during morning, the natural body strength is more and exercise will help to further strengthen the body.

Exercise increases Vata dosha and naturally, during evening there is Vata dominance, hence exercising in evening will further increase Vata.

### **Example for exercise increasing Vata -**

Foot pain is a Vata imbalance symptom (at the knees). If you exercise, then **foot pain** will further worsen. This means that exercise is further vitiating already increased Vata.

Hence exercise in evening may cause more tiredness.

In some people, exercise at night may worsen headache and lack of sleep.

### **Benefits of exercise in the evening -**

- Some people may be free only in the evenings. In such cases, they can exercise in the evening.
- For some, tiredness caused due to exercise at night may help sleep better.
- If you are fond of outdoor games, evening is a better time as the mind will be totally relaxed and there will be lesser time constraint.

Those who are already well-accustomed to exercise during evening hours, then it is better to stick to the same.

### **Bottom line**

- If you have both the options, then opt for exercising in morning.
- If you are left with no option but evening hours or if you are accustomed, then exercising in evening is a good choice.



## **EXERCISE TIPS TO GET FIT OVER FORTY**

Being forty and fabulous is every person's dream. We are usually tight-scheduled in our 30s with marriage, family and professional commitments. When we reach 40, things look pretty much settled and idea of getting back to the vigor and valor of 20s hits the mind. If you are thinking in these lines, chances are that you are planning to incorporate a physical activity in your routine. But there are a few facts to consider.

### **Over 40 fitness for men – Things to consider**

**1. Plan perfectly** - You have many exercise options to choose from.

- Gym at home or joining a gym
- **Yoga** - Doing it yourself or joining a course.
- Walking / jogging
- outdoor games

You can choose any of these, but you should have genuine and thorough interest in it.

**Gym** – you may not lose weight as quickly as in your 20s. However, gym exercises enable you to have strong muscle strength. Take enough care not to lift weights beyond capacity. After 40, bruises and muscle twitches take longer time to heal.

**Yoga** – Is perfect for people suffering from stress, diabetes, high BP etc. If you seek mental and physical balance out of your workout schedule then Yoga is perfect for you.

**Walking / jogging** is perfect for those who seek good cardiac health.

**Outdoor games** – is a great way of workout. It helps to strengthen your relationships.

## **2. For Fitness over Forty, be ready for initial painful days -**

Because you are taking up physical activity after a long time, the body will take time to adjust. The best way to deal with such pain is

- To start very slowly and gradually
- Don't give up.
- Resting the particular part of the muscle group that has excess pain
- Applying pain relief herbal oil, as per the advice of your Ayurveda doctor.

**3. Start very slowly** and never aim for heavy weight lifting initially. You might be an expert in your twenties, but starting the same exercise schedule all of a sudden is not a good idea.

**4. Only Ground exercise, initially** - I strongly recommend to stick to ground exercises only for at least 2 – 3 months, especially if you are going to gym.

**Concentrate on stretch exercises** rather than weight training. This is the reason why Yoga is a better option than gym. (However, the choice is yours). At least 70 % of exercises that you do should involve stretching.

**Mix Yoga with Gym** - This is another good and ideal fitness option, because you can enjoy stretching exercises and dumbbells. Also you can increase the strength of both mind and body at the same time.

**5. Take a special care of back.** Use lumbo-sacral belt, gym gloves especially when exercising with weights.

Always end the gym session with back strengthening stretch or exercises.

After physical activities, it is good to apply Maha Narayana oil to body, wait for 20 minutes and then have hot water bath. This will relieve muscle sprains and relaxes the whole body.

### **GYM OR YOGA? WHICH ONE IS GOOD FOR YOU?**

With the ever increasing Diabetes and other lifestyle disorder menace, it is almost mandatory for every one to engage in one or the other sort of physical activities. Dance and sports are the best options; Gym and Yoga are also equally good. I have listed advantages of each of them below to help you to choose the best.

Dance and sports are the best options because -

- If planned perfectly, all the family members can be involved.
- There is obvious enjoyment quotient.
- It improves family / friendship bonding.

#### **Gym advantages:**

- Gym workout helps to improve muscle mass and to burn calories quickly. Yoga exercises concentrate more on stretching and maintaining postures.
- One can burn more calories, working in a gym for one hour than doing yoga for the same duration.
- To lose weight quickly, gym and exercise is a better option than Yoga.
- For youngsters above 18 years, gym is a better option, because a good physique can be achieved faster and maintained by gym workouts.

- In physically challenged people, it is easier to do selected gym exercises than Yoga.

#### **Yoga advantages:**

- Though both Yoga and gym workouts emphasize on patterned and controlled breathing, Yoga helps for a more controlled breathing.
- Yoga (and Pranayama) helps to improve concentration.
- Yoga postures and exercises involve most of the muscles of the body, but in gym, usually the workout concentrates on specific group of muscles.
- Yoga postures and exercises involve stretching type of exercises. Hence Yoga is more suitable for children up to 18 years as it promotes proper bone growth and helps in overall development.
- The chances of getting injured are more in gym than in yoga.

#### **Conclusion:**

- Dance and sports are best options for physical workouts.
- Gym or Yoga? – It is better to decide on case to case basis.
- Up to 18 years of age, Yoga is better as it promotes growth and much required concentration in studies.
- For youngsters after 18, gym seems a better option as it helps to maintain good physique and muscles, though yoga is also a good option for them.
- For obese people, Gym is better, to lose weight quickly.
- For those who are already fit, for older people, and who are passionate and inclined about Yoga, Yoga is a better choice.

#### **Benefits of Gym and exercise:**

- Benefits of gym and exercise are very well explained in Ancient Ayurvedic text book – Sushruta Samhita. Its meaning is worth exploring.

- For easy understanding, the terms – weight lifting exercise, workout exercise, weight training exercise, fitness routine, are all covered under the term Vyayama (Exercise).
- Anything that brings about tiredness to the body is called as Vyayama (exercise).
- After exercise, the whole body should be gently pressed.
- Due to exercise, overall body nourishment, luster, and body curves improve.
- It improves digestive power, body stability, makes one feel light, removes laziness, and brings about tolerance towards tiredness. Exercise begets health.
- There is no other thing as effective as exercise to cure obesity.

An exercised body is feared by his enemies. Such a body will even defy old age. Exercised and well massaged body keeps diseases at bay, as similar to lion keeps small animals at bay.

Exercised body can digest even half baked food.

Slightly oily food can be had by person doing gym and exercise.

Maximum exercise can be done in winter and autumn.

Exercise should be done till one's half strength.

When a person starts feeling as if his breath is coming out of his heart level, it indicates he has reached to half of his original strength. Then the exercise should be stopped.

Quantity of exercise should be determined by the place (warmer places – lesser exercise), time (summer – lesser exercise), diet (soon after food – no exercise) and disease condition.

If one over exercises, he will suffer from depleted body strength, thirst, tastelessness, giddiness, bleeding disorders (such as nasal bleeding), cough, fever, respiratory disorders etc.

**Avoid gym** – Those suffering from bleeding disorders, emaciated, suffering from respiratory disorders, soon after eating or soon after sexual intercourse, having giddiness, should *avoid exercise*.

## **BENEFITS OF GYM AND EXERCISE – AYURVEDIC EXPLANATION**

Benefits of exercise are very well explained in Ancient Ayurvedic text-book – Sushruta Samhita. It is so meaningful and interesting that I can't resist mentioning the original Sanskrit shloka from the text-book, along with meaning.

For easy understanding, the terms – weight lifting exercise, workout exercise, weight training exercise, fitness routine are all covered under the term Vyayama (Exercise).

shareera aayaasa jananam karma vyayama sajnitam |  
Tat krutva sukham deham vimrudeeyat samantataha |  
Shareeropachayaha kaantir gaatraanaam suvibhaktataa /  
Deeptaagnitvam anaalasyam sthiratvam laaghavam mrujaa |  
Shrama klama pipaasoshna sheetaadeenaam sahisnutaa |  
aarogyam chaapi paramam vyaayaamaadupajaayate ||  
Na chaasti sadrusham tena kinchit sthoulyaapakarshanam |  
Na cha vyaayaaminam martyamardayantyarayu balaat |  
Na chainam sahasaa aakramya jaraa samadhirohati |  
Sthireebhavati maamsam cha vyaayaamabdiratasya cha |  
Vyaayaamasvinna gaatrasya pdmyamydvatitasya cha |  
vyaadhayo nopasarpanti simham kshud mrugaa iva |  
Vyaayaamam kurvato nityam viruddhamapi bhojanam |  
Vidagdham avidagdham vaa nirdosham paripachyate |  
vyaayaamo hi sadaa pathyo balinaam snigdha bhojinaam |  
Sa cha sheete vasante cha tessaam pathyatamaha smrutaha ||  
sarveshu avrutu arahaha pumbhiratmahitaishibhihi |

Balasyardhena kartavyo vyaayaamo hanyato athavaa | |  
Hrudi sthaanasthito vaayuryadaa vaktram prapadyate |  
Vyaayaamam kuravato jantostad balaardhasya lakshanam |  
Vayobala shareeraani deshakaalaashanaani cha |  
sameekshya kuryaat vyaayaamam anyathaa rogamaapnuyaat | |  
Kshaya trushnaa aruchi chardi raktapitta bhrama klamaaha |  
Kasa shosha jvara shwaasaa ativyaayaama sambhavaaha | |  
raktapitto krushaha shoshee shwaasa kaasa kshataaturaha |  
bhuktavaan streeshu cha ksheena trut bhramaarthascha varjayet | |

**Translation:**

Anything that brings tiredness to the body is called as Vyayama (exercise).

After exercise, the whole body should be gently pressed.

Due to exercise, overall body nourishment, lustre, and body curves improve.

It improves digestive power, body stability and lightness. It removes laziness, brings about tolerance towards tiredness, thirst, hot or cold weather. Exercise begets health.

There is no other thing as effective as exercise to cure obesity.

The enemies are scared of an exercised body. Such a body will even defy old age.

Exercised and well massaged body keeps diseases at bay, as similar to lion keeps small animals at bay.

Exercised body can digest even half-baked food.

Slightly oily food can be had by person, who does gym and exercise.

Maximum exercise can be done in winter and autumn.

Exercise should be done till one's half strength.

When a person starts feeling as if his breath is coming out of his heart level, it



indicates he has reached to half of his original strength. Then the exercise should be stopped.

Quantity of exercise should be determined by place (warmer places – lesser exercise), time (summer – lesser exercise), diet (soon after food – no exercise) and disease condition.

If one exercises overly, he will suffer from depleted body strength, thirst, tastelessness, giddiness, bleeding disorders (such as nasal bleeding), cough, fever, respiratory disorders etc.

#### **Avoid gym –**

- Those suffering from bleeding disorders and respiratory disorders should avoid gym.
- One should not exercise soon after eating or has giddiness.
- Those who indulge in excessive sexual activity, lift heavy weight, walk long distances, weakened by excessive physical and mental work, are suffering from Vata disorder, are hungry and thirsty should avoid exercise.

#### **Side effects of over-exercise:**

- Shrama – tiredness
- Klama – exhaustion
- Kshaya – depletion of body tissues
- Trushna – excessive thirst
- Raktapitta – bleeding disorders – such as nasal bleeding, worsening of menorrhagia in women etc.
- Pratamaka – breathing difficulties
- Kasa – cough
- Jwara – fever

- Chardi – vomiting

## **WHEN TO AVOID GYM AND WORKOUT**

Bodybuilding and gym training is a passion for a few and need for many. With ever-rising risk of cardiovascular diseases, and raise in people wanting to look fit, many people are hitting to gym with vengeance. But there are many circumstances, where Gym and exercises for bodybuilding are best avoided.

According to Ayurveda, you must avoid gym under these circumstances –

**1. Lack of sleep** – Amir Khan, the bollywood actor took up body building for his flick – Ghazini. While his training program was shot, he pointed out correctly that he used to avoid gym, whenever he was not having 8 hours of complete sleep. According to Ayurveda, Vyayama or gym elevates Vata, so also, lack of sleep. So, elevation of Vata to a much higher level is undesirable. Avoid gym if you did not have sleep and rest, the last night.

**2. Muscle pull** – Sometimes, in gym when a new exercise is tried, muscles twitch or pull. During these circumstances, it is highly advisable to stay away from gym till the time the muscle pull or twitch is treated, to avoid excessive Vata aggravation.

**3. After delivery** – After delivering a baby, till the time the uterus returns to normal shape and the tendons and ligaments around it regain strength, it is highly advisable to avoid gym. Usually this period is up to 3 months in case of normal delivery and 6 months in case of caesarean section. Uterus prolapse during the later stages of life is linked to improper rest during the after-delivery-period. So take rest if you just have delivered a baby and enjoy taking care of your bundle of joy.

**4. Feeling of burnt out, breathing problem** – Normally, after a heavy work schedule, we may feel over tired, or burnt out. In such circumstances, rest is very much needed. If you are feeling burnt out, stop going to gym for a week, then self assess your condition and act accordingly.

**5. During or just after a disease attack** – Your body has already fought with infecting micro organisms. So, it needs rest, before you go and wrestle with the gym machines. So, rest well during or just after a disease attack.

**6. When you do not feel like going to gym** – Sometimes, if you are not really feeling like going to gym, it may be a hidden signal from your body to take rest, unless your laziness is haunting your will-power to workout.

**7. When your family members are upset with your daily routine** – This is also a very important issue. If you are very much self indulging in nature, and do not give enough time to your beloved one's at home, then, why not stop going to gym and look for alternatives like out-door games with your family like volleyball, badminton, football, swimming, trekking etc? They are also equally effective as a gym schedule, provided you plan it right.

## **HOW LONG TO EXERCISE?**

Exercise is the best medicine to many of the lifestyle disorders like obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, stress etc. If you do not follow any exercise schedule, I suggest, today is the right day. The question is, how long to exercise to enjoy maximum health benefits?

### **What Ayurveda says?**

According to Ayurveda, you should exercise till you sweat on your forehead, abdomen and thighs and till breathing becomes rigorous.

Anyhow, the duration of workout varies from one person to another.

### **Workout duration depends on-**

- Nature of workout – Yoga, Gym, Outdoor games, swimming etc.
- Person's height, weight and age.
- Time availability
- **Experience in the workout** - Beginners may be able to work out only for a very short period of time, compared to experts.
- **Sleep and eating habits** - For example, even a fit person might feel it difficult to exercise, if he has not slept for at least 6 hours.
- The purpose of workout – to lose weight, to maintain already gained good body shape.

### **How long to work out?**

If you have got enough time, if you are not intending for body building, just 45 minutes to 1 hour workout is ideal.

At times, you won't be able to follow your regular schedule, may be because of some important work. In that case, instead of skipping the complete work out,

you can manage to exercise rigorously for 5-10 minutes. It will be of some value.

**Here are a few very-short exercise plans:**

**Plan 1-** 20 push ups, 20 sit ups, 5 Surya Namaskara, 30 dumbbell biceps exercise and 30 abdominal crunches – all in a matter of 5 minutes, without break.

**Plan 2** – Jogging / sprinting / brisk walking for 1 mile.

**Plan 3** – A quick set of fast badminton game.

**Benefits of these 5 minute workout –**

- You will not feel guilty about missing your regular exercise schedule.
- Heavy breathing is stimulated, shoots up your enthusiasm to kick start the day.
- Body becomes flexible. Energy will be boosted and you do not feel easily tired.
- Keeps your body ready for your regular workout for the next day.
- You will be able to burn about 40 – 50 quick calories. So, with this short exercise schedule, if you take only vegetable salad or just corn flakes for your breakfast instead of your regular heavy breakfast, that will make up for the loss of regular exercise.

So, if you have not started any exercise schedule, because you did not have any time for it, just start with a simple 5 minute workout today. It is rewarding.

**Are you over-exercising?** According to Ayurveda, over exercise leads to Vata imbalance and leads to many complications.

**Signs to watch –**

- Breathing difficulty
- Lack of muscle and body strength
- Excessive sleepiness all through the day
- Severe fatigue and feeling tired all the time.
- You do not feel energetic at all.
- Aches and pains in joints, muscles and whole body

**Bad effects of over-exercise as per Ayurveda:**

Tiredness, exhaustion, depletion of body tissues, excessive thirst, bleeding disorders – such as nasal bleeding, worsening of menorrhagia in women, breathing difficulties, cough, fever and vomiting.

**What to do after over exercising?** Drink good amount of fruit juice, take rest, and cut down on your exercise schedule.

## **GYM RULES AS PER AYURVEDA**

Ayurvedic bodybuilding and muscle toning supplements were also famous during the time the Ayurvedic classical text books were written, many centuries ago!

These are the benefits ascribed to regular exercise:

*Shareera aayaasajananam karma vyaayaama uchyate |  
laaghavam karmasaamarthyam deepto agni medasa kshayaha |  
vibhaktaghanagaatratwam vyaayaamaat upajaayate |  
vaatapittaamayee baalo vruddho ajeerne ca tam tyajet |  
ardhashaktyaa nishevastu balibhihi snigdhabhohjibhihi |  
sheetakaale vasante cha mandameva tato anyathaa || – Ashtanga sangraha  
Sutrasthana 5th chapter.*

### **Meaning:**

That which brings tiredness to the body is called as Vyayama.

Regular exercise brings lightness to the body and keeps the body healthy and active throughout the day.

It improves digestive power.

It burns fat and makes body strong and sturdy.

### **Who should do only limited exercise?**

Those who have Vata and Pitta predominant body constitution, who are too young or too old, and those suffering from indigestion should avoid too much work out.

### **What kind of food is good for gym and exercise?**



Snigha bhojana – unctuous food articles – Ghee, carbohydrate and protein rich food articles. This is because, gym and exercise tend to Vata, to mitigate which, the above food is advised.

### **Which are the seasons best for Vyayama?**

During winter and spring, one can do full range of exercises. In rest of the periods, it can be done, with care and in limit. This is because Ayurveda explains – Bala (strength) of an individual will be maximum, in winter and spring.

### **How long one should do Vyayama or exercise:**

Up to half of one's original strength. Till one is having heavy breathing with sweating on forehead, arms and thighs, it is advised to do exercise.

### **What are the harms of over – exercising?**

Ayurveda says, Over- exercising leads to depletion in body tissues, hunger imbalance, depleted desire and depleted body growth.

It is also quite commonly seen that the over exercise and gym practices leads to an abnormal hunger level, leading to obesity, and many cardiac and respiratory problems, a feeling of excessive tiredness, fatigue etc.

### **Which is the best time for gym?**

Ayurveda explains morning as the best time for exercise. The routine as prescribed by Ayurveda is to get up at 5 AM, to attend daily rituals, and then to exercise.

During morning hours, since all the organs are at rest and are ready to get pumped up, it is more sensible to go for gym in the morning. That does not

mean that one should not do exercise in the evening. But one gets easily tired and feels sleepy, if exercised in evening hours.

## **Hot Water Or Cold Water For Bath After Workout?**

Say, you have done Yoga / workout / Gym / outdoor games. You come home and want to take bath. How do you decide between hot water and cold water for bathing? What are the criteria to decide on bath after workout? Does the choice vary, if it is morning or evening? Does the choice vary if it is Yoga / Gym / Outdoor games?

### **Exercise and Tridosha –**

Exercise involves movement of different parts of the body. Movement is always related with Vata, hence any type of exercise, Yoga or outdoor game will predominantly increase Vata. Cold is a quality of Vata Dosha.

But some exercises / Yoga increase body heat and sweating. Remember heat and sweat are associated with Pitta, because hotness is associated with Pitta.

### **When cold water bath makes sense?**

- In your workout / Yoga or any physical activity, if you sweat too much, then it implies Pitta is more, then take cold water bath or lukewarm water bath makes sense.
- If you are naturally a Pitta dominant person, (redness of palms and feet, sweat more normally, very sensitive to hotness, highly emotional) then it makes sense to take cold water bath.
- During summer

### **When hot water bath makes sense?**

- If you have indulged in heavy physical activity for a very long time, then definitely Vata will be increased, it makes sense to take lukewarm to hot water bath.

- If you have developed pain during your workout, then it makes sense to take hot water bath.
- If you are of Kapha body type (stout, do not sweat much etc) or of Vata body type (lean, with prominent blood vessels in hand and feet etc), then hot water bath makes sense.
- During winter and rainy seasons.

## 6 WAYS WALKING IMPROVED MY LIFE – 9 TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

Article by Harshita

Since childhood, I hardly used to fall sick and was always physically active and fit. I was never a fussy eater. I hardly have any memory of visiting a doctor. For seasonal cold and cough, home remedy used to work fine. I was very positive towards my health, I think that made me feel healthier and stronger.

According to a recent survey conducted by Duke University, a person's opinion of his or her health stands out as a key to good health and longevity. The study also suggests that the attitude can tip a balance between life and death.

Same attitude continued after wedding also. After both the deliveries, I recovered fast and got back to my normal routine within few weeks. Well, the praises from the doctors, my husband and others backed my attitude further. My husband and my son used to pull my leg (in good humour) saying "My mummy is strongest".

I had already quit my job and was enjoying my motherhood. I never thought that even I could have health issues. I started putting on weight, I was lethargic and sweating, I used to get frequent headaches and so on. After a complete health check up, I was diagnosed to have high cholesterol.

I started taking medicines and going for walk, as per doctor's prescription.

Also, I strictly avoided the food and activities, which the doctor had proscribed.

For example, I avoided,

- Excess rice items, sweets, coconut, groundnuts and more.
- Sleeping immediately after eating.
- Eating immediately after work out.
- Oil fried, non-vegetarian food.

By following just a few simple and basic routines, I could lose considerable amount of weight in just a couple of months.

## **How walking helped me?**

In the beginning, I was a bit sceptical to go for walk since there are hardly any parks around my house. I managed to find a street with comparatively lesser traffic and a descent footpath. I would listen to music on radio, while walking. Involuntarily many memories and thoughts started flowing in. Sometimes, I would laugh to myself, thinking of some funny incidents during school and college days. This made me feel lighter and younger at heart.

Many a time, I think about how I handled certain situations and how I could have handled it better. Sometimes, I feel bad for scolding my children and then I realize that I should have made them to understand the problem and circumstances instead of scolding. This helps me to evolve as a better person and a better mother.

The 45 minutes, while walking, are completely mine. I enjoy this “my own time”!!! Most of the married women with kids know the true meaning as well as value of “my own time”.

I realized that I need to care for myself, to be healthier, to be happier. This doesn't mean that I am being selfish. The woman, the mother, the wife is like a pillar that supports the structure. She is a lamp, whose brightness lights the life of others. Brighter the lamp, more will be the light. So I have to be healthy and happy to take my family in the positive direction. For example; I started having lunch and dinner before my kids. This way, I am more patient while feeding them.

I decided to continue learning German, which I had to stop because of time constraint. I believe that having a sense of purpose in life is very important. It keeps us healthier and happier.

The walking period gave me the time and opportunity for introspection, which is difficult to accommodate in our busy schedule.

## **Tips which will help you get more out of walking**

- Do not over strain yourself. In the beginning, you can walk for just 15 minutes and then gradually increase the duration. So, you can start your walk this way.
- I go for walking during morning because I get up early and will be free after my son leaves for school. I know it will not be the same with all, especially with working women.
- You can walk in the evening when your kid is playing in the park. If you have a tight schedule, you can manage to walk in the office.
- They say it is necessary to walk at least 10,000 steps every day, to be healthy. Perhaps, many companies are too conscious about the health of their employees. They conduct seminars regarding healthy lifestyle regularly. They organize health check-up camps. Few companies have also provided their employees with pedometer, to monitor how much they walk!!
- If you are hesitant to go for a walk, you can ask one of your family members to join you. Nothing will be more rewarding if your husband joins you for walking. Both of you will be benefited with good health and also it strengthens your relationship.
- After walking, I do simple stretching exercises for 10- 15 minutes, when the body is still warm. One can burn more calories by this. After the body cools down, I drink at least 2 glasses of water to re-hydrate myself.
- You can also do simple stretching exercises like arm rotation, neck rotation, hip rotation – 10 rounds each – clockwise and anticlockwise while walking.
- Buy a pair of comfortable sports shoe for walking.

- Avoid tight clothing. Go for loose cotton wear.

Walking has not only helped me to shed those extra kilos but it has also improved my immune system, patience level, memory power and I manage my time better now. All this has led to massive increase in my confidence level.



## **REASONS TO INCLUDE PRANAYAMA IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE**

Pranayama is an ancient Yoga technique to improve mental and physical health.

Pranayama is a simple and effective method, well adopted in the Ayurvedic treatment in a variety of health conditions.

### **What is Pranayama?**

It is a technique of controlled & rhythmic breathing for a short duration. It is the fourth step in the Yogic spiritual practice. But apart for spiritual benefits, it is also a healthy technique to prevent or treat many diseases.

### **Benefits of daily Pranayama**

1. Improves concentration. Brain becomes more active.
2. Memory power increases.
3. All the organs of the body get stimulated.
4. Good flow of oxygen rich blood to brain and all other body parts.
5. Muscles feel relaxed, thus reducing pain sensation.
6. Helpful against stress, depression, anxiety, etc.
7. Instils confidence and courage.
8. Useful to overcome speech related problems.
9. It fights against chronic degenerative diseases such as diabetes, high BP, cholesterol and obesity.
10. It helps to relieve hurriedness in thinking, speech and action. It gives you that mental balance.

### **Pranayama and Ayurveda –**

Ayurveda explains Vata as one among three Doshas. The Vāta is very important as all the body and mind activities and movements are controlled by Vāta. The breath is called as prāṇa vāta and it controls all the other types of vāta. The

Pranayama helps to balance prāṇa vāta. Thereby, it brings about balance of Vata Dosha in the entire body. It leads to a well-balanced body and mind.

## **HOW TO DO PRANAYAMA – A SIMPLE PRANAYAMA TECHNIQUE**

Pranayama is one of the usual suggestions that I give to patients, for a variety of health conditions. But often it is seen that people do not get time to go to a Yoga teacher and learn the technique (though it is highly recommended). That gives way for a simplified version of Pranayama. But please remember, it is only the second choice to Pranayama learnt from a Yoga teacher.

### **Why there is a need to simplify Pranayama –**

- The regular Pranayama mentioned in Yoga is for totally healthy people.
- It has yoga prerequisites. Namely – Yama, Niyama and Asana. It means, the regular Pranayama would require one to follow dietary & mind restrictions and to have proper training in the Asanas. As Swamy Vivekananda used to say, a fit body is prerequisite of a fit mind.
- Inhaling and exhaling through single nostrils alternatively is quite confusing for the beginners.
- If strained excessively while doing Pranayama, it causes giddiness and difficulty in breathing.

### **What are the pre-requisites for doing Pranayama?**

- **Pranayama Time** - Morning, on empty stomach or 20 minutes after tea / coffee, preferably after bath. Pranayama is a technique to fill mind & body with fresh air and energy. So morning is the right time for it. After bath, we feel fresh. So it adds to the benefits of Pranayama. It will be easier for the mind to get cleansed with the fresh Prana (breath).
- **Pranayama Place:** The place should be spacious, with sufficient air and light. Better to keep the windows open. If it is done in a closed room it

may cause dizziness. So, fresh air is very necessary. The place should be noise free.

- **Pranayama Posture** – Sit on a mat on the floor, with legs crossed. Spine (back) should be erect & straight. Head straight. Face looking forward. For those with knee problem, and who can't sit on the floor, a chair can be used.
- **Position of hands:** Fingers and palm stretched. Tip of thumb finger and tip of index finger touching each other. Indicating lamp – thinking that the Pranayama exercise is enlightening me, and cleansing away my inner darkness. Indicating zeroness – that I am zero in front of my favourite Deity. I surrender completely at His Holy Feet.
- **Eyes** – eyelids closed with eyes pointing towards the tip of the nose. You need to close the eyelids with eyes pointing to nose tip. This way, when you close the eyes, the eyes will automatically concentrate on centre point of two eye brows.
- **Pranayama Mindset** – Feel very relaxed, with absolutely no hurriedness and no extra thoughts. If possible, think of your favourite Deity. If you can not relax your mind, or if you are in a hurry, it is better to skip the Pranayama session for that day, rather than doing it half heartedly or rushing through it.

### **The Simple Pranayama Technique –**

- Sit quietly for one minute. Breathe deeply, breathe easily. During this one minute, think that you are going to receive energy to the body and mind to become healthier, to become robust & strong. Think that you are going to throw out all the impurities of mind and the body through exhaling breath and think that you are going to have fresh and pure

energy by inhaling the fresh Prana – the breath fully filled with life, strength, positivism and energy.

- Once the eyes are closed and are pointing to nose, back erect, mind relaxed, start the Pranayama. It has three phases.
- **Slow Inhale** – Take a deep breath (as deep as possible), very slowly and steadily, without hurrying up. The mind should think that you are taking the energy of God into your body. Fill your lungs and heart with fresh energy.
- **Hold** – Hold the breath for as long as comfortable. During this time, think that the Prana (energetic breath) that you have taken in is cleansing the whole body from tip of the brain to tip of your legs. Imagine as though the air is moving all over the body and cleansing all the organs and mind.
- **Slower Exhale** – Exhale slowly. Exhaling period should be longer than inhaling period. While exhaling, think that all the impurities of your body and mind, which were cleansed, are now let out of the body.
- Repeat the same steps from 1 to 3 or three to ten times, based on your convenience.
- After Pranayama, you need to sit in the same place, for at least five minutes. During which time, prayer can be done.

### **What should be the duration of this simplified Pranayama?**

Not more than 5 minutes.

### **Is there a rule that it should be done daily?**

It is better to do it daily. It is ok, if it is missed for a few days, when the mind is too much occupied or when you are too busy.

### **Are there any side effects? Who should not do this?**

- If one feels dizziness or breathing difficulty or sweating or temporary feeling of darkness then it has to be discontinued. Rush to a place with plenty of air, lie down and breathe easy. Do not try to do it ever again.
- It is not suitable for pregnant woman or children below 12 years of age.
- It is not suitable for people with respiratory problems such as asthma, chronic cough.
- It is not suitable for people with severe illnesses such as heart conditions, cancer etc.
- It is highly recommended to learn Pranayama from a qualified Yoga teacher than to follow this method.

### **Breath should be taken from mouth or nose?**

Breath should be always taken and released from the nose only.

## **WHAT YOU SHOULD THINK WHILE YOU DO PRANAYAMA?**

“What you think is what you become.” This is more so, while doing Pranayama.

It is a well established fact that disease is directly related to mind. A person with positive thoughts will have greater strength to fight diseases than a person with a negative mindset.

Benefits of Pranayama can be doubled by adopting positive thinking.

Pranayama and thinking patterns of a person are related in two ways.

1. Pranayama will yield more benefits, if it is done with a positive & calm mind.
2. Pranayama helps you to adopt positive thinking, if practiced for a period of time.

Thus Pranayama technique is very beneficial in chronic (long-term) diseases.

Though there might be ‘pain’, there will be lesser ‘suffering’.

### **Mindset during Pranayama –**

Here, I have suggested few ways, what and how mind should be thinking while practising Pranayama.

#### **If you have anxiety –**

*While inhaling* - Think that you are inhaling all the power and courage to tackle any given situation, by the grace of God.

*While holding breath* – Think that each and every cell of your body and mind is storing up energy and courage to tackle any given situation.

*While exhaling* – Think that you are throwing out all the anxiety, negativity, fear out of your body and mind through your breath.

This way, Pranayama can be adopted as one of the best stress relieving techniques.

#### **If you have depression –**

*While inhaling* – Think that you are inhaling all the energy and happiness into your mind and body.

*While holding breath* – Think that your body and mind is getting energized to work for a better tomorrow.

*While exhaling* – Think that you are throwing out all the sadness out of your mind, body and soul and out of your life.

**If you are a student –**

*While inhaling* – Think that you are inhaling all the concentration power, intelligence and memory into your mind. Think that you are taking in all the concentration, memory power and perseverance to study for longer hours into your body.

*While holding breath* – Think that whole of your body and mind is getting filled up with concentration, dedication, will power and memory power.

*While exhaling* – Think that you are throwing away all your lethargy, laziness, tiredness out of your body, mind and soul through your breath.

**If you have a disease –**

Consult your doctor before doing Pranayama. Usually, it is ok to do Pranayama during diseases like diabetes, osteo arthritis, etc.

*While inhaling* – Think that you are taking in the special energy into your mind, body and soul which will empower you with new immunity and strength.

*While holding the breath* – Think that your body and mind are getting cleansed of all the toxins and micro organisms.

*While exhaling* – Think that you are throwing away all the toxins and micro organisms out of your body.

This way, Pranayama can be adopted to heal body and mind. But please note that Pranayama may not suit for few people and expert guidance is highly recommended.



*Most of the ideas expressed in this article have been adopted from DIVINE  
PARK.*

## **TYPES OF PRANAYAMA – EFFECT ON HEALTH – THROUGH AN AYURVEDA MICROSCOPE**

Different types of Pranayama have different effects on our health. The right choice of Pranayama depends on many factors such as body constitution, season, purpose (to treat a disease or for meditation) and so on. Let us see, from an Ayurveda view-point, various types of Pranayama and how it affects Tridosha and different aspects of body and mind.

There are different ways in which Pranayama is classified. I have tried to cover most of them here..

There are lot of Vatas, Pittas and Kaphas used in this article. If you really do not have any idea, just remember, Vata is that factor in the body, which has wind like action, Pitta is fire like and Kapha is water like.

**Kapal Bhati** – Here, the air from lungs is forcefully exhaled, but inhalation is made involuntarily. Many use this Pranayama in the initial phase of meditation. It helps to improve alertness and concentration.

In Ayurvedic terms, Gheranda samhita mentions that it mitigates Kapha dosha. In stomach and lungs, Kapha is prominent. Rigorous exhaling of breath leads to increase in Vata. That is why one feels more alert and active, after this exercise. The Vata has fanning effect over Kapha. Like water is dried by the wind, Vata helps to balance out Kapha.

Kapha is related to obesity, and this Pranayama strengthens abdominal muscles and helps to burn calories. Hence, it is beneficial to achieve Kapha balance.

**Agnisara Pranayama** – The air is exhaled out and at that point, abdominal muscles are fanned. This improves digestion power. Hence, it increases Pitta at the level of stomach and intestines. It also activates Vata in large intestine, due to increased abdominal pressure.

**Bhastrika Pranayama -Bellow's breathing** - It is meant to increase blood circulation and to activate body channels. It increases Vata to a great extent and Pitta to a lesser extent.

**Chandranga Bhastrika**, practised through left nostril, influences Ida nadi. It is relatively coolant in nature. Hence it will not increase Pitta, but increases Vata and slightly Kapha.

**Sooryanga Bhastrika**, practised through right nostril, influences Pingala nadi and increases Pitta and Vata in the same order.

**Ujjayi Pranayama – Victorious breathe**- It involves making of sound from throat. Some experts opine that it lowers blood pressure. Some say, that it is useful in treating diseases of ear, nose and throat. From an Ayurvedic point of view, it stimulates Udana type of Vata, which controls functions like speech, memory, immunity and enthusiasm.

**Bhramari Pranayama – Humming bee breathe** – It is more targeted toward mind and spirituality than the body. It balances all the three Doshas.

I have heard from a Spiritual Yogi that this makes you “think before you talk” – Based on this explanation, it can be said that it helps to control Vata in mind and in speech. It also increases Kapha to a minor extent.

**Nadi Shodhana Pranayama** – This balances all the three Doshas.

**Sheetkari and Sheetali Pranayama** – It is a coolant breathing exercise, which mitigates Pitta and increases Kapha and Vata Doshas.

**Surya Bhedana Pranayama** - It generates heat. It increases Pitta Dosha and decreases Kapha Dosha.

**Anuloma Viloma Pranayama** – It is a derivative of Nadi Shodhana, excluding the breath holding phase. It balances Tridosha.

### **Physiology of Pranayama -**

Ignore the spiritual aspects of Pranayama for a while and think. Pranayamas are simple breathing exercises, made in sitting posture. Most of the Pranayama exercises are exciting and stimulating in nature.

**Effect on Vata Dosha** - Since it involves breathing, all the Pranayamas increase Vata in general. Breathing itself is a Vata activity. But because it involves sitting, and there are concepts of mind control, Vata is just stimulated and not elevated to an extent to cause diseases.

**Effect on Pitta Dosha** - Certain types of Pranayama, which generate heat, or stimulate Pingala Nadi tend to increase Pitta, and those that are coolant, like Sheetali and Sheetkari mitigate Pitta.

**Effect on Kapha** – Sitting is an inactive pose of the body, hence sitting for long increases Kapha. Hence Pranayama does gently increase Kapha. But it, being a mentally very active exercise, and breathing going on in a rhythmic manner, Pranayama does not cause Kapha increase to an extent to cause disease. Those types, which generate heat like Kapal Bhati decreases Kapha.

Pranayama does Tridosha balancing act in general with little variations in certain types.

## **ARE YOU SUFFERING FROM THESE 18 SIDE EFFECTS OF PRANAYAMA?**

### **SOLUTIONS**

You heard from someone that Pranayama is good for treatment of headache, backache, lack of concentration etc, read about it thoroughly in the internet and started doing Pranayama. After some days, you start feeling little dizzy, vomiting sensation and uneasiness. Sounds familiar? You may be affected with side effects of Pranayama.

If Pranayama is not practised in the right method, you may encounter one (or more) of the following side effects.

Headache

Dizziness

Lassitude

Lethargy

Feeling as if something is moving continuously around your closed eyes

Lack of stability in thoughts

Vomiting sensation (nausea)

Uneasiness, easily excitable mind

Breathing difficulty / worsening of asthma

Indigestion

Constipation or diarrhoea

Psychological imbalance, restlessness

Worsening of depression

Dryness of mouth

Increase of internal fear

Excessive perspiration, salivation

Variation in blood pressure and blood glucose levels

Increase in stress level

Lowered immunity

Body ache, back ache

Blurred vision

### **Why it happens?**

It may happen because of the following reasons -

**1. Self therapy** – As self treatment with Ayurvedic medicine is dangerous, similarly, self treatment with Pranayama is also dangerous. It is always recommended to learn Pranayama from an expert. So learn it, do it, master it and win!

**2. Closed room, without windows** - Pranayama should be done in a well-ventilated room. There should be freshness in the air. If not, it may lead to breathing difficulty or it may interrupt free-thinking-process of the brain, leading to side effects. If your house is not properly ventilated, you can practice Pranayama on the terrace of your house.

**3. Hurried mind, lack of calmness** – You can skip Pranayama for the day, if your mind is too unstable or your mood is too upset. To reap the maximum benefits of Pranayama, do it with good mood. In case if you are depressed, read a page from your favourite self help book, talk to your friend for few minutes, get back to your positive self and then sit for Pranayama. If you can't then, skip it for the day. There is always another day to fight back and to win. You will lose nothing. Be positive and be hopeful.

**4. External noise** – While practising Pranayama, avoid too much noise because you are doing Pranayama to calm yourself and concentrate more. It will be more effective if you practise in a quieter environment.

**5. Wrong sitting posture** – In case you have back pain and can not sit straight, you will have to consult your expert to do a milder form of Pranayama.

Wrong posture may cause irregular flow of Prana (vital – positive energy) through your body channels and may cause side effects listed above.

**6. Over doing Pranayama** – Stick to the dosage of your doctor, when it comes to Ayurvedic medicines. Stick to the frequency, your Yoga expert has suggested when it comes to Yoga or Pranayama. Over-doing may cause your ‘Vata’ to go awry.

**7. Doing it when very hungry** – We have learnt that hunger should not be suppressed, as per Ayurvedic principles. If you do Pranayama, when you are hungry, you will end up hurting your Agni – digestive fire, Pitta and Vata, leading to digestive issues, bloating, nausea, dizziness, blurred vision, migraine etc. If you are hungry, have some vegetable or fruit salad. Wait for couple of hours, and then do Pranayama.

**8. Doing it soon after food** – One should not do Pranayama soon after eating. It will harm his/her Kapha, Pitta and Vata. A gap of at least 2 hours is ideal between meals and Pranayama.

**9. Too much concentration in between-the-eyebrow-area** – Usually eyes are kept closed and you are asked to concentrate on Shringataka region. But concentrating too hard on that area may lead to dizziness.

First concentrate on the tip of the nose. Then gradually over a period of several days, raise the concentration point to between-the-eyebrows-point.

**10. Very Negative mindset** – You may not be totally depressed. But you have the habit of finding faults in all the creatures on this earth. “What the heck this Pranayama is going to do for my concentration? I am not sure if it is a good health exercise or just a waste of time?” If you are engulfed in such thoughts, better stay away from it.

**11. Hurried activities after Pranayama** – Soon after Pranayama, do not get up and start off with your routines. Sit in the same place for at least 7 – 10

minutes, do meditation, prayer or contemplate on your priorities of the day, then slowly get back to your routine.

**12. Wrong type of Pranayama for the Right You!** For example, if you have kapha body type, then Sheetalī Pranayama might harm your system. Always consult your expert.

**13. Problem with holding breath** – Many types of Pranayama may require you to hold your breath for specified time. But many may feel difficulty in doing it. In such a case, avoid such Pranayama and practice one which is lot easier, like simple Anuloma – Viloma – Pranayama.

So, is Pranayama good? Of course it is good; it is safe, when it is done correctly, under the guidance of an able Yoga teacher.

But at times, it may yield some adverse effects. Consult your Yoga teacher, get things sorted out, do it in the right way and enjoy its benefits.



## Health advice based on season

## **AYURVEDIC HEALTH TIPS FOR SUMMER SEASON**

During summer, a few Ayurvedic tips will help you to keep the body cool and away from disease threats.

### **Dosha balance during summer:**

Vata starts slowly building up during summer and Kapha Dosha, which shoots up in spring, starts to lower down naturally.

In Greesma (summer) the sun rays become powerful and appear to be destructive. Kapha decreases gradually and Vata increases consequently.

### **Desired food qualities:**

Food of sweet taste, coolant food, liquid diet, oil fried food and drinks are desirable during summer.

**Food** which are sweet, light (easy to digest), fatty, cold and liquid should be taken. Take corn flour mixed with cold water and sugar after taking bath in cold water.

Boiled rice, which is white in colour, should be eaten along with meat of animals of desert.

Mantha – mashed sweet fruit mix, added with water and sugar candy is beneficial.

Meat of the animals or birds of arid, desert land is desirable.

Ghee and milk along with rice helps to keep the body cool.

Meat soup (Mamsarasa) which is not very thick,

Rasala (curds churned and mixed with pepper powder and sugar),

Raga (syrup which is sweet, sour and little salty) and Khandava (syrup which has all the tastes, prepared with many substances) are advised.

**Panaka Panchasara**, (syrup prepared with raisins (draksha), madhuka, dates (karjura), kasmarya, and parushaka fruits all in equal quantities, cooled and added with powder of cinnamon leaves, cinnamon and cardamom etc) and

kept inside a fresh mud pot, along with leaves of plantain and coconut trees, and made sour (fermented) should be drunk in mugs of mud or shell.

Very cool water kept in mud pot along with flowers of Patala (*Stereospermum suaveolens*) and camphor should be used for drinking.

Food articles like sasanka kirana (hollow, finger-like, fried pastry made of corn flour) should be taken at night.

Buffalo milk mixed with sugar and cooled by moonlight and the stars should be used for drinking.

### **Avoid alcohol during summer –**

One should either drink little or no alcohol at all. Otherwise it should be diluted with plenty of water.

Wine should be avoided or very little quantity should be consumed or diluted with more quantity of water. If wine is taken in large doses, it will cause inflammatory conditions, it will make the body fragile and weak, increases burning sensation and causes delusion.

One should avoid taking foods having salt, sour, pungent and hot qualities because Vata increases and Kapha decreases during this season. These tastes are favourable to Vata and decrease Kapha.

Excessive physical exertion and high level of exercises should be avoided, as the season itself burns more calories.

### **Healthy activities to take up –**

During summer, napping is fine. During night, after smearing body with sandalwood paste, one should sleep in open airy roof, which is cooled by moon rays.

One should wear pearls. It acts as coolant.

One should enjoy gardens, cold water and flowers during summer.

Day time should be spent in forests having tall trees reaching the sky such as

shala (shorea robusta), Tala – Borassus flabellifera etc, which obstruct the hot rays of the sun, or in houses around which, bunches of flowers and grapes are hanging from the creepers.

Sheets of cloth spreading sweet scented water are arranged (to fan the air) all around.

Sleep on soft bed prepared with flowers of banana, lotus etc. with fully blossomed flowers place all over.

Spend the day inside the house cooled by water fountains, water being scented with usheera (Cus Cus grass), which relieves you from the heat of the sun.

**Avoid these activities:**

Avoid excess sex, because the body is already under exertion and is losing calories. Hence, excess sex may worsen exhaustion

Avoid heavy physical exercises and exposure to sunlight.

**Night regimen:** At nights, one should sleep on the terrace, facing moonlight.

Exhaustion due to heat of the day is relieved by, anointing the body with paste of sandalwood, wearing garlands, avoidance of sexual activities, wearing very light and thin dress, by fanning with fans made of leaves of Tala (Sugar Palm) or large leaves of padmini (lily) made wet; syringes sprinkling cool water softly, garlands of flowers of camphor, jasmine and of pearls and beads of white sandal paste, children, sarika (mynah bird) and shuka (parrot), talking pleasantly.

## **WINTER SEASON REGIMEN AS PER AYURVEDA**

Ayurveda describes winter as one of the seasons, when body has good strength and immunity. But a few precautions and lifestyle adjustments will make the winter all the more enjoyable.

### **Digestion strength is more:**

During winter, the digestion strength is so much powerful that it is capable of digesting any food stuff irrespective of its heaviness and the quantity. This is explained with a simple concept. Digestion strength is compared to fire in Ayurveda. Due to the weather, the body heat is not moving out of the body. Hence, the fire within is ignited, leading to improved digestion strength.

### **Desired qualities in foods:**

You should take proper quantities of food. If not, it affects the quality of Rasa Dhatu (nutritious fluid generated as a product of digestion) and this may lead to depleted Rasa dhatu (depleted nutrition).

Food items that are of sweet, salt and sour tastes are recommended during this period.

Whenever, a body tissue is depleted, Vata tends to increase. Hence, during winter, because of low food quantities, if Rasa dhatu gets depleted, this coupled with coldness of season, Vata Dosha gets imbalanced. (Coldness is also a Vata quality)

### **Diet during winter:**

- Oils, ghee, food with sour and salt tasting ingredients.
- Sea food – (Audaka mamsa) – crab, fish, pearl oyster, Conch snail, lobster etc.
- Meat of animals from marshy place (Anupa mamsa) – buffalo meat, yak meat.

- Meat with fat
- Different fruit wines
- Cow milk and its products
- Sugarcane and its products, sesame oil, fresh grains are recommended.
- Avoid excess pungent, bitter and astringent food stuff. These can improve appetite, which is undesirable, because appetite is already high.
- Avoid cold drinks, aerated drinks, avoid light to digest foods.
- Meat soup mixed with fats, meat of well nourished animals, wine prepared with jaggery, and supernatant part of wine (Sura) should be had more.
- Food prepared with wheat flour, black gram products of sugarcane and of milk,
- Food prepared from freshly harvested corn, muscles, fat and edible oils should be partaken as food.
- **Vitamin D:** Since there is scarcity of Vitamin D, due to lack of sunlight, food rich with Vitamin D is recommended – Salmon, Tuna, Cod liver oil, Fish, fortified cereals, oysters, ham, dairy products, egg, mushroom, yogurt, cheese, orange juice, zucchini and tomato.

#### **Massage and bath:**

- **Hot water usage:** To counter the effect of winter, hot water bath and hot water for drinking are recommended.
- **Oil massage** – is highly recommended. It relieves dryness of skin, improves blood circulation. During winter, body ache worsens (cold weather – Vata increase – pain increase). So, oil massage helps to relax muscles and relieve aches and pains.
- **Palm massage** – Once in a while it is best to undergo just dry palm massage. It helps to keep good blood circulation to hands and legs.

- **Oil massage to head** is highly recommended to avoid dry scalp, dandruff, hair fall, headaches, worsening of migraine, which are quite common during winter.
- After massage, the oil should be washed off with astringent powders and bathing. Then fine powder of Saffron, Agar (Aquilaria agallocha) and ksthuri (musk) is applied. The body is exposed to the fumes of aguru (Aquilaria agallocha)
- **Sweating treatment:** Just to shrug off excess coldness and to balance out scarcity of sunlight, it is best to undergo sweating treatment once in a while. This can be in the form of small wood fire, or hot water bath.
- **Sunlight:** Whenever you get a chance, expose your skin to sunlight and restore back Vitamin D. Avoid exposure to wind.

#### **Bedding:**

- One should ensure that conveyance, bedding and seats are well covered with heavy wrappers, silk cloth, ropes and blankets. One should wear heavy and warm clothes.
- Thick sheet made of cotton, leather, silk, wool or bark of trees that are light in weight should be used during sleep.

**Sex:** Because of best of health and strength during winter, one can indulge in sexual activity on daily basis.

**Foot wear** should be worn always. One of the reasons for increased hip and leg pain during winter is constant cold exposure of feet. This increases Vata drastically, worsening the pain. Hence, always wear footwear, even at home.

#### **Dry skin during winter:**

Dryness is a Vata quality. Increase in dryness in skin is due to Vata dosha

imbalance. Coldness is again another Vata quality. Coldness in winter leads to increase in skin dryness. Hence, special care is needed to relieve dryness of skin

**Remedy for dry skin of winter:**

Take Eladi Tailam (herbal oil) – apply few drops of it to the parts of the body with dry skin, 10 minutes before bath.



## **AUTUMN SEASON HEALTHY REGIMEN**

Autumn is a very important season from health perspective. As per Ayurveda, Vata Dosha decreases gradually and Pitta hits its peak. Here are health tips for autumn.

### **How Pitta Dosha increases during Autumn:**

During rainy season, one is accustomed to coldness. When the body is suddenly exposed to warm rays of Sun, the Pitta, which undergoes slight increase during rainy season, gets aggressive.

**Vata Dosha undergoes natural decrease.** During rainy season, due to coldness (which is a Vata quality), Vata gets aggressive (that is why; pains and aches worsen during rainy season.) But due to hotter rays of autumn, hotness pacifies Vata.

### **Foods to have:**

- In order to get over it, Tikta ghrita (medicated ghee recipe with bitter herbs) is specifically mentioned.
- When hungry, the person should take food with bitter, sweet and astringent tastes. These tastes are anti Pitta in nature.
- Easily digestible foods such as rice, green gram, sugar, Amla, pointed gourd, honey are good to have.
- Goat meat, mutton, chicken, rabbit.
- Rice, barley and wheat are fine to have.

### **Hamsodaka –**

The water which gets heated by the hot rays of the sun during day cooled by

the cool rays of the moon during night, for many days continuously, which has been de-poisoned by the rise of the star Agastya, which is pure, uncontaminated and capable of mitigating morbid matters of the body, is known as Hamsodaka. It is neither too moist to obstruct body channels, nor very dry. Such water is nectar and should be used for drinking and cooking purposes.

#### **Foods to avoid:**

- Indulgence in Kshara (alkaline substances), satiation with a very heavy meal.
- Sour curd should be avoided.
- Muscle fat, use of curds, mustard oil should be avoided.
- Strong liquors that cause Pitta increase should be avoided.
- Fish and other aquatic animals should be avoided.

#### **Ideal activities to follow:**

- Virechana treatment – purgation therapy helps to expel Pitta out of the body.
- Pitta is also related to Rakta (blood). Hence, if the blood is vitiated with Pitta, then blood letting should be done. In some parts of India, for people with high blood pressure, blood letting therapy during autumn is performed, which keeps the pressure normal during the rest of the seasons as well.
- **Evening** should be spent on the terraces of houses which are white (by painting), anointing the body with the paste of sandalwood, cus cus grass, camphor, wearing garlands of pearls and shining dress and enjoying the moonlight.

- Use of garlands made of autumnal flowers and clean cloth and also the rays of the moon in the evenings are very beneficial.
- **Avoid** exposure to mist; afternoon sunlight.
- Sleeping during day time should be avoided since the digestion strength is altered due to Pitta and napping will further disturb it.
- Eastern breeze should also be avoided, as it brings heat waves.

### **AYURVEDA HEALTH TIPS FOR RAINY SEASON**

During rainy season, you need to take special care of your health. While certain types of food are good to have during rainy season, we need to restrict certain food and some habits.

**Effect of Dosha on rainy season** – Increase in Vata and mild increase in Pitta.

### **Body & health condition during rainy season:**

Low digestion power, low immunity and low body strength

### **Rainy Season diet:**

#### **Food to be had, during rainy season:**

- Old grains, Old rice, Wheat, Barley, soup of pulses, thin supernatant water of curds, grape wine, honey.
- Food with sour, sweet and salty taste.
- An Ayurvedic drink made by adding a pinch of salt, pepper, long pepper and ginger to a cup of water is ideal to take. It helps to improve digestion power.

#### **Food to avoid during rainy season:**

- Food that causes Vata and Pitta imbalance such as food having bitter, hot and astringent principles E.g. Potato.

- Food items those are heavy to digest.
- Frozen food and ice creams.
- Oily food stuff.

#### **Health tips for rainy season:**

- Since it is difficult to have outdoor activities, you should make sure to have indoor physical activities. Don't let laziness grow on you.
- **Foot care for diabetics** –As the feet tend to get wet all the time, it is very important for everybody and especially diabetics to take a special care for feet. As and when feet get wet, make sure to dry them immediately.
- To avoid skin infections and itching, it is ideal to add 1 or 2 spoons of neem oil to half a cup of sesame oil. Use this for massage before hot water bath, at least once a week.
- It makes sense to have hot water bath during rainy season. It helps to curb Vata.
- Those who are prone to joint pains and arthritis should avoid sitting or lying down on the floor. Skin contact with a cold surface will cause tremendous Vata increase, leading to aggravation of pain.
- It is better to wear footwear inside home during rainy season and winters.
- Cut your nails very regularly. Moisture between them, will invite infection.
- Keep the body covered fully, do not wear sleeveless dress.
- Dry hair as soon as you return home.
- It is not good to sleep soon after lunch during rainy season, it worsens indigestion problem.
- Use only hot water to drink.

- Ayurveda recommends undergoing Panchakarma treatment during rainy season.
- Make sure to use footwear with good grip to avoid slipping and falling.

## **AYURVEDIC HEALTH TIPS FOR SPRING SEASON**

During spring, though there is sunlight, many often suffer from worsening of asthma, digestive and respiratory disorders. This is because Kapha that is accumulated in winters gets liquefied by the sun heat and disturbs the digestion power. This leads to many diseases.

### **What happens to Kapha Dosha during spring?**

Imagine Kapha as ice. So, during winter, the Kapha dosha consolidates and stays at one place. But during spring, due to strong sunrays, Kapha Dosha melts and moves into other places of the body, and causes / worsens Kapha disorders such as asthma, indigestion, cold, cough, etc. This process is called as Kapha Dosha Prakopa. Hence Kapha should be controlled quickly, by resorting to strong emesis therapy (Vamana Panchakarma procedure), Nasya (nasal medication) and other therapies.

### **Vamana (emesis) Panchakarma treatment:**

Vamana treatment is recommended for Kapha Dosha. During spring, Kapha dosha gets liquefied and moves to other places. This process is called as Prakopa. Hence, to eliminate imbalanced Kapha dosha, emesis treatment is prescribed during this season.

**Nasya treatment (nasal drops)** is recommended to expel Kapha Dosha from head, eyes, ear nose and throat.

**Herbal smoking** is recommended. It keeps upper respiratory tract disorders away. It helps to clear phlegm collection and to relieve sinusitis.

**Oil pulling – Gandusha –** is recommended to strengthen teeth and to improve oral health.

Question is – oil increases Kapha. Then how oil pulling is helpful in expelling Kapha during spring? In oil pulling, we are not consuming the oil. We are just rinsing the mouth with the oil. This helps to give a churning effect and drags

out all the Kapha Dosha from ear, nose and throat into mouth, which is expelled out.

**Food qualities:**

We have to balance Kapha Dosha. Hence, avoid, Guru – heavy to digest foods, excess oils and fats, sweet and sour foods.

**Recommended foods** – old barley, wheat, raisins, grape wine, honey, easily digestible and dry (moisture-free, fat-free) foods.

Mango juice mixed with fragrant substances like cinnamon, cardamom – to quench the thirst in the afternoon.

**Jangala mamsa** - meat of animals of arid, desert-like land is recommended – goat meat, chicken, rabbit.

Meat / chicken roasted in fire is good.

**Beverages** such as asava (fermented infusion), arishta (fermented decoction), sidhu (fermented infusion), grape juice, sharambu (extract of sandalwood etc.)

Water mixed with honey or water boiled with Jalada (musta – Nut grass) is recommended. It can be had instead of water, twice or thrice a day.

**Day sleep:**

During summer, when the energy is low, taking nap is good, but certainly not during spring. It increases Kapha Dosha, leading to indigestion and stomach disorders. So it is not advised.

**Exercise** is a must. It reduces Kapha and improves lung health.

**Palm massage** and patting helps to relieve joint and muscle stiffness caused by Kapha Dosha.

**Anjana** – collyrium – Kajal application is useful to relieve heaviness of eyes.

One should smear his body with saffron, camphor, sandalwood and Aguru ( Aquilaria Agallocha). They reduce itching and body odour. This was the ancient way of perfume.

**This is the exact quote from Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutrasthana 3rd chapter -**

During spring season, person should spend his midday in the company of friends engaged in pleasant games, pastimes, storytelling etc., in forests (or gardens). The gardens should have cool breeze from south direction, with plenty of reservoirs of water all around, invisible or poor sunlight, the land covered with shining crystals, with the cuckoo everywhere making pleasant sounds and engaged in love-play, with trees and different kinds of beautiful and sweet smelling flowers.



## **AYURVEDIC SEASONAL REGIMEN BASED ON DIFFERENT CLIMATIC CONDITIONS**

Ayurveda has elaborately explained about specific regimen to be followed in different seasons. It is based on the variation of weather affecting the physiological processes of the body. Ayurveda believes that external atmosphere has direct impact on internal atmosphere (health).

Ancient Ayurveda has explained seasonal regimen by dividing year into six seasons of 2 months each.

But the climate has changed a lot since then, and different parts of the world are ruled by different climatic conditions. In this view, the following assumptions can be made to suit ancient saying to current time and place.

**1. Hemantha Ritu** – This season can be compared to first half of winter. This is milder form of winter, or early winter, whichever may be your place.

**2. Shishira Ritu** – This season can be compared to second half of the winter, when the temperature dips further.

**3. Vasantha Ritu** – The spring season, can be compared to between winter and summer.

**4. Greeshma Ritu** – This season is summer

**5. Varsha Ritu** – Rainy season

**6. Sharath Ritu** – Autumn season

Based on climate, the prescribed Ritucharya can be continued for a longer period of time, but care should be taken to hit the right balance. For example, during winter (Shishira) one is advised to exercise for a longer period of time. As per text book, this advice is valid only for two months. But in long winter countries, exercise can be continued as long as winter lasts, but it should be coupled with oil massage and hot water bath to avoid increase of Vata. (over-exercise increases Vata.)

For people living in higher temperature countries, like gulf, they have to follow more of Pitta balancing diet and activities. Because excessive Sun exposure and high temperate tends to increase Pitta.

**Conclusion:**

The advice given in Ancient Ayurvedic text books may not perfectly suit to current times and places. But with wisdom, they can be very well adjusted for a better health.

## **AYURVEDA ADVICE FOR PEOPLE LIVING IN COLD CLIMATE COUNTRIES**

**Question:** Doctor, can you write an article about basic elements of healthy lifestyle for people living in northern parts of the globe? For example in my country, from mid October to mid March there is very limited sun light. Sun is very low, usually covered by low clouds and temperature reaches below zero degrees Celsius. In December day last from 8AM to 3PM. From October to May, there are no fresh vegetables, the nature totally sleeps. We can buy vegetables imported but usually chemically preserved and old.

This is very hard time for people (October-March). Winter affects people's mood, feelings, health condition Doctor, can you give some advice how to keep energy in the body and how to take advantage of low light time? Some animals sleep during that time. Shall we limit our activity?"

Ancient text books of Ayurveda are written keeping India and surrounding parts of the world in view. But Ayurveda is deep and wide enough to derive lifestyle advice for people from any part of the world. Let us explore.

### **A. During onset of summer –**

Ayurveda explains the transit period from one type of weather to other as 'Rutu Sandhi'.

Special precaution needs to be taken during this period

Due to extreme winters, Kapha and Vata will be *increased and collected* inside the body. This gets liquefied and starts spreading all over the body during the onset of summer. This leads to increase in Kapha and Vata and may worsen asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, and other types of arthritis such as gout, body heaviness, migraines, indigestion, skin allergy, respiratory problems and more.

Ginger, pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, garlic, turmeric, vegetables and food stuff that are hot in nature should be used more.

Follow light diet (avoid oily and heavy non vegetarian food) and avoid over-eating.

If you have an Ayurveda center nearby, Panchakarma therapies such as Vamana and Basti come in handy.

### **B. During sunny days and summer –**

From the query, I assume that life is normal and easy during this period.

Just do all those things which you can not do during winter.

Allowing body to sweat is important. Avoid air conditioners as much as you can.

Expose your skin to early morning Sun and get some vitamin D because you will be deprived of Sunlight on the other half of the year.

Throughout the day also, I would recommend to expose arms and legs to external atmosphere as much as possible. The skin needs Sun and wind exposure, which is not possible for you during winter. So, make the most out of summer. Wearing coats & ties, making yourself warmer and overusing air conditioners does not make much sense. However, this may not apply to people with extremely sensitive skin.

You can have light oily food and fried food, cold food stuff in this period.

The food can be little heavy, since your body will be more active and can burn extra calories.

Oil massage and exercise will keep the body and skin toned and good.

**Effect of Dosha:** Pitta and Slight Vata will be dominant.

Hence digestion power, skin health will be good.

If you are tired during the day, a nap of 15-30 minutes before food is good enough.

Exercising in the morning is better than in the evenings.

If you feel too much heat, use rose water to wash your face.

Enjoy cold water bath (on the days when you are not applying oil to the body).

### **C. During early part of winter**

Again special care and precautions are required. Use more of bitter and spices to boost immunity. Consider Panchakarma treatment.

#### **During winter**

Once the winter dawns, Kapha and Vata will be dominant in the said order.

Digestive capacity will be more during first half and tends to decrease in the last half of the season (during December and January).

#### **“Some animals sleep during that time. Shall we limit our activity?”**

See, there are two basic differences between us and animals. Animals follow the rule of nature and we fight against it. We optimize, adjust and manipulate the nature for our survival.

Example 1. Animals breed at a particular season of the year. But we control our desires, tie it in the ropes of relationship and ethics, give it a proper direction and convert that energy into concentration and purpose of our lives.

Example 2. Animals do not have anything like cloth or accommodation. So they have no choice but to adjust with the nature and be inactive during extreme winters.

But we have got goals and purposes in our lives. We have got milestones to cross, relationships to take care of, social work to do, people to show love to, work-goals to achieve, knowledge to share. We have so many things to do in so less time. So, being inactive during whole winter period is out of question. We will have to manipulate the climatic condition into an active environment.

- Eat ginger, long pepper, neem, cinnamon, cardamom, clove and turmeric. This will keep the body warm.
- You can have wine, drink it only to the extent so that it does not make you excess sleepy.

- Avoid day-sleep. Remember, laziness is a byproduct of Kapha, we need to work against it, to keep it in balance.
- Exercise is a must, to keep up good muscle tone, to keep up good blood circulation and to keep mind active.
- Oil massage with slight hot oils like mustard oil, is good. If mustard oil is too hot for you, you can mix mustard oil + sesame oil in equal parts and use it for massage. Or you can use sesame oil also.  
Before massaging, warm the oil a bit.
- If you take oily food, make sure to drink warm water.
- Coffee or tea – as stimulative drink is good.
- Avoid too much of milk, curds and dairy products.
- Having lemon juice, occasionally, with less sugar is good.
- Even if you are not accustomed to massage, apply a little ghee or sesame oil, once or twice a day, all over your body. This helps to avoid skin dryness.
- Do not sleep for more than eight hours a day.
- Follow Brahmacharya - abstinence and convert your energy into productive work, as much as you can.
- If fresh vegetables are not available, then take the available vegetables, keep it in hot water for two minutes, and then use it. This way way, at least some preservatives are washed out.
- Pranayama and Yoga are good for any season.

So these are some basic guidelines to build your own daily routine and to choose food and lifestyle habits.

## **TRAVELLING TO A VERY COLD PLACE? HEALTH TIPS FOR YOU**

A reader asks, “I am planning to go to Badrinath (India) during this October. I am very much worried about my father’s health. He is 64 years old and has Diabetes and Hypertension. Please advice what should be done in case if he feels very cold and starts shivering, finally going to hypothermia? The temperature at that time will be below 0 degree Celsius.”

Here are some Ayurvedic ways to keep your body warm and healthy while you visit very cold places.

### **Get your clothing correct:**

Use cloth which traps the heat within and avoids loss of temperature from the body. Have some winter-wear collection.

### **Exercise or Yoga**

Remember that even if you are on tour, while visiting a cold location, exercise will help you to keep the body warm, it allows you to sweat and skin to breathe.

**Chyawanprash** – It is a good Ayurvedic product to carry with you. Most of the ingredients in Chyawanprash are hot in nature. They help to improve lungs strength and boost blood circulation.

A quick tip here – usually Chyawanprash is advised along with milk. But while visiting places with sub zero temperatures, hot water can be the co-drink of choice for Chyawanprash.

Chyawanprash contains sugar. Hence, diabetic people will need to consult their doctor before taking it.

**Ginger** – Make sure you carry good amount of ginger and have it. Ginger improves blood circulation and keeps the body warm. If your stomach is sensitive to ginger, you can have ginger tea.

**Aloe Vera** – Aloe vera is another herb, which promotes blood circulation. Hence it is a good idea to have aloe-vera tea.

Ayurvedic products containing Aloe vera like Kumaryasavam is very good to have. But consult your doctor before going for it.

**Turmeric and neem** – Keep turmeric and neem powders with you and use them in your diet. You can use them externally also. (explained below)

**Spices** - Ginger, pepper, cardamom, onion, cinnamon, curry leaves are precious. They are good for lungs and for blood circulation.

**Oil application** – You need to apply some oil over the skin. It helps to avoid dryness, improves blood circulation under the skin and also relieves aches and pains. You may use one among the following combinations –

- **Mustard oil for massage** – If you wish to have plain oil massage, mustard oil will be good.
- **Oil combination for regular application** – If you hate mustard oil for some reason, then take Maha Narayana taila – 1 ounce, and add a pinch of pepper powder and mix well. Apply this oil, especially to legs and hands, if not to the whole body, at least two times a day.

**Dashamoolarishta** – It is a safe Ayurvedic product to take. It helps to keep body warm, fights inflammation, good for lungs, stomach and heart. Again, diabetic people should take this only under professional advice.



**Aloe vera skin cream** – Helps to keep skin moistened.

**Avoid the following –**

**Smoking** – Smoking worsens the health of lungs and blood vessels. Remember that you need extra attention about these two body parts in a cold place.

**Long nails** – You need special concentration on your finger tips. So, avoid long nails.

**Unattended wounds** – Watch for even a small wound, with lessened blood circulation, wound healing may take a long time, especially for diabetic people.

**Meals and medication** – Both are very important, especially if you have diabetes or high BP.

Make sure you skip neither of them.

**Neglecting medical help** – It is always better to seek your doctor's help, especially in subzero temperature. A small health hitch, if neglected, can grow into a large complication. Keep your doctor's phone number handy.

## **TRAVELLING TIPS – HOW TO KEEP VATA DOSHA BALANCE WHILE TRAVELLING?**

According to Ayurvedic principles, travelling is a major cause of Vata imbalance. This exhibits through symptoms such as headache, dizziness, vomiting sensation, backache, body ache etc. While traveling, you can take simple measures to prevent Vata imbalance.

### **Health tips for travel- keep Vata balance while travelling:**

**Select a good seat:** If you are travelling by a bus or car, select a comfortable seat that gives a good rest to your back. In a bus, choose a seat that is between the front and rear tyres to avoid jerky movements. If you are travelling by car, you can use pillows to make yourself comfortable.

**Proper leg position:** Keep your feet rested on the floor so that the knee angle makes an obtuse angle. Do not keep the legs crossed.

**Keep your ears plugged:** If you usually get headache during or after the journey, it is advisable to keep the ears plugged with cotton swabs.

**Keep the windows closed or with minimal opening:** This way, your body is not directly exposed to wind. Exposure to direct wind is a major cause for Vata imbalance.

**Don't set the A/C to very low temperature:** Excessive cool air leads to Vata imbalance.

**Let the dress or cloth cover your arms and legs:** So as to avoid skin exposure to direct wind, which is a cause for Vata Dosha imbalance.

**Ayurvedic massage:** Before and after a long travel, it is a good habit to have an **Ayurvedic massage** with Ayurvedic herbal oil.

**Wear a helmet:** If you are travelling on bike, make sure that you wear a helmet. It not only maintains Vata balance, but also protects your head.

**Hot water:** Especially in long journeys, use hot water to drink. This maintains Vata balance.

Do not talk much while traveling.

So these are the very easy to follow, highly effective traveling tips for Vata Balance.

## Diet advice

## **FOOD HABITS**

'What you eat is what you become' is an old but evergreen saying.

There are certain general diet rules that you should follow.

### **No junk foods**

The food which is highly crispy, crunchy, excessively salty or sour in taste, containing artificial flavors, coloring agents, etc. are categorized under junk foods.

They contain many cancer causing agents like PhIP, disintegrated polyunsaturated fatty acids, etc. Hence it is better to avoid junk food and eating outside as far as possible.

### **Tastes:**

Ayurveda strongly recommends having food with all the tastes – sweet, salt, sour and bitter. It helps to balance three Doshas and leads to overall health improvement.

### **Eating etiquettes:**

- While eating concentrate on the plate rather than on TV, computer or mobile phones.
- Strict no to texting, facebook or checking emails while eating.
- Eat only when you are hungry.
- Drinking water in between food is good rather than drinking before or after food.
- Avoid curd at night, instead have butter milk.
- Avoid sweets and ice creams during night.
- Eat when the food is still hot.
- Avoid reheating of food as much as you can.
- Do not eat fast. Eating slow is recommended, especially for obese people.

- Do not eat when you are not hungry and do not fast when you cannot.

## **DRINKING WATER BEFORE OR AFTER FOOD- A WRONG HABIT – AYURVEDA PROOF**

I have seen in many online platforms, many Ayurvedic doctors suggesting to drink water after food. Let us nail this subject with authentic traditional reference once and for all.

### **How much water should we actually drink?**

You are supposed to drink water only when thirsty. Thirst is a natural urge.

Natural urges should be attended only when they arrive, as per Ayurveda. For example, we need to eat food only when we are hungry.

We need to urinate and defecate only when there is an urge for them. Purpose is to maintain body's natural circadian rhythm. To attune body to the nature based on the signals given by nature. So, the point is, a normal person does not need excess of water to drink. However there are exceptions in a few diseases.

### **When to drink water with respect to meal?**

Many Ayurveda doctors, many science websites including 'Discovery' have advised not to drink water in between a meal. But As per Ayurveda, you are supposed to drink water between the meals only.

### **Drinking water before food –**

As per Ayurveda, drinking water before food dilutes and weakens Agni – digestion strength because water is a coolant, a principle directly opposite to digestion strength. Hence taking water before food is not ideal.

### **Drinking water after food –**

It affects both the quality of food and digestion strength. It gives a touch of coolant effect to whatever the food is eaten. Thus a person tends to become obese over a period of time, by this. Hence it is not ideal.

### **Drinking water in between food –**

It helps to moisten the food, it helps to breakdown food particles into smaller pieces and it quenches thirst. Therefore it is ideal.

**Reference:** Ashtanga Hrudayam, Sutrasthana 5th chapter 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> verse  
Water should not be consumed / little water should be consumed by those suffering from poor digestive function, tumours of the abdomen, anaemia, enlargement of the abdomen, diarrhoea, haemorrhoids, diseases of the duodenum, dropsy.

Excepting for Sharad (autumn) and Nidagha (summer) even healthy persons should drink less quantity of water in rest other seasons.

### **Jalapana phala- (effects of drinking water with respect to meals)**

Drinking water before meals – causes emaciation, weakness.

Drinking water after meals – causes obesity

Drinking water in between meals – healthy habit

### **If it is not good to drink water before meals, then how to take medicines before meals?**

While taking medicines, water in required quantity can be had, 20 minutes before meals.

### **For how long before & after meal the water isn't to be taken?**

We can have water around one hour before food and around one and half hour after food. This is an approximate estimation.

### **If drinking water before or after the meal supposedly dilutes the Agni, will it not have the same effect, if taken during the course of the meal?**

During the course of meal, the Agni will start interacting with the food to initiate the process of digestion. Hence, water consumed at this point would be used up by the food particles to disintegrate. There will be very less interaction between Agni and the water at this point of time.





## **DRINKING HOT WATER BENEFITS – WHAT AYURVEDA SAYS?**

Drinking hot water is one of the very good habits that suits most of the people. It is especially beneficial during night time. Here is the original Ayurvedic reference which explains in great detail regarding benefits of hot water. Hot water is prepared by boiling the water till it reduces to one eighth or quarter or half of the initial quantity of water or just heating water till it reaches the boiling point.

**Benefits of hot water** – Drinking hot water at night time is beneficial against diseases with Kapha related disorders, Amavata (compared to rheumatoid arthritis) decreases fat deposition in the body, cleanses the urinary bladder, and is useful in the treatment of cough and other respiratory diseases and fever.

### **Ayurvedic medicines which are specifically told to be taken along with Hot water**

Generally hot water is advised after taking ghee or oil. It aids in easy digestion and avoids indigestion problem. In Ayurvedic treatment with herbal ghees and oils, hot water is the preferred co drink.

Apart from them, there are a few specific Ayurvedic medicines where hot water is the most preferred co drink. They are -

Ajamodadi churna - used in the treatment of Rheumatoid arthritis, pain and inflammation of joints, osteo arthritis, back pain, sciatica and such other joint diseases.

Anthrakutharam gulika - an Ayurvedic tablet used in bloating, constipation and such other abdominal conditions.

### **Why hot water is always advised during Panchakarma treatment?**

Panchakarma treatment is the Ayurvedic procedure to relieve toxins and metabolic wastes from the body. It is done for both, to maintain good health and to relieve diseases. There are many rules to be followed during Panchakarma procedure, among which drinking hot water is very important.

**The aim of Panchakarma** therapy is to remove the vitiated Doshas (toxins) from the body. This can be linked to getting rid of stains from a vessel. When you want to get rid of very sticky stains from a steel vessel, often you prefer to use hot water rather than cold water. Same way, hot water helps to get rid of the body wastes easily.

**Involvement of GIT:** In Panchakarma treatment, since the gastro intestinal tract is involved, digestive system is directly involved in the treatment process. Hence, during Panchakarma treatment, usually patient's digestion power reduces. Therefore the person is advised to take light and easy-to-digest food, after the Panchakarma treatment. Hot water tends to improve digestion strength when compared to cold water. Hence using hot water is a must before and after Panchakarma therapy.

**Ghee consumption** is part of the plan during pre-phase of Panchakarma. Whenever ghee or oily food is consumed, it is always advised to take hot water. It eases digestion and washes off the extra fat from the gut. So, hot water limits its absorption based on body requirement.

## **HOW MUCH WATER SHOULD YOU ACTUALLY DRINK? AYURVEDA OPINION**

“Sir, you have written in your book that drinking water only when one is thirsty is good. But I have read in a book that thirst destroys body mechanism. Feeling thirsty is a sign of body weakness. Grab for water in a day even if you don't feel thirsty.”

“Many health experts advise that one should drink 8 glasses of water. Is that true? What Ayurveda says about it?”

### **Answer:**

There is no truth in thirst theory.

We feel hungry. Does that destroy our body mechanism? Many people do foodless and waterless fasting. Have they caused injury to their bodies? No. So, there is no truth in saying that thirst is a sign of disaster.

We feel hungry, when the body needs food, similarly we feel thirsty when the body needs water. As per Ayurveda, thirst is one of “Vega” – a natural urge of the body, indicated a need.

### **Ayurvedic Mantra – Supply only when there is an urge.**

According to Ayurveda, thirst, hunger, sleep, sneezing, urination, defecation etc are called as natural urges.

Ayurveda preaches that “Not attending a natural urge, when it is there, and initiating an urge, when it is not there leads to a disease.”

For example, any healthy person should eat when he feels hunger.

He should not eat, if he is not hungry. Similarly, water should be drunk whenever there is thirst and it should not be drunk, whenever there isn't any thirst.

### **How much water should I drink?**

There are some theories which say that if you drink 8 glasses of water, it will detoxify and flush of all the toxins in the body. Drinking excess water is good for skin, as it keeps it well nourished and hydrated.

But this is not true as per Ayurveda. As a co-incidence, researchers also have the same opinion.

Water is a coolant. Too much of water intake, even when you're not thirsty will cause indigestion and may cause or worsen a condition called as "Ama". This is a product of improper digestion and metabolism at the level of digestive track and at the level of body tissues and cells. As per Ayurveda, 'Ama' is the precursor for a host of diseases.

Drinking a large quantity of water will cause increase of Kapha and Vata, and decrease of Pitta and digestion power.

If you are thirsty enough to drink 8 glasses of water or even more then you can drink it by all means. The deciding factor here is not the quantity per day target. The deciding factor is your thirst level.

### **So, how much water to drink?**

Till you feel satiated. Stop it there. Satiation is a signal from your body to stop drinking.

**Right time to drink water while taking food,** is while taking food. Drinking water before food is not recommended. After having food, drink water only if you're thirsty.

**What if, you are feeling thirsty, before taking food?**

**What if you are feeling hungry and thirsty at the same?**

If you are too much thirsty before starting your food, then drink water, wait for 15 – 30 minutes, and then take food.

If you are feeling hungry and thirsty together, then, like I have said, food and water can be had together. Or start with food then take water.

## **USAGE OF WATER AS PER AYURVEDA – COMPLETE COMPILATION**

Here is a complete list of rules of water consumption as explained in Ayurveda. Ayurveda differentiates properties of hot water and cold water and mentions its benefits separately.

**Reference:** Most of the points here are taken from Ashtanga Hridayam 5th chapter – which deals with liquid foods.

**Source of water** – In ancient times, there was very less pollution. Hence cold water, collected directly from rain, which was clean, unpolluted, and uncontaminated, was used for consumption.

Such fresh and clean water is – enlivening, improves quality of life, satiating, good for heart, calming and soothing to the mind and stomach, stimulates intellect, thin, imperceptible taste, cold, light to digest and similar to nectar.

Only seasonal rain water is recommended for consumption. Collected rain water should not be stored for more than a day. During summer and winter, when it does not rain, river water could be used.

Rain water, always collected in a clean vessel and which has not changed in colour, taste and odour, should be used for drinking. In its absence, the water of the earth, which is similar to rainwater, collected from clean vast place that has black or white soil, which is exposed to sunlight and breeze.

**Restriction for drinking of water:** Water should not be consumed /consumed in very little quantity, by those suffering from poor digestive function, tumours of the abdomen, anaemia, enlargement of the abdomen, diarrhoea, haemorrhoids, diseases of the duodenum, dropsy. In all these patients, there is lack of digestion strength, and drinking water in excess would worsen the disease.

Except during autumn and summer, even healthy people should drink less water.

### **Time of water drinking with respect to food –**

Drinking water in between meals is considered to be a healthy habit. It helps to disintegrate food particles into tiny ones and hence aids in digestion.

Drinking water after meals causes obesity. Soon after meals, at the initial stage of digestion, there is Kapha dominance. Hence, if water is consumed it would further increase Kapha. It leads to errant assimilation of food nutrients in the body, leading to obesity.

Drinking water before meals causes emaciation, weakness. If you drink water before food, the digestive fire, appetite and strength get depleted. Hence it is not ideal.

### **Cold water Vs Hot water:**

**Cold water** relieves alcoholic intoxication, exhaustion, fainting, vomiting, debility (fatigue), dizziness, giddiness, thirst, heat (of the sun), burning sensation, bleeding conditions and Pitta dominant conditions and poison.

### **Hot water –**

Hot water stimulates hunger, helps digestion, good for throat, eases digestion, cleanses the urinary bladder, relieves hiccup, flatulence, vata imbalance, Kapha imbalance. It is ideal during the Panchakarma therapy, Useful against fever, cold, cough, Ama condition, rhinitis, chronic respiratory conditions and pain in flanks.

Boiled and cooled water is very useful in Pitta disorders, but such water should not be stored for more than a day.

In people with Pitta body type, (who can not tolerate heat) and people with Vata body type, (who are lean) hot water at night may disturb their sleep. So,



hot water at night is ideal only for people with kapha body type (who are obese, who suffer from respiratory diseases etc).

### **Different types of natural processing of drinking water –**

1. Use mud pot to store water. It keeps the water cool and is much better than refrigerator.
2. In ancient times, Clearing nut (Kataka) was added to the water to filter out all the dissolved / suspended waste particles from the water.
3. Mix two pinch of cumin seed powder to five litres of water for drinking. It will aid in digestion and relieves indigestion naturally.
4. Add few roots of Usheera (Vetiver) to water pot. This helps to cleanse kidney and bladder, and to purify / detoxify blood.

In all these cases, water should be consumed within 12 hours. That means, fresh water treatment should be done everyday and consumed.

## **VEGETARIAN VS NON VEGETARIAN FOOD HABIT – A COMPARISON**

Being vegetarian is a trend now-a-days. There is a general misconception that Ayurveda supports vegetarianism. Vegetarian and Non Vegetarian food habits have their own advantages and disadvantages. Health factors and personal choices should be considered while opting for a food habit.

### **What is vegetarian food?**

There are different versions and definitions for vegetarian food. They are –

- **Lacto vegetarian** – This includes plant based food and dairy products such as milk, buttermilk, ghee etc.
- **Ovo – vegetarian** - Plant based food and egg.
- **Ovo-lacto-vegetarian** – This includes plant based food, egg and dairy products.
- **A Vegan diet** – Just plant based food and avoiding all animal origin products including honey, dairy products and egg.
- **Semi vegetarian** – Ovo-lacto-vegetarian and fish / chicken.

### **Advantages of vegetarian food habit –**

- Vegetarian food habit helps in inculcating self control.
- Many religions support vegetarianism. It is the choice of food habit for many spiritual seekers.
- Vegetarian food is less in fat.
- More sources of fibres are found in vegetarian food.
- Vegetarian food is considered to be '*Satvik*' in nature. *Satvik* refers to ability to imbibe noble qualities such as peacefulness, concentration, love for all and optimism in mind.
- Most of the vegetarian food is easier to digest than non vegetarian food.

### **Advantages of Non Vegetarian food habit –**

- Excellent source of protein and vitamins, Vitamin B complex, especially Vitamin B 12.
- Fish is a very rich source of omega 3 fatty acid.
- A well planned non-vegetarian food regimen will make the body stronger.
- Ayurveda explains that meat soup is one of the best nutritious drinks. In ancient times, after surgery or for a patient who has become very lean due to chronic illness, meat soup mixed with spices such as ginger was administered to restore digestion strength and nourishment.
- For gym goers, non-vegetarian food will help to build muscle mass faster.
- Non-vegetarian food is excellent for gaining weight.

### **Disadvantages of non-vegetarian food habit –**

- As per Indian belief, non-vegetarian food is *rajasik and tamasik* in nature. Non-vegetarian food harms concentration levels. It also increases anger and lust.
- Chances of occurrence of constipation, high BP, obesity, high cholesterol, heart diseases are more in non vegetarian food.

Both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food habits have their own advantages.

- It is not advisable for a vegetarian to switch over to non-vegetarian diet. Because stomach, liver, intestines will not be 'ready' with the required enzymes to digest food.

- If you are following a non vegetarian diet, no need to think about switching over to vegetarianism.
  - If you have good control over the quantity of food you take.
  - If regular physical activity is a part of your daily routine.
  - If you are consciously avoiding excess fatty and oily food.
  - If you are not a smoker and alcoholic.
  - If you do not have higher spiritual ambitions.

### **Spirituality and vegetarianism –**

While answering to a query from his disciple, Swamy Vivekananda says that for higher spiritual practice, the body needs to be very strong. For this reason, non-vegetarian food helps. (Source: Talks with Swami Vivekananda)

According to Divine Park, “what eats your mind is more important than what you eat. But when one moves up the ladder of spirituality, naturally mind and body will develop aversion towards Tamasik and Rajasik food and the devotee will eventually embark on vegetarianism.”

## **HEALTH BENEFITS OF VEGETARIAN DIET – AYURVEDIC OPINION**

Health benefits of vegetarian diet are immense, but having said that non-vegetarian diet is not a banned entity in Ayurveda. But if you are susceptible to lifestyle diseases such as diabetes, high BP, high cholesterol, obesity etc, then adopting vegetarian diet will be very helpful.

### **Health benefits of vegetarian diet:**

**Lower risk of heart diseases:** A new study done in University of Oxford, published in American Journal of Clinical Nutrition has revealed that the risk of hospitalization or death from heart disease is 32% lower in vegetarians than people who eat meat and fish. This is because,

- Vegetables provide more fibres in diet.
- Lesser intake of cholesterol. Hence lesser chance for cholesterol deposition in blood vessels.
- Lower cholesterol intake leads to lesser chances of hypertension (high BP).

**Feel light on the feet** – This is the first positive change of vegetarian diet that you will observe. When compared to all the non-vegetarian food items, most of vegetarian food items are light in nature. They are easily digestible and time taken for digestion in stomach and intestines is lesser. It in turn leads to lightness of mind and lightness of the whole body.

**Lessens risk of high cholesterol food intake** – Non vegetarian food particles are comparatively rich in protein and cholesterol compared to vegetarian food items since most of the non-vegetarian food are processed with oil. So shifting to vegetarian diet helps in controlling diabetes, obesity, high BP etc.

**Helps to lose weight** – Quitting non-vegetarian food is an act of mind control over diet. Hence the decision itself brings positive effect on your attitude towards your health. It makes you more health conscious.

**Psychological benefits** – Vegetarianism helps to keep mind more active, positive and focused. It is a kind of auspicious step towards a better physical and mental health.

**Spiritual angle** – Most of vegetarian food items are considered as Satvik food in nature. Meaning, they imbibe positive qualities to mind. Non vegetarian food source and manufacturing has hidden violence. Therefore it is considered as Tamasic (having negativity). Spiritual organization, Divine park is of the opinion that, “when one climbs the ladder of spirituality, in due course of progress, one will be naturally inclined towards vegetarian diet.”

**Strengthens liver, pancreas, stomach, intestines** – Vegetarian diet decreases the load of work on the organs related to digestion, making them stronger.

**Improves skin health** – Reduces occurrence of acne, bad breath problem and also improves the quality of hair.

**Longevity** – Secret of health lies in eating nutritious food. But another secret lies in conditioning the body organs, stimulating them and fine tuning them. This way, shifting to vegetarian diet increases one’s life span.

Non-vegetarian diet has its own benefits. Shifting to vegetarian diet should not be a forceful exercise. The person should be fully self-motivated for the shift. If you are suffering from obesity or have been advised by your physician to consider vegetarian diet, there are umpteen reasons to follow vegetarian diet.

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## **HOW TO BECOME A VEGETARIAN? – AYURVEDA TIPS FOR EASY TRANSITION**

Becoming a vegan is primarily, a matter of choice. Vegetarian diet has many health benefits. Vegetarianism helps against lifestyle diseases like diabetes, high BP, obesity etc. Here are a few tips on how to become a vegan.

**Should not be a forceful exercise** – Do not think of becoming a vegan, just because of the advice. You need to be really motivated to shift to vegetarianism.

**Choose your level of vegetarian transition** – Depending on the extent to which you want to adopt vegetarianism, you may choose one of the following.

- Total vegetarianism – completely avoiding all sorts of non vegetarian sources.
- Abstaining from a few non-vegetarian foods that are high in cholesterol.
- Limiting non-vegetarian diet only to fish, milk, egg etc.
- Defining your limit and level of commitment is essential for the success of the whole process of becoming a vegan.

**Mental readiness** is as important as physical preparedness. It is more of controlling your mind than anything else.

**Main organs involved** - Stomach, liver, intestines and the brain. These organs need to reset themselves to the new diet style.

**Pace of Transition** -Ayurveda recommends that any change in diet (or lifestyle) should be gradual. Once a particular set of diet becomes congenial (Satmya), it takes time for the body to readjust to a new regime. Transition can be planned by reducing the days of non vegetarian food intake gradually and quitting non-vegetarian food one after the other.

**Food that you should consume more after becoming a vegan** -

- The food should be ideally rich in protein and Vitamin B 12, because non-vegetarian food is rich in these two diet components.

- Cheese, raw eggs, whey powder, milk and yogurt are a few vegetarian sources for Vitamin B 12.
- Beans, cashew, peanut, sesame seed, pistachio, lentil, yogurt, spinach, beetroot, cheese, egg, soyabean Fish, Yogurt, milk, soyamilk, soyabeans and legumes are a few vegetarian sources of protein.

### **What you should avoid?**

- At least for the initial six months of the transition, avoid fasting, skipping meals, avoid excess of spicy food, which may cause increase in hunger and strain your stomach.
- Avoid oily foods – If you are taking too much of oily food, it may beat the purpose of becoming a vegan.

### **Beneficial activities –**

Yoga, Pranayama or any other form of physical activities would fortify the health benefits of vegetarianism.



## **LET US SACRIFICE A LITTLE BIT OF FOOD AND SLEEP FOR OUR OWN GOOD**

The two major causes for diabetes as per Ayurveda are –

Asyasukha – eating at one's will and

Swapnasukha – sleeping at one's will. (Madhava Nidana)

I wonder how they found out this truth thousands of years ago. But the statement holds good even today, tomorrow and forever. If we control our eating and sleeping habits, it can drastically reduce the number of medicines that we take.

Swapnasukha does not limit to sleeping only. It covers all the aspects of sedentary lifestyle like lack of exercise, sitting for long hours and so on.

**Calories consumed Vs Calories burnt** - There should be always a match between the fuel we consume and fuel we use up. If the fuel we consume (food) is more than the fuel that we use (physical and mental work), then the extra fuel gets stored in the form of fat, and leads to diabetes, high BP, high cholesterol, heart disease, etc.

**Exercise** is the best way to achieve a balance between intake and output of calories. But unfortunately, many of us fail to do exercise regularly. Hence, from a long term perspective, there should be a contingency plan, if exercise fails to deliver.

**The best way** is to limit the calories that we take and to control excessive sleep.

**Tips to eat less –**

(don't try this if you are malnourished or have anorexia).

1. Whenever you serve food for yourself, just take a portion of food from the plate and place it back to the food pot. I know this is not possible when you're attending a party, or someone else is serving the food. But it is possible for you to do that when your family member or close friend is serving the food (he would not think that you're rude).
2. Just take one serving of food. Tell your mind that all you want is this much amount of food to survive till the next meal. Do not go for the second serving at all.

Bottom line is, say 'no' to excess of food. Though it will be a bit difficult in the beginning, your stomach and mind will get used to it gradually.

These two methods should not prevent you from providing yourself with sufficient nutrition. You only have to decide the amount of food, how much you actually need and how much is avoidable.

**Tips to control sleep:** (Don't try this if you have insomnia). You need 6 – 8 hours of sleep, based on your age, body weight, daily habits, mental and physical work. But if you think you can sleep lesser, then try to decrease sleeping hours.

To reduce the sleep, do not delay the time you go to bed, at night. But get up early. Getting up early has lot of benefits. To try that, set the alarm clock to one hour before your scheduled waking time. Get up an hour early, read some book, meditate, or do some productive work for just 20 minutes and then again go back to sleep. Apart from lessening the sleep it adds more value to your 20 minutes. For example, the early morning will be quite and calm and you can concentrate better.

This may not work well for all, but it is worth giving a try.

## **NIGHT FOOD IS VERY IMPORTANT. WATCH WHAT YOU EAT AT NIGHT!**

According to Ayurveda, you need be very careful about what you have for dinner, if you are really serious about your health. Light dinner is highly recommended both by Ayurveda and the modern science. My usual recommendations always include a list of foods to avoid at night.

If we divide a day into three equal parts, the last part is dominated by Kapha. In this period, the food that we eat should balance Kapha and should not increase Kapha dosha.

**Foods to avoid** – During night, oily foods, junk foods, sweets, chocolates, heavy-to-digest food, non vegetarian food, cold or frozen food, ice creams, large quantity of food, curd should be avoided or taken in small quantities, because these increase kapha, leading to complications such as running nose during morning, worsening of cough and cold, allergies, excessive weight gain, excessive salivation during morning, worsening of vomiting, indigestion etc. Over a period of time, it causes toxic substance accumulation in the body to cause further complications. So the person suffering with one or more of these symptoms, should definitely avoid the above mentioned food items for dinner. In many cases it is found that only this simple diet change cures or improves many of the respiratory disorders.

**Diet plan** for night – Healthy low carbohydrate diet, which is easy to digest, is preferable during night. Curd can be replaced with butter milk. The quantity of food should be limited. Curry leaves, dal, turmeric, small quantities of ginger, etc are good to have at night. The thumb rule is, the food that you take should make your stomach feel light. You should not get a sense of heaviness.

Generally during sleep, we require less energy. So, if we eat in large quantities

at night, most of the energy produced is stored in the body, causing fat deposition and weight gain. Hence, modern science also recommends having a light dinner.

## **BAD FOOD COMBINATIONS AND SOLUTION AS PER AYURVEDA**

Though some food articles are quite safe, Ayurveda explains that combination of two particular safe foods may not be ideal for health. It depends on the quantity of each food, time of taking food, processing of food and a lot of other factors.

### **Principle involved:**

- **Opposing dual qualities:** If two qualities are strongly exhibited in two items and their combination would lead to a bad quality match, then they are rendered incompatible. Usually hot potency and cold potency is considered. But this does not always hold good. For example, in some cases, some hot potency herbs are treated with milk (cold potency) to lower its hotness. Example: Garlic Milk Remedy, Bhallataka (Marking nut) – processed with milk etc.
- **Similar qualities:** If two foods are too similar, to such an extent that the combination would increase a particular Dosha to a very high extent, then they are said to be incompatible.

**Example:** Fish with radish – Both are hot in nature.

- **Opposing multiple qualities:** If two foods have multiple opposing qualities, their combination is usually declared incompatible. For example – honey and ghee in equal quantities.
- **Processing:** If processing of the food leads to alteration or destruction of original quality of the food, then it is not recommended, such as heating of curds and heating of honey.
- **Time of intake:** The day and night can be divided into three parts. From morning to evening, in first part, Kapha, in second part Pitta and in third part Vata are active. If taking some food aggravates Dosha due to its

similarity in qualities with the timing of Dosha, then that food at that particular time is defined as incompatible. Example: Taking curds at night or taking excess sweets at night.

### **Wrong Food Combinations as Per Ayurveda:**

- Pork, Buffalo meat, Swan meat, goose, crab, fish and tortoise should not be taken along with black gram, honey, milk and germinated grains.
- Radish is incompatible with fish.
- **Fish with milk** is incompatible. Both fish and milk have sweet taste, but due to the contradiction in their potency (fish is hot and milk is cold) they vitiate the blood and obstruct the channels of circulation.
- **Anupa Mamsa** – Meat of Yak, buffalo, cow, deer, elephant, Audaka / Varishaya - Fish, whale, pearl oyster, conch snail, cat fish, crocodile, etc should not be taken together with honey, sesame seeds, sugar candy, milk, black gram (Masha), radish, lotus stalk or germinated grains (Viruda dhanya), because one gets afflicted with deafness, blindness, trembling, loss of intelligence loss of voice and nasal voice. It may even cause death.
- Meat of Kapota (dove), fried in mustard oil together with honey and milk, obstructs channels of circulation and causes dilatation of blood vessels, epilepsy, Shankhaka (a disease of the head characterized by acute pain in temporal region), Galaganda (Scrofula) or even death.
- Milk should not be taken after radish, garlic, Drum stick (Moringa), Arjaka ( Ocimum gratissimum Linn), Holy basil. It may cause skin diseases. Though garlic and milk are heated and used together in many medicines, cold milk should not be consumed immediately after garlic, radish, and holy basil consumption.

- **Holy basil with milk** – If you are taking holy basil capsule or tablet for any respiratory or viral infection condition, then better to avoid having milk soon after this. Maintain a gap of at least 30 minutes between the two.
- **Milk with sour fruits** - All sour substances, sour fruits such as sour mango, sour pomegranate and orange are incompatible with milk.
- Horse gram with milk is a bad combination.
- After consuming green leafy vegetables and radish, drinking milk should be avoided.
- **Spinach with sesame seed** – Indian spinach (Basella rubra) processed along with sesame seed paste causes diarrhoea.
- Pork should not be taken along with porcupine meat.
- **Honey** should not be heated. Honey should not be consumed by person suffering with excess heat. It causes Pitta increase.
- Honey and ghee or honey and rain water in equal quantities should be avoided.
- Radish along with black gram is forbidden.
- Curd along with palm date is not good.
- Black pepper along with fish or during digestion of fish
- Banana along with butter milk is not recommended
- Chicken and Spotted deer should not be taken along with curds
- Uncooked meat along with bile of animals is bad
- Sheep meat along with leaves of Kusumba (safflower / parrot seed / wild saffron)
- Germinated grains along with lotus stalk
- Lakucha Phala (wild jack) along with black gram soup.
- Kakamachi (Black night shade) along with jiggery.



- **Pippali – Long pepper** fruit, prepared with fish fat and Kakamachi (Black nightshade – *Solanum nigrum*), mixed with honey causes death.
- Pippali (long pepper) processed with the oil in which fish is fried should be strictly avoided.
- Ghee kept in bronze vessel for more than 10 days should not be taken.
- Hot substances or hot procedures (like sun bath) is not recommended along with Bhallataka (Marking nut - *Semecarpus anacardium*)
- Mixing of milk, beer and Krishara (rice – green gram dish)
- Mixing of equal quantities of any 2, 3 or all of the following is not recommended –
  - Honey, ghee, meat, fat, sesame oil and beverages.
  - Honey along with ghee, even in unequal proportions, should not be consumed along with water.
  - Honey along with seeds of Pushkara (*Inula racemosa*)
  - Honey, along with wine of dates (*Maireya*) and sugar
  - Milk drinks along with Mantha (solution of corn flour)
  - Mushroom with yellow cap is incompatible with mustard oil.
  - Leaves of Jatuka(*Ferula narthex*) or ripe fruit of Nikucha (*Artocarpus lakoocha* Roxb). Should not be taken with honey and milk.
  - Ripe fruit of Nikucha (*Artocarpus lakoocha* Roxb) should not be taken with the soup of Masha (black gram), sugar candy and ghee because they are mutually contradicting.
  - Meat of Tittiri (Partridge), peacock, Godha (Iguana lizard), Lava (common quail), Kapinjala, cooked by the fire of wood of castor and processed with, fried in castor oil is lethal.

## **The treatment for incompatible food consumption**

- Shodhana – purification procedure – Panchakarma. It helps to cleanse the body and gut of the toxins.
- Shamana – palliative treatment – Based on particular Dosha imbalance observed in the patient.
- Virodha chikitsa – symptom based treatment.
- Health should be restored quickly by using food that has opposite qualities to that of incompatible foods.

## **In whom it might not affect?**

In those who exercise regularly, who are habituated to oily fatty food, who have good digestion power, in young and strong, the incompatible food will not cause any ill effects.

In those, who are habituated (sathmya) to incompatible food and in those who take low quantities of incompatible food for a long period of time, the ill effects will not be seen.

## **Types of Viruddha Ahara- Types of food incompatibility as explained by Charaka:**

**1. Desha Viruddha – Place** – Intake of dry and strong substances such as strong wine, in deserts; oily and cold substance in marshy land is place contradictory diet habit. Because, in deserts, it causes extreme increase of Vata and Pitta and in marshy land, it causes extreme increase of Kapha Dosha.

**2. Kala Viruddha – Time contradictory diet habit** – Intake of cold and dry substances in winter; pungent and hot substance in the summer.

**3. Agni Viruddha – Power of Digestion contradictory diet** – Intake of heavy-to-digest food when the power of digestion is low (mandagni); intake of light food when the power of digestion is very high (Teekshnagni).

**4. Matra Viruddha – Dose specific diet contradiction** – Intake of honey and ghee in equal quantities

**5. Satmya Viruddha – Habit specific diet contradiction-** Intake of sweet and cold substance by persons accustomed to pungent and hot substances.

**6. Dosha Viruddha – Dosha specific diet contradiction-** Utilization of drugs, diets and regimen having similar qualities with Dosas but at variance with the habit of the individual.

**7. Samskara Viruddha – processing** – Method of preparation specific diet contradiction:- Drugs and diets which when prepared in a particular way produce poisonous effects, for example, meat of peacock roasted on a castor spit, heating of honey etc.

**8. Veerya Viruddha – Potency specific diet contradiction-** Substances having cold potency in combination with those of hot potency.

**9. Koshta Viruddha – Bowel specific diet contradiction** –

Administration of a mild purgative in a small dose for a person of with hard bowel (Krura Koshta) and administration of strong purgatives food for a person with soft bowel (Mrudu Koshta)

**10. Avastha Viruddha –Stage specific contradiction:** Indulgence in Vata aggravating diet after physical stress, sexual intercourse, exercise.  
Indulgence in Kapha aggravating diet by a lethargic, sleepy person.

**11. Krama Viruddha – Order specific contradiction –** If a person takes food before his bowel and urinary bladder are clear (empty) or when he does not have appetite or after his hunger has been highly aggravated.

**12. Parihara Viruddha – Prescription specific contradiction -** Intake of hot things after taking pork

**13. Upachara Viruddha – Treatment specific contradiction –** Taking cold things after taking ghee.

**14. Paka Viruddha – Cooking contradiction –** Preparation of food with bad or rotten fuel, under-cooking, over-cooking or burning during the process of preparation.

**15. Samyoga Viruddha – Combination –** Intake of sour substance with milk.

**16. Hrudaya Viruddha – Palatability:** Any substance which is not pleasant in taste.

**17. Sampat Viruddha – Richness of quality:** Intake of substance that are not mature, over-mature or purified.

**18. Vidhi Viruddha – Rules of eating :** Taking meals in public

### **Effect of taking incompatible foods –**

Intake of unwholesome food is responsible for the

Shandya – causation of sterility ,

Andhya – blindness,

visarpa (herpes, spreading type of skin disease),

Dakodara – ascitis,

Visphota – eruptions,

Unmada – insanity,

Bhagandara – fistula,

Murcha – fainting,

Mada – intoxication,

Adhmana – bloating

Galagraha – spasmodic obstruction in throat,

Pandu – anaemia, initial stage of liver disorder

Amavisha- poisoning due to Ama (indigestion and altered metabolism),

Kilasa type of skin disease,

Kushta – skin disorders

Grahani – sprue, IBS,

Shotha – oedema,

Amlapitta – acid dyspepsia,

Jvara – fever,

Peenasa – rhinitis,

Santana Dosha – foetal diseases and

Mrutyu – death.

### **Treatment for disorders of incompatible food and diet habits –**

First the undigested food particles left in the gut and the highly imbalanced doshas should be expelled out of the body. For this purpose, two Panchakarma treatments – Vamana – emesis treatment and Virechana – purgation treatment is adopted.

Then, specific antidotes and prophylaxis is adopted.

### **How to leave bad food combinations and adopt right foods?**

Unhealthy things – foods, drinks, activities which have become accustomed by long use should be discontinued by quarter and quarter gradually.

Similarly healthy things (foods etc.) should be gradually made use with intervals of 1, 2 and 3 days.

So, the process of shift from bad to good food should be gradual and methodical, rather than a sudden shift.

Sudden discontinuance of unhealthy things, foods, drinks etc. and indulgence in healthy things, done suddenly and improperly give rise to diseases.

The ill effects of incompatible foods that eliminated gradually and good habits developed gradually leads to robust health.

### **References:**

Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26th chapter

Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutrasthana 7th chapter

## **BEST OBESITY HEALTH TIP – GO TO SHOPPING MALL SOON AFTER FOOD**

Have you ever noticed that the aroma inside shopping mall is very different than elsewhere? Have you noticed that the aroma makes you excited, happy and active? It is not by accident. It is planned.

The aroma is set inside the shopping mall so that, you feel happy and you buy more. They are trying to increase the Rajas in you.

According to the report published by the Centre of Science in Public Interest, impulse buying of unhealthy food, in checkout aisles, increases risk of obesity. We need to stop that, we need shopping malls to display only healthier fruits and vegetables than the junk food stuff. But rather than trying to controlling and regulating them, why not we try to control and regulate our own mind?

If you think about this whole system of inducing greed and more and more people falling in to the trap, you start to realize that, this is how the world works. When I watched a documentary about 2008 global financial crash, the root of it lied in banks giving unrealistic home loans to people who could not afford to repay it. All the meltdown started right there. So, it was the fault of the banks to lure people in to buying into that ugly idea.

Okay, the bank people were bad, but what would have happened if the common man stood strong to his sanity and did not succumb to greed and avoided taking the home loan that he really did not need?

Alright, let us return back to our shopping mall.

The urge to buy more or to put those junk colas, chips, more and more to your shopping cart is caused by Vata and Pitta Dosha. The good aroma and colourful ambiance inside a supermarket increases Vata and Pitta. It tempts your sense

organs more and more and your mind gives in and before you know it, the thing that you don't need is in your basket.

The trick is to stop the greed of the mind, to nip the impulse bud, to nullify the temptation, to check the appetite, to keep Vata and Pitta under check. This can be done by increasing Kapha.

The best way to do it is by having a very strong mind. But I and you know that, it is not really our strength.

So, before you go to shopping mall, have your food.

Soon after having food, there is Kapha dominance in the body. It is also a good idea to walk a few steps after having food. So, it going to shopping mall soon after food is very perfect in both the senses.

Still a better idea is to have some sweet dish / fruit before going there. What it does is, when that appetizing aroma hits your nose, you feel a bit nauseated because of the sweet, increasing Kapha in the stomach. So you will avoid basket balling all those unnecessary food items and would rather tempted to get out of the mall as soon as you could. It will save a lot of money.

Another good idea is to put apply some hair oil. This will again keep your brain from unnecessary excitation to external stimuli.



## **HOW MUCH FOOD TO EAT PER DAY AS PER AYURVEDA?**

It is really a difficult question to answer. The quantity of food that we take varies based on mood, what we had eaten on previous meal, what is the nature of present meal, whether the previously taken food is completely digested or not, etc. Though there are few uncertain factors, there are also a few general rules that help to answer – how much food to eat per day.

### **Based on hunger:**

The rule of ‘natural urges of Ayurveda’ states that, you should eat only when you are completely hungry. You should eat till the hunger is satiated. When you are hungry, it indicates that the digestive enzymes are completely produced to optimum extent. Hence the food that you take will be digested well.

You should eat till the hunger is satiated. While taking food, if you stop feeling hungry, that indicates that the food that you have taken matches with your digestion strength. Hence, it is time to stop eating. If we eat, beyond hunger, then there is extra pressure on digestive enzymes and some part of food may get left undigested. This is the leading cause of indigestion and altered metabolism. This is how ‘Ama’ develops, as per Ayurveda.

Sometimes we get fooled by our mind, of hunger, because we like the food on the table very much. In such tough circumstances, we have to be strong enough to listen to our stomach, carefully, ignoring our mind.

### **Just before the hunger is totally satiated:**

This is what we hear from our parents and grandparents. We should get up from the bed when there is little sleep still left in our eyes, we should stop eating when there is little hunger still left in our tummies. This argument also

has weight. This practice will always make sure never to over-eat. This practice also gives good control over our mind and sense organs.

### **Time for the food to get digested:**

The quantity of food should be such that it gets digested before we take food next time. So, if you are taking only two meals per day, then relatively the quantity of food can be more, so that it keeps you energized throughout the day, till the second meal is taken at night.

If you are accustomed to 4 – 5 meals per day, (which is recommended in diabetics, certain type of gastritis patients etc), the quantity of food should be smaller.

It sounds more like defining the upper limit of food quantity. But it also defines the lower limit as well. Meaning – the food quantity should be not so high that when the next meal time arrives, you are still not hungry and it should not be too low that before next meal time, you already start feeling hungry.

### **Based on Guru Laghu qualities**

**Ayurveda classifies food into two main categories.**

**Guru** – heavy are those food that impart heaviness to the body, after taking which, you feel heavy, which take longer time to get digested.

**Example:** wheat, Fresh wine, black gram, cow pea, lablab bean, mutton, Fish, ash gourd, dates, Jamun fruit, onion, garlic, cow milk, buffalo milk, jaggery, honey, sesame, dairy products, sweet products, fried foods, etc.

**Laghu** – light, those foods that impart lightness to the body, after taking which, you feel light, which take shorter time to get digested. They are pretty easily digested.

**Example:** old rice, Green gram, goat milk, camel milk, Chick pea, lentils, grass

pea, lemon, old wine, Moringa (drum stick), pomegranate, cumin seeds, hot water, coconut water, butter milk etc.

Foods that are heavy, should be had less in quantity. – About half to one third of stomach capacity.

Foods that are light can be had more than those that are heavy, up to one third of stomach.

How to decide if one third of stomach is filled up or not? – It is left to your own observation. It is that point of time while you take food, when you no more feel comfortable.

**Time of the day:** Usual rule is to have good amount of breakfast, moderate amount of lunch and less amount of dinner. It makes sense, because, you will require more calories in the morning, moderate calories in the afternoon and lesser during night.

So, these are some of the criteria that are explained in Ayurvedic text books. Though most of these are subjective, I hope that with experience and self observation, you can decide on yourself about the right quantity of food.

## **OBAMA'S FOOD CHOICES – TOO MANY FACEBOOK FRIENDS – YOUR MENTAL HEALTH**

An article on Barack Obama revealed that he does not have any choices when it comes to his food or clothing. A recent study has revealed that having too many Facebook friends is bad. But how these two are related to each other and to your mental health? Read to find out.

**Our brain** can be compared to a computer. It has its own speed of working (~RAM speed) and its own limited space (~Disk Space). If you overload the brain or if you try to accelerate the working speed of brain, it gets stressed, it may crash just like your computer.

An article about Barack Obama (during his election campaign) detailed about his day to day lifestyle. It said that he avoids making his food and dress choices. That way he can reduce his brain load on 'decision making'. He is making his RAM speed and Disc space available to the more important tasks, by avoiding the brain usage for not-so-important tasks. This is his intelligent way of reducing stress.

A recent study by University of Edinburgh Business School revealed that more Facebook friends mean more stress. If you have too many friends, naturally you will be getting too many Facebook updates from those friends on your wall, naturally your brain is flooded with those useful, useless Facebook updates. This leads to information overload and this leads to stress.

When you have too much of work to do, it is always better to write them down, one by one based on your priority. This is because, when you see the

first work in the list, the brain temporarily forgets the rest of the works and you get good RAM speed and free disk space to perform this.

In meditation, there is a process called 'emptying'. This helps to empty your mind and brain from all the thoughts. Thus meditation helps to improve your thinking speed, concentration and memory.

**Bottom line:**

To have a stress free mind, limit your source of information to only the important things. Discard all the not-so-important stuffs from your thought and from your brain.

## 11 AYURVEDIC EATING TIPS FOR GOOD HEALTH

How we eat is as important as what we eat. Methodical eating helps to extract the best out of food into body and mind. Eating is not just filling the stomach with fuel for energy. Good eating habits help to improve mood, strengthen all the organs and nourish the whole body. Here are eating tips for good health.

**1. Eat only when hungry:** Eating only when you feel hungry. This helps in timely secretion of gastric juice and digestive enzymes. So, do not eat repeatedly neglecting the hunger and do not avoid eating when you are very hungry.

**2. Eat at regular intervals.**

- Maintaining a particular time to eat helps the body clock to set the time for release of enzymes and digestion process.
- Do not take wrong food combinations such as mixing too hot substances along with cold substances. For example, having a cup of coffee soon after an ice cream.

**3. Eat only after proper digestion.** Do not eat over undigested food. Wait till the previous food to get digested completely. Ayurveda explains the following symptoms to know that the previously taken food is completely digested.

- **Clear belching:** Belching / burping devoid of any smell, taste or flavour of the previously taken food.
- **Enthusiasm and being active:** You will feel enthusiastic rather than feeling lazy or dull.
- **Lightness:** You will feel your stomach to be light. There will not be any heaviness.
- **Feeling hunger and thirst**

**4. Just before starting meals, have this:** A pinch of rock salt and a pinch of ginger powder. It helps in proper secretion of enzymes and digestion.

**5. What is a balanced diet?** According to Ayurveda, there are six tastes. – Sweet, sour, salt, pungent, bitter and astringent. Ideally a balanced diet should have all these tastes, to make it a complete and balanced diet.

**6. Which taste food item should be had first?** According to Ayurvedic diet plan, following order is ideal. Sweet, sour, salt, pungent, bitter and astringent

**7. Speed of eating:** If you eat fast, you will end up in eating more quantity of food. Eating slow will lead to eating less. So, moderate pace of eating is advisable. For losing weight, eating at a slow pace is recommended.

**8. Quantity of food:** If majority of food is heavy to digest, like oily food, black gram, etc, the quantity of food should be taken only till half of your digestive strength. If it is light food stuff, then it can be had till content.

**9. When to have water:** Having water in between food is advisable, rather than before or after food.

**10. Thirsty and hungry:** Thirsty person should not eat and hungry person should not consume liquid foods.

**11. To end with:** To end the meals, it is a good habit to end with little milk or a dairy product or a sweet fruit juice. It helps to calm Pitta.

Please note that these are the general rules for healthy people. For people with ailments, some rules might not apply.

## **HOW MANY TIME SHOULD KIDS EAT IN A DAY?**

*A reader asks – “About how long does it take for a kid to digest a meal? Does it take longer for an adult and an elderly person? Do certain foods like fruits take less time? Is snacking discouraged then because it comes between meals when the previous meal may not have been completely digested?”*

### **Healthy eating habit for kids – What Ayurveda says?**

Ayurveda opines that as long as there is undigested food in stomach and intestines, it is not healthy to take food. Because, the digestive enzymes (referred to as *Agni (fire)* – in Ayurvedic literature), are busy digesting the food that is already there in the gut. Hence they cannot take a load of next dose of meals. It may lead to indigestion.

There is a natural cycle of things that happen in digestive system.

- Digestive enzymes are produced in saliva, stomach, liver, pancreas and intestines at specific time.
- Food is received into the stomach, undergoes first level of digestion, and then it enters intestines, undergoes second level of digestion.
- Nutrients are absorbed into the blood from the gut, which gets spread across the body.
- Once the previous food is digested, signals are sent to brain, again enzymes are secreted, and person starts feeling hungry.

According to Ayurveda, as long as the person is obeying this rule of eating only when the previous food is digested by the digestive enzymes, and there is secretion of new set of enzymes, he will be healthy and fit.



If this cycle is broken and if we take food before we actually feel hungry, then indigestion sets in leading to undigested food in the gut. It mixes up with half formed enzymes, leading to free radicals. The enzyme system is also hampered, natural body rhythm is disturbed and disease process sets in.

### **Few Factors that influence the time taken for digestion, in a kid –**

**Exercise and physical activity** - If the kid is indulging in physical games, body will be burning good amounts of calories in short time and hence the time taken for digestion will be less. Whereas, in an inactive kid, whatever he eats, nutrients are only stored in the body, there is energy reservoir that is readily available. Hence, fewer enzymes are produced and it takes longer time for digestion.

**Nature of food** – According to Ayurveda, certain types of food undergo quick digestion like pomegranate, some take longer time to digestion – example – meat.

**Spices** – If you are taking food along with ginger, pepper, etc food tend to digest fast.

**Mood of the child** – If the child is stressed, then digestion power will be low, takes longer time for digestion.

So considering all these, an eating frequency with a gap of a minimum of 5 – 6 hours is good for a kid above three years of age.

That is, for a kid above three years, breakfast at about 8 am, lunch between 1 – 2, evening snacks with energy drink between 5 – 6 pm and dinner between 8 – 10 pm, looks a good schedule.

But this rule is not universal. It varies from one child to the other, based on the level of physical and mental activities, kid's natural eating habits, nature of food etc.

For example, if your kid had his lunch at 2 pm, went out for playing, and comes tired at 5 pm, there is no point in waiting till 7 pm. The kid needs some quick energy. Give him something to eat and drink.

Kid has taken light breakfast with Ginger and garlic Chutney, at 8 am, which are natural appetizers; he might feel hungry by 12 noon only. Do not wait till 1 pm.

#### **Signals to watch if the previous food is not yet digested –**

- Heaviness in the stomach and body
- Aversion towards food
- Thick white coating on the tongue
- General dullness and lesser physical activity

#### **Signs to know that previous food are digested –**

- Kid feels hungry
- Feeling lightness of stomach and body
- Clear belching, without any flavours of previously taken food

#### ***Does it take longer for an adult and an elderly person?***

If the quantity of food is kept constant, the time taken by an adult to digest same amount of food is lesser, when compared to a kid.

#### ***Do certain foods like fruits take less time?***

Yes. For example, pomegranate digests fast, where as jack fruit takes longer time.

#### ***Is snacking discouraged then because it comes between meals when the previous meal may not have been completely digested? “***

If there is a minimum gap of 3 – 4 hours between lunch and evening snacks, I think it is just fine.

Snacks should not be too heavy. Of course, it should not be junk food.



## 5 THINGS TO DO AFTER A HIGH CHOLESTEROL DIET

Though you are a health conscious person and particular on whatever you eat, sometimes you end up eating more or eating high calorie food. Following ayurvedic guidelines will help you nullify the negative effects of high cholesterol diet.

**1. Warm water or a warm drink:** While you are having oily food, make sure to drink two glasses of **hot water** or a cup of any warm drink like coffee (with less sugar) with it. It helps in easy evacuation of oily food. It keeps the stomach, liver and intestines unaffected and healthy.

**2. Avoid ice cream and cold food stuff:** As per Ayurveda, it is better not to mix fat rich diet with cold food stuffs. While you take fat rich food stuff, make sure to avoid ice creams or any cold food at the end of it. It upsets the stomach, liver and intestines. In Ayurvedic terms, it generates Ama - A product of indigestion and altered metabolism.

**3. Exercise:** After a heavy meal or oily food, it is better to walk a little. The extra calories will be burnt away in the form of energy consumption through physical activity. You will not feel extra heaviness due to the food.

**4. Avoid going to bed immediately:** After an oily diet, make sure to give at least 2 hours gap before you go to bed.

### **5. Antidotes to oily diet -**

These Ayurvedic remedies help equal out the adverse effects of oily diet. A short term usage of these remedies will help nullify the bad effects of high cholesterol foods.

**a. Long pepper:** Though spicy and hot, long pepper stimulates liver for early metabolism of fat. Take long pepper powder – 2 pinches 2 times a day, for 2 – 3 days with honey or distilled cow's urine (Go Arka).

**b. Triphala:** It is also helpful in reducing the effects of oily diet. Take 1 teaspoon of Triphala powder with warm water or honey, 2 times a day, after food for 3 days.

**c. Honey:** Though it tastes sweet, according to Ayurveda, **honey** is an antidote to oily foods. Take a teaspoon of honey after food twice a day for 3 days.

**d. Cow's urine:** It is the best remedy for obesity, both on short and long term basis. In Indian customs, cow's urine distillate is used as medicine. A small dose of 10 drops two times a day, after food for 3 days is good enough. Water can be added to nullify extra hotness of cow urine distillate.

**e. Guggulu:** Guggulu is an excellent herb to lower cholesterol or to mitigate ill effects of high cholesterol diet. Its tablets are available in the market. Consult your Ayurvedic doctor first for the best choice of Guggulu tablet for you. Usual dose of Guggulu capsule is – 1 capsule 2 times a day after food.

These are a few ways to nullify ill effects of a high cholesterol diet.

## Fasting

## **DIFFERENT TYPES OF FASTING OPTIONS FOR YOU**

There are different types of fasting which can be easily incorporated into your routine. Fasting doesn't always mean complete refraining from all sorts of foods. For a person with hectic schedule, it is really hard to stick to normal activities without having food for a long time. However one can adopt variants of fasting based on body constitution, eating patterns, strength and will power.

**Note** – Since fasting is a type of physical and mental strain, it is always recommended to take up fasting only after consulting your doctor.

### **Types of fasting**

**1. Complete fasting – no meals no water** – This is the hardest of all the fasting methods since it requires lot of mental and physical strength to hold back yourselves completely from drinking and eating. This type of fasting is suitable only for pro fasters.

**2. Skipping breakfast** – In this method, you skip your breakfast or will eat and drink nothing till 11, 12 or 1'o clock, as per your convenience. This is ideal for those who can manage with delayed breakfast.

It is not recommended for people with minor gastric problems because stomach will be devoid from food for more than 12 – 14 hours. (From previous night to next day afternoon).

**3. Skipping lunch or dinner or both** – Here you will have breakfast but will not take food or water for the rest of the day.

If you are following this type of fasting, then make sure to drink plenty of water with breakfast. This helps to keep you hydrated throughout the day, thereby avoiding easy tiredness.

Skipping lunch is not ideal for physical workers and for those who work under sun because fasting causes an increase in Vata and Pitta and sun exposure further increases pitta leading to intense burning sensation, dizziness etc.

**4. Water fasting** – In this type, you can drink water through out the day. This is next best to complete fasting as body usually has energy reserves in the form of stored fat. Hence it is a safer method.

**5. Juice fasting** – Here instead of water, you will have only fruit juices through out the day. This method of fasting is ideal for people who can not stay away from food for long. This is lighter type of fasting compared to water fasting because juices will provide you more nourishment with added carbohydrate and other fruit nutrients.

Make sure that you drink juice only when you cannot control hunger anymore. Do not add or add very less sugar to your juice. Too much of sugar will beat the purpose of fasting.

**6. Only fruits fasting** – In this type of fasting only fruits are taken throughout the day.

**7. Chocolate fasting** – This is one of the latest methods. Chocolates though are rich in carbohydrate have immense health benefits over heart and are powered with anti oxidants. This can be a substitute to fruit fasting. But there is a threat of over-nourishment and hence, purpose of fasting can get beaten.

**8. Vegetable fasting** – Vegetable salads can be had whenever hunger is out of control. Good for people with gastritis because fibre rich vegetables keep the hunger in check.

Mixture of above methods can also be tried as per your convenience. Principle of limited consumption and intake only when the hunger is excess should be strictly followed.



## **HOW TO DO FASTING? A STEP BY STEP GUIDE FOR YOU**

Fasting is an excellent method of self cleansing. It has spiritual, psychological and physical benefits. The success of fasting depends on the method of fasting, type of fasting and mental and physical activities while fasting.

### **How to do fasting?**

Before you start fasting, you will have to choose among the different types of fasting. You may seek your doctor's help also. The decision has to be made based on,

- Your mental strength and will power
- Strength of your stomach
- Dosha body type – constitution
- Your diet habits

### **Step by step guide on how to do fasting –**

- **Decide on the number of days**

I recommend fasting for only one day. If you want to do fasting for many days at a stretch, it is advisable to give a gap of at least a week between two fasting sessions. Your doctor will be a better judge.

- If you follow astrology or numerology, it makes sense to choose an auspicious day for fasting. You will have psychological and spiritual advantages.
- Initially it is better to do fasting on holidays, when you can be at home, relaxed. But choosing holiday for fasting has also got its downside. If you are working, you'll be busy and will have hardly any time to think about food. Hence it is easy to forget about hunger. If it is on a holiday, obviously you pay more attention to fasting and tend to think about hunger and food all the time.

### **Stop all bad habits-**

You should not smoke or consume alcohol during fasting period since it adds more toxins to your body. Remember you are fasting to cleanse your body off toxins.

### **No non-vegetarian food at all –**

If you are doing breakfast-only-fasting or one-meal-per-day type of fasting, make sure to avoid non vegetarian food.

The basic purpose of fasting is to avoid eating, or eating very minimal.

Fasting has its links with spiritual practices. So it is best to avoid non-vegetarian food during fasting.

### **Have sufficient food on the previous day –**

- Make sure that you have sufficient food, a day prior to fasting.
- Make sure not to take too much of salt and spicy food in the last dinner. It may make you thirsty early in the morning on the day of fasting.
- It is a good idea to eat late on the previous night.

### **On the day of fasting –**

- **Get up early** – Make sure you wake up early in the morning.
- **Take head bath** – with hot or cold water, as per your convenience.
- **Do Pranayama** – Pranayama helps you to have a concentrated mind. It also strengthens your stomach and lungs.
- **Do prayers** - Pray for inner strength.
- **Read a few pages of good book** – A self help book or any other positive book helps you to feel motivated. Your fasting day is the day you cleanse

your body and mind and resolve to have a better lifestyle. Few pages of a self help book go a long way to help you re-orient your stream of thoughts.

- **Curb the hunger** as much as you can. Do not give up easily. If you are doing juice fasting or vegetable fasting, there will be a tendency for over-consumption. Resolve not to give in to hunger. Exercise highest self control. Decide the amount of fruits / juice / vegetable salad that you will be consuming on the day of fasting.
- **Take rest** – The body has to live without the supply of calories. Proper rest helps you keep food away for a longer time.
- **No sun exposure** – Fasting tends to increase Vata and Pitta. Sun and wind exposure also increases Vata and Pitta. Hence it is ideal to stay away from Sun and wind during fasting.
- **No / very little exercise** – If you are accustomed to exercise, limit yourself to a very short exercise session, may be just stretching exercises, on the fasting day.
- **Have the cell number of your doctor handy** – If anything goes wrong, a doctor can be of immediate help to you.
- **Fast with family members and friends** – It helps to improve bonding. You enjoy fasting better. Your motivation will be fortified.
- **Your regular medicines** – You will have to talk to your doctor regarding the regular medicines that you may or may not take during fasting. Certain medications that may cause stomach irritation may have to be avoided.

So plan well, plan ahead to reap maximum benefits out of fasting.

## **HOW TO DO JUICE FASTING? IDEAL JUICE RECIPES FOR FASTING – AYURVEDA METHOD**

Juice fasting is a safer method of fasting, when compared to complete fasting or water fasting. The success of juice fasting largely depends on the choice of juice recipes. The choice of juice recipe can be made based on your health / disease condition, strength of your stomach and the target organ or target system of your body.

### **How to do juice fasting?**

- Any type of fasting should always be done under medical supervision.
- The basic rule of fasting is to avoid all sorts of food and only take fruit juice or vegetable juice through out the fasting period.
- It is better to do juice fasting for one day only.
- Avoid sugar in the juice for fasting.

### **How to select juice recipes for fasting?**

Your doctor will be the best judge. Here are a few guidelines.

In a few conditions, few types of fruits are best avoided.

Example – fruits and vegetables containing oxalates, such as berries, grapes, spinach, celery, and beans are best avoided by a patient with kidney stones.

Juice of fruits and vegetables that stimulate stomach are best avoided – like ginger juice.

### **Ideal juice recipes for fasting –**

**Orange juice fasting** – It is very ideal. Good for stomach, liver, heart and kidneys. For a fasting newbie, who are scared of hunger, orange juice fasting is quite handy.

**Grape juice fasting** – Good for those targeting liver, stomach and intestines.

Grapes cleanse colon. Has calming effect over stomach and mind.

May make you pass stools a couple of times.

Many not be ideal for those who suffer from frequent cold attacks, as it is a coolant fruit.

### **Coconut water fasting**

- Ideal for newbies
- Has calming and coolant effect over stomach and intestines.
- Not ideal for those suffering from frequent cold attacks.
- Not ideal during winter
- Does natural urinary bladder cleanse
- Calms Pitta

### **Sesame juice fasting –**

- Good for those having frequent cold.
- Has hot nature, hence not ideal for Pitta body type people.
- Improves intelligence and strength of teeth.

### **Kokum juice for fasting –**

- Good for heart
- Good for liver and small intestines.
- Ideal for those doing juice fasting for weight loss

### **Pomegranate juice –**

- Pomegranate Balances Tridosha – Vata, Pitta and Kapha
- Cleanses oral cavity, and throat
- Good for stomach health
- May cause constipation in few

### **Lemon juice fasting**

- Good for heart, liver, stomach and intestines.
- Has stimulative effect over different body parts.
- Ideal for those doing juice fasting for weight loss
- Good for people with any body type.

### **Sugarcane juice for fasting –**

- Ideal only for newbies, as it is rich in carbohydrates and keeps you well nourished even during fasting.
- Does natural bladder cleanse.
- Not ideal for diabetics.

### **Amla juice fasting –**

- One of the ideal juice recipes for fasting.
- Good for all three Doshas.
- Good for eyes, intestines, liver, heart, stomach and spleen.
- Calming effect over stomach.
- Immense health benefits of Amla.
- Natural anti oxidant
- Does rejuvenation.

### **Aloe vera juice fasting –**

- Good for liver
- Improves stomach strength.
- Good for those having frequent skin issues like acne.

**Garlic juice** – Fasting has its spiritual connections and garlic is told that it increases Tamas (darkness of mind) Hence, if your fasting has spiritual angle, better to avoid garlic juice.

**Ginger, pepper, etc are not ideal** because they may cause excessive burning sensation in stomach.

**Apple juice** –

If you are doing fasting for 2 or 3 days (which is not always recommended), a mixture of the above juice recipes, for fasting, can be tried.

## **MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL BENEFITS OF FASTING**

Fasting is an excellent way to train your mind and brain to perform better. Fasting looks like a physical exercise, but it needs a good control on mind. Hence it is also a mental and spiritual exercise. Even if you are an atheist, benefits of fasting to improve your mental skills and brain functionality can be hardly ignored.

### **Spiritual benefits of fasting –**

If you are a spiritual seeker, fasting can act as a media to communicate with Almighty. It is a way to express your love towards God. It is a way to train your mind to strengthen belief in God.

### **Mental benefits of fasting –**

**Control over mind** – Fasting helps to exercise control over mind. When you start fasting, it is more of mental hunger that you need to control than the stomach related hunger.

Fasting helps to have good control of mind, which

- Helps to achieve superior concentration.
- Boosts confidence.
- Helps to keep distractions at bay.
- Makes you think twice before speaking.

Control of mind is very important for anger management and following abstinence.

**Firm resolution** – Fasting boosts the resolution power of mind. It makes you firmer, it makes you to stick to one particular task and complete it. This is the reason why great people like Gandhiji, while on strike, resolve to fast. Fasting helps them to stick to their resolution apart from putting pressure on the opposition.

### **Clarity of mind –**



- Fasting clears thoughts of mind and helps in organized thinking.
- Fasting drives you towards austerity and simplicity.
- Steve Jobs used to resolve to fast, or eating only fruits for a specific period of time. It helped him to lead a simple lifestyle, with clearer thoughts and a firm resolution not to give in to money. This kind of resolution comes from the power of fasting. His famous quote – “Stay hungry and stay foolish” has its origin in fasting. Hunger in the mind can be increased by controlling hunger of the stomach, because stomach, emotions and mind are interrelated. (Example – people with bad temper tend to suffer from gastric problems.)

### **Laziness –**

Fasting helps to clear the stomach and intestines of ‘Ama’ (indigestion). Ama causes laziness. Hence, fasting helps to get rid of laziness.

### **Lighter inside –**

Makes you feel lighter from inside, gives you a healthy body and healthier mind.

### **According to Ayurveda,**

- Fasting boosts Satvic nature of mind.
- Fasting boosts Pitta. Pitta Dosha is related with enthusiasm, intelligence, analytical ability of mind, dedication, resolution to achieve the task at hand etc.

So enjoy mental and spiritual benefits of fasting by incorporating it after consulting your doctor.

**Caution** - Patients, people who are very lean and weak, and having Vata and Pitta imbalance or increase of Pitta should fast only after consultation with an Ayurvedic doctor.



## **WHY DID I SKIP MY LUNCH TODAY, THOUGH I AM NOT ON FAST?**

I usually have lunch by 1 pm, but today I did not have it. Because, according to a principle of Ayurveda, *for a healthy person*, he should not eat until he feels hungry. Also, he should not skip meals, when he is very hungry.

As per Ayurveda, if one eats even when he is not hungry, indigestion sets in.

Feeling hungry, in a normal human being is a sign of secretion of proper gastric juice and enzymes. If someone is not feeling hungry, it indicates that,

1. Previous food is not yet digested.
2. The enzymes and gastric juice are not yet secreted up to optimum level.

In Ayurvedic terms, it is referred as “Agni”, which is not yet formed fully. In such a situation, if I have my lunch, it will lead to a condition called as “Ama” – a state of indigestion and a precursor of many diseases.

So, right time to have food is when you are completely hungry.

## **HOW TO DO WATER FASTING? BENEFITS OF WATER FASTING TO LOSE WEIGHT**

Water fasting is next best thing to complete fasting. It is relatively a safer method. One of the main benefits of water fasting is its effectiveness to lose weight. Here is a guide on how to do water fasting.

### **What is water fasting?**

Water fasting is one of the best methods of fasting. Here, you will have nothing throughout the day other than water.

### **How long can water fasting be done?**

It can be done for many days at a stretch. But if you are new to fasting, it is better to limit fasting to only one day. If you want to do it frequently, better to do one day water fasting, once in a week or a fortnight.

### **What you need?**

- Firm resolution
- Consent from your doctor
- A strong body and a stronger mind
- One day for yourself
- Few glasses of water

### **How to prepare for water fasting?**

- Consult your doctor before going for water fasting.
- Have good amount of food, the night before the fasting day.
- Plan your fasting day well ahead for complete rest, or minimal activity.
- Some people get a colon cleanse. But I do not recommend it as such.

[reason is explained below]

### **How to start water fasting?**

Wake up early, have hot or cold water head bath, do prayer and Pranayama.

### **When to drink water?**

The basic purpose of fasting is to avoid any kind of food or drink as long as possible. Hence there should be some discipline even with drinking of water. You should drink water only when you are really thirsty.

### **Hot water or cold water to drink?**

- Very hot water should be avoided since it increases appetite.
- Ideally, in the morning session of water fasting, it is best to drink luke-warm water.

A few recommend a colon cleanse before the fasting day. Colon refers to small and large intestine. The idea is to cleanse off the intestines from toxins to enjoy washing effect of water. This is not really necessary in water fasting. If you drink warm water in the morning session, warm water itself has colon cleansing nature. It also stimulates liver and stomach. Hence if you drink warm water for initial few hours, it is just fine.

- From around 11 am onwards, it is ideal to drink cold water. Because, afternoon is naturally dominated by Pitta, warm water also increases Pitta, so also fasting. Hence, cold water helps for Pitta balance.

### **What are the other activities to do?**

All the general activities and the rules of fasting can be followed.

### **How to end water fasting?**

As a general rule, any fasting should not be ended with heavy food.

A light sugarless nourishing fruit juice like grape juice, apple juice can be drunk.

### **What are the benefits of water fasting?**

- **Stomach** – Cleanse stomach, helps to rest the enzyme secretion process.
- **Intestines** - Helps to cleanse intestine and entire digestive tract. In Ayurvedic terms, it helps to relieve 'Ama'. Ama is undigested food – enzyme – toxin mix-up generated in the stomach and intestines.
- **Liver and pancreas**- Water fasting helps to stimulate liver and pancreas.
- **Detox** – It is actually a natural detox method.
- **Kidney and bladder cleanse** – If you are drinking good amount of water during fasting, it will help to flush off kidney and bladder.
- **To lose weight** – It helps to keep hunger under check, helps to use up the stored fat in the body, while you avoid calorie intake. Water fasting, if done repeatedly over a scheduled period of time, is an awesome way to lose weight.

### **Variations of water fasting to lose weight**

Often fasting is considered as a spiritual practice. If that is the case with you, then you are not supposed to take anything but water till the intended time period is complete.

But if you are doing it to enjoy the health benefits of water fasting, try the below method –

**Hot water with honey** – In the morning hours of fasting, take a cup of warm water with a teaspoon of honey, mixed together. Repeat it for 3 – 4 times, before 11 am.

Honey, though sweet in taste, is a prime Ayurveda product with weight loss benefit.

Luke warm water with honey is one of the authentic Ayurvedic traditional weight loss recipes.

Carbohydrates in the honey keeps you nourished during the fasting day.

Honey also has astringent principles, which helps to check hunger.

## **WHEN TO STOP FASTING? WARNING SYMPTOMS TO WATCH**

You will have your goal to continue fasting for a particular time period. But from a health point of view, if you are experiencing certain warning signals, it is better to stop fasting. If neglected, it may go wrong, leading to severe complications like low levels of sugar and salts in blood, dehydration etc.

### **When To Stop Fasting?**

**Dizziness** – Dizziness suggests that the brain is getting deprived of glucose. It means you should stop fasting immediately or at least shift to juice fasting.

**Feeling like fainting** – Means body can no more go on without the supply of food.

**Vomiting** – Suggests towards gastric irritation and electrolyte imbalance in the body. It is a definite sign to stop fasting.

**Diarrhoea** – It may happen if you have chosen the wrong fruit or juice for fasting or if the quality of food or drink that you took while fasting was not good. If neglected, it may lead to severe electrolyte imbalance and dehydration. Hence better to stop fasting.

**Severe burning sensation in stomach** – Usual symptom in gastritis. Hence people with gastritis should always take extra caution before taking up fasting.

**Worsening of disease symptoms** - like Asthma (wrong juice selection), constipation, cold and cough, etc – This may happen due to selection of wrong juice or fruit. Usually fruits that are cold in nature are best avoided by people who are prone to respiratory conditions.

**Sudden need for excess physical activity like travel** – Taking good rest is one of the ideal things to do while fasting. But suddenly due to work or other reasons, if you have to take up excessive physical activity, consider stopping fasting.



**Onset of periods in ladies** – Ladies usually will have less physical power during periods. According to Ayurveda, fasting or excessive physical activities during periods lead to increase of Vata. Hence it is not advisable to continue fasting during periods.

**Chest pain, stomach pain, abdominal pain** – If you are doing fasting for spiritual benefits, many tend to push themselves to the extreme limits. But such a practice is not encouraged, because health is the greatest gift of God. So, live today, fight tomorrow. Stop fasting for now. Do it again, with better preparation and precaution, after consulting your doctor.

## **Tastes and their qualities**

## **TASTES – TYPES, QUALITIES, THERAPEUTIC ACTION- AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Many of the therapeutic actions of Ayurvedic medicines are explained by the taste of the medicine / herb. For example, Guduchi – Indian Tinospora acts as anti-fever herb, because of its bitter taste. So, taste in Ayurveda is not only meant to explain it as a feature, but it is also a tool to explain pharmacology (how a medicine acts).

*A physician, well acquainted with the combinations of Rasa (taste) and Doshas, seldom commits blunders in ascertaining the etiology, symptoms and treatment of diseases. – Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26th chapter.*

**Root Element For Taste:** All tastes have their root in water element. It does not mean that totally dry powders do not have taste. It only means that all the matters have water as an element in its subtle atomic level.

### **Definition:**

Ayurveda explains taste as Rasa. It is the quality of a substance that is perceived by Rasana – the tongue.

### **How to identify Rasa?**

The taste of an herb should be measured by taking the dry sample of the herb. The taste that you clearly feel and perceive at the beginning and at the end of tongue contact, is the taste of the substance.

Sometimes, in different Ayurvedic text books, you may find the same herb, explained to be having different tastes. This may be because; the authors may be from different places with different climatic conditions. Orange may be sourer in some place, and less sour, sweeter in some other. The context of

such explanation should also be taken into consideration. For example: if an author explains – sour mango, he is referring to unripe fruit and if someone is referring to sweet mango, then he is talking about ripen one.

### **Anurasa – sub-taste:**

When such a taste is not distinctly perceived, but is inferred only by its actions, it is known as Anurasa (after-taste).

It is the sub taste that is subtle, and felt at the end of consumption. When compared with dry and wet herb, Anurasa (after taste) is usually cannot perceived in a dry herb.

### **Taste is a quality, that resides in the substance:**

In describing tastes, it is told that Madhura rasa (sweet taste) increase Kapha Dosh. By this, it actually means that the sweet taste, residing in the food substance increases Kapha. The taste itself is not acting directly, but the substance is causing this effect, due to the taste that it contains.

So, taste is a quality that resides in the substance. Action is always attributed to the substance, and not to its quality (including taste).

### **Types of taste:**

When ancient Ayurvedic seers sat down to decide on the number of taste, there was a big debate and each one had different views. You can find the entire detail of their discussion in 26th chapter of Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana. Later it was concluded that there are only six tastes.

They are –

Madhura / Swadu – Sweet,

Amala – Sour,

Lavana – Salt,

Katu – Pungent,

Tikta – Bitter and

Kashaya – Astringent

### **Genesis of Rasa from five basic elements;**

As per Ayurveda, all the tastes originate from water element. It reacts with other elements in the object to give rise to specific tastes.

As per Ayurveda, all the substances are composed of five basic elements, called as Panchamahabhuta. They are – ether, air, fire, water and solid. Taste is also composed of these five factors. Each taste is formed by two of these factors.

Because, all the substances are composed of these five factors, all the substances have mixed tastes. In those combinations of tastes, one or two become dominant and define the actual taste of the substance.

### **Predominance of basic elements in individual Rasa:**

All the tastes have Jala Mahabhuta (water element) dominance.

- Sweet taste – Madhura rasa = Prithvi + Jala (earth + water)
- Sour taste – Amla rasa = Pruthvi + Agni (earth + fire)
- Salt taste – Lavana Rasa = Jala and Agni (water + fire)
- Pungent taste – Katu Rasa = Vayu + Agni (air and fire)
- Bitter taste – Tikta Rasa = Vayu + Akasha (air and ether)
- Astringent taste – Kashaya Rasa = Vayu and Prithvi (air and earth).

**What this means?**

- If a substance is sweet, it will have more of solid and water components in it. If it is bitter in taste, it indicates that it has more of air and ether components in it.
- In case of sweet, it is composed of solid and water. Both are heavy elements. Hence, sweet tasting substances are generally heavy to digest. They bring in stability to the body. Similarly, bitter tasting substances are light to digest, because air and ether – both are very light in nature. They bring in lightness to the body.
- Sweet is formed by solid and cold, so together, they bring about coolness. Pungent taste has air and fire, hence pungent tasting things like chilli is usually hot in nature.

#### **Effect of tastes on Tridosha –**

- Sweet, sour and salt tastes increase Kapha Dosha and decrease Vata Dosha.
- Pungent, bitter and astringent tastes increase Vata Dosha and pacify Kapha Dosha.
- Sour, salt and pungent tastes increase Pitta Dosha.
- Sweet, bitter and astringent tastes decrease Pitta Dosha.

#### **How taste of particular substance is determined?**

Pratyaksha – direct perception and observation

Anumana – Guess work. Based on the action, and other qualities.

Aptopadesha – By the sayings in the ancient text books. By relying on ancient wisdom.

#### **Factors causing taste transformation –**

**Kalasthiti – Time factor** – Mango fruit is astringent at first, gradually it turns

sour, and then to sweet taste.

**Patrasthiti – effect of vessel** – Curd, stored in bronze vessel, turns from sour to pungent taste.

**Samyoga – combination** – Tamarind's taste gets converted from sour to sweet by adding lime.

**Paka – by heat processing** – Tamarind turns sweet on boiling with water.

**Atapa – by sun exposure** – unripe fruits get altered taste due to Sun.

**Bhavana** – Grinding with liquids – sesame seeds turn to sweet taste, due to grinding it with licorice decoction (Yashtimadhu Kashaya).

**Desha – by the effect of place** – some fruits have different tastes based on the effect of place and quality of soil.

**Parinama – conversion in form** – Milk gets different taste after getting converted into curd.

**Upasarga – infestation** – due to worm infestation the taste of herbs get changed.

**Vikriya – special processing** – Talaphala (Date palm fruit), when subjected to fire, and banged on to ground turns sweet in taste!

**Classification of tastes of Ayurveda –**

**Coolant tastes** – Sweet (Madhura), Tikta (Bitter) and astringent (Kashaya) – these three are coolant in nature. This means, if an herb has any of these tastes, it is most likely that the herb has coolant effect over the body (there are exceptions). They usually balance Pitta and relieve burning sensation.

**Hot tastes** – Pungent (Katu), Sour (Amla) and salt (Lavana) are hot in nature. It means, if an herb has any of these tastes, it is likely that the herb has hot effect over the body. Such herbs increase Pitta Dosha, but may balance Vata and Kapha Dosha, increase digestive fire but may cause burning sensation in the body.

### **Qualities of Sweet taste**

Sweet is congenial to the body, it is wholesome, improves body fluid, blood, muscle, fat, bone marrow, Ojas, and nourishes male and female reproductive systems. It improves life expectancy, soothes all the sense organs and mind, improves strength.

### **Qualities of sour taste –**

Sour improves taste of food, digestion strength, nourishes the body, improves enthusiasm, pleases mind, strengthens sense organs.

### **Salt qualities:**

Salt aids in digestion, causes moistening effect, scraping effect, excision effect, breaks down, piercing, sharp etc.

### **Pungent qualities:**

Pungent taste cleanses mouth, improves digestion strength, dries up food, causes watering of nose, causes lacrimation, sharpens sense organs, cures diseases like Alasaka (intestinal toper), inflammation, obesity, urticaria, chronic conjunctivitis.

### **Bitter qualities:**

Though not so good to taste, when taken, it improves sense of taste in the person, detoxifies, kills germs and worms, relieves unconsciousness, burning sensation, itching and skin disorders, relieves thirst, strengthens and stabilizes body, useful in fever, digestive and carminative, cleanses and detoxifies breast milk.



**Astringent qualities:**

Calming, healing, absorbing, constipative, wound healing, bone healing, causes pressure on body parts, dries up moisture, blocking, useful in bleeding disorders.

**Relative superiority of Tastes based on certain qualities:**

- For Dryness quality (Rookshana), Kashaya (astringent) is best, Katu (pungent) is medium and Tikta (bitter) is inferior.
- For hotness quality (Ushna) – lavana (salt) is superior, sour is medium and Katu (pungent) is inferior.
- For Unctuousness, oiliness (Snigdha) quality, Sweet is superior, Pungent is medium and Bitter is inferior.
- For cooling quality (sheeta), Sweet – Astringent – Bitter
- For Heaviness (guru) – Sweet- Astringent – salt
- For lightness (laghu) – bitter – Pungent – Sour

**Elimination of waste products:**

Owing to their unctuousness (oiliness), sweet, sour and saline tastes are useful for the elimination of flatus, urine and stool.

On the other hand, pungent, bitter and astringent tastes create difficulty in the elimination of flatus, stool, urine and semen in view of their drying property.

**No substance has a single taste -**

A substance has all the five basic elements but a few are dominant. Based on this dominance, a particular taste / tastes become more evident than the other. A substance need not necessarily have one particular taste. For example, Indian gooseberry (Amla) has five tastes. (all tastes except salt).

### **Order of taste consumption and reasoning –**

**Question: Even today the order of serving the food in Indian custom, and also in other Auspicious functions all over the Nation(i think) is as indicated in Ayurveda- A sweet food(payasam)-sour and salt (sambar-rasam-curry)-Pungent,Bitter and Astringent(buttermilk-pickle)-followed by Betel leaves and Nut(astringent).So great we are that we still follow what our Ancient Seers (the authors of Ayurveda) instructed us. Can you please tell the logic behind this order?**

**Answer:** Ayurveda recommends taking sweet, sour, salt, pungent, bitter and astringent taste foods in this same order, while having food.

When we are hungry and are about to start eating, the digestion strength is at peak. Sweet, sour and salt, being heavy in nature, if they are consumed first, the digestion strength will be better utilized to digest these tastes. Pungent, bitter and astringent food, take a bit less strength to digest, hence, they are advised to be taken at the second half of meals.

## **BENEFITS OF SWEET TASTE – AYURVEDA DESCRIPTION, EFFECT ON BODY**

Sweet taste is probably the most liked taste throughout the world. Let us learn in detail, the benefits of sweet taste, its effect on body, general qualities of substances having sweet taste, who should have sweet and who should not etc.

### **Composition –**

Sweet taste is composed of Mahabhuta (basic elements) – Pruthvi – solid (earth) and Ap – water.

### **Effect of sweet taste on Tridosha –**

- Sweet increases Kapha Dosha, decreases Pitta and Vata Dosha.
- Sweet taste is constituted by earth and water elements. Both these add the qualities of coldness and heaviness to the body, because both earth and water are cold and heavy. Hence, it increases Kapha, which has similar qualities.
- Pitta can be compared to fire. If you want to put off fire, you would throw water and sand (earth material) over the fire. Same way, sweet helps to pacify Pitta.
- Vata dosha is like air. Since sweet does not contain any air or ether element, it pacifies Vata Dosha.
- Indriya Prasadana – boosts strength of sense organs, nourishes sense organs.

### **Qualities:**

Unctuous (oily) , coolant and heavy for digestion

Hence softness, coldness due to water and heaviness due to Solid are the two

qualities of Sweet taste. So, substances with sweet taste are soft, unctuous, cold and usually heavy to digest.

### **Effect of sweet taste on body and mind –**

- Shareera Satmya – congenial to the body by birth, wholesome
- Rasa, Rudhira, Mamsa Medo Asthi Majja Oja Shukra Abhivardhana – improves – Rasa (body fluid), blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow, ojas, semen and longevity.
- Prahladana – Brings happiness to mind
- Brimhana – nourishing
- Tarpana – Nourishes sense organs
- Shadindriya Prasadana – Soothing to the six sense organs. (5 + mind)  
Jeevana – enlivening, promotes growth and enhances quality of life
- Mukha Upalepa – coats the tongue
- Anulomana – promotes natural movement of fluids and matter inside body channels
- Trushna Nigrahana – satiating, quenches thirst
- Sandhaneeya – brings about quick fracture healing
- Vrusha -acts as aphrodisiac, promotes pregnancy, promotes lactation.
- Relieves burning sensation, improves skin complexion.
- Useful in relieving the effects of external trauma
- Nourishes all the body tissues, promotes growth.
- Increases Ojas - immunity
- Balya – increases strength
- Varnakara – influences skin colour
- Vishaghna – anti toxic
- Sthairyakara – improves body stability

- Ayushya – increases life expectancy
- Ghrana Mukha Kantha Oshta Jihva Prahladana – soothing to the nose, mouth, throat, lips and tongue

**Benefits of sweet taste:**

- Sweet gives a feeling of contentment, pleasure to the body and comfort to the sense organs.
- Sweet taste, being accustomed since birth, produces greater strength in the body tissues. It is good for children, the aged, the wounded, and the emaciated. It improves skin complexion, hair texture, strength of the sense organs and Ojas (essence of the tissues, immunity).
- Sweet taste causes stoutness of the body, good for throat, increases breast milk, unites fractured bones.
- Sweet is not easily digestible, prolongs life, helps life activities.
- It is unctuous, mitigates Pitta, Vata and poison.

When used in excess, it produces diseases arising from fat and Kapha like obesity, Asthma, unconsciousness, diabetes, enlargements of glands of the neck, malignant tumour (cancer) and more.

Generally, substances of sweet taste increase Kapha except old rice (more than a year old) Barley, green gram, wheat, honey, sugar, and meat of desert animals.

**Example for sweet tasting herbs and substances –**

Ghee, Swarna Bhasma, Jaggery, jack fruit, Jivanti – Leptadenia reticulata, Tribulus, honey, raisins etc.

**Sweet food should be consumed first –**

Ayurveda explains that sweet food should be consumed first during meals. It is

because, just before meal time, there is Vata increase in the stomach. Hence, sweet helps to palliate Vata Dosha.

**Excess of sweet** causes increase of Kapha, which leads to the following symptoms –

- Sthaulya – obesity
- Mardava – increase of moisture component, increased softness
- Alasya – lethargy
- Atiswapna – Feeling sleepy all the time
- Gaurava – increased heaviness of the body
- Aruchi – anorexia, lack of interest in food
- Alasaka, Agnimandya – lack of digestion strength
- Mamsavruddhi in Mukha and Kantha – growth / lipoma over face and throat
- Shwasa, Kasa, Pratisnyaya – worsening of respiratory diseases like cough, cold, asthma, rhinitis
- Sheetajwara – fever with chills
- Anaha – bloating
- Mukhamadhura – sweet taste on the tongue
- Vamana – vomiting
- Sanjnanasha – lack of sensation
- Svarabhanga – voice changes
- Krumi – intestinal worms
- Arbuda, Shleepada – excessive growths and tumours
- Netraroga – eye disorders.

**Characteristic features of sweet taste -**

Sweetness is ascertained from

- Snehana – oiliness, unctuousness
- Preenana – deliciousness
- Ahlada – delightfulness
- Mardava – softness
- When taken in, it pervades all over the mouth as it is adhering to mouth.

**Reference:**

Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26th chapter

Ashtanga Hrudayam Sutrasthana 10th chapter

## **SOUR TASTE – QUALITIES, HEALTH BENEFITS, SIDE EFFECTS**

Let us learn in detail about sour taste, what are the general qualities of substances having sour taste, how it affects health, mind, Tridosha and diseases, adverse effects on excessive intake etc.

### **Effect of sour taste on Tridosha –**

Sour taste decreases Vata. It increases Pitta and Kapha Dosha.

### **Composition –**

Sour taste is composed of Pruthvi (solid) and Teja (fire) elements.

Hence it has heavy, unctuous and hot qualities.

Because of its earth element, it has qualities like heaviness, which increases Kapha Dosha.

Because of its fire element, it increases Pitta Dosha.

Because it does not contain any air element, and because of hotness of fire and heaviness of solid (both are against Vata qualities), sour pacifies Vata Dosha.

### **Effect of Sour taste on body and mind –**

Dantaharshakara – causes tingling sensation in teeth

Prasravana – causes salivation, secretion from internal organs

Svedana – induces sweating

Mukhabodhana – cleanses oral cavity

Kanta Vidahakara – causes burning sensation in mouth and throat

Jihva uttejaka – excites tongue

Rochana – improves taste

Romanchana – causes horripilation



Mana Prasadana – satiates mind

Indriya Sthairyakara – stabilizes sense organs

Deepana – increases digestion strength

Pachana – carminative

Anulomana – promotes natural movement of fluids and substances in body channels

Hrudya – promotes heart health

Raktapittakara – may cause bleeding disorders of Pitta, if taken excessively.

Shukraghna – depletes quality and quantity of semen and sperm

Mutrala – induces excess formation of urine

Balya – increases strength

Bruhmana – nourishing

- Sour taste makes the mouth watery, causes horripilation, tingling of the teeth and leads to closing of the eyes and brows.
- Sour taste stimulates digestive activity, it is unctuous, good for the heart, digestive, appetizer, hot in potency, cold on touch (coolant on external applications, relieves burning sensation)
- It satiates, causes moistening, it is easy for digestion, causes aggravation of Kapha, Pitta and blood and makes the inactive Vata move downwards.
- Sour taste if used in excess, it results in looseness of the body, loss of strength, blindness, giddiness, itching, pallor, swellings, thirst and fever.
- Generally substances of sour taste aggravate Pitta, except Pomegranate and Amla (Indian gooseberry).

**Excess of sour** causes increase of Pitta leading to following symptoms –

Dantaharsha – tingling sensation in teeth

Trushna – excessive thirst

Akshinimeelana – unable to open eyes easily

Romanchana – horripilation

Kaphadravikarana – liquefies Kapha Dosha and causes spread of Kapha all over the body

Pittavruddhi – increases Pitta

Raktadosha – Causes vitiation of blood

Mamsavidaha – Causes burning sensation in muscles

Shareerashaithilya – destabilizes body

Shotha – causes / worsens inflammatory conditions

Paka – causes pus formation in wounds

Kantha Daaha– burning sensation in throat

Vaksha and Hrudaya Daha – burning sensation in chest

### **Characteristic features of Sour taste -**

Sourness is ascertained by

Dantaharsha – tingling sensation in teeth

Mukha srava – Salivation

Svedana – Sweating

Mukha Bodhana – Clarity of mouth

Vidaha – burning sensation in the mouth and throat.

### **While taking food,**

Sour taste should be consumed next to sweet foods in diet, in the early part of meals.

**Herbs with sour taste:**

Dhatriphala – Amla,

Amlika – tamarind,

Amlavetas – *Garcinia pedunculata* Roxb. / *Rheum emodi* Wall.,

Dadima – Pomegranate – *Punica granatum*,

Rajata (Siver), Buttermilk, Chukra, Palevata, Dadhi – Curds, Mango,

Amrataka,

Bhavya – *Dillenia indica*,

Kapittha – *Feronia limonia* / *Limonia acidissima*, Karamardaka etc

**Reference:**

Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26th chapter

Ashtanga Hrudayam Sutrasthana 10th chapter

## **SALT TASTE – TYPES, QUALITIES, HEALTH BENEFITS, SIDE EFFECTS**

### **Word derivation – Nirukti –**

Lunati iti lavanam – the substance having piercing and cutting nature

### **Effect of salt taste on Tridosha –**

Salt taste decreases Vata. It increases Pitta and Kapha Dosha.

### **Qualities of Lavana rasa –**

It is not too heavy, not too hot and not oily.

### **Composition –**

There are different opinions regarding basic element composition of salt taste.

It is composed of,

Solid and fire elements as per Charaka and Vagbhata

Solid and Fire as per Sushruta

Fire and water as per Nagarjuna

Solid and fire composition theory is widely accepted one. Because of solid element, it is heavy and unctuous. Because of fire, it has hot quality.

Because of its fire element, it increases Pitta Dosha.

Because of its solid (heaviness), it balances Vata and increases Kapha.

### **Effect of Salt taste on body and mind -**

Ashuvilayana – It melts and gets distributed in the body very quickly.

Kledana – It imparts moistness to the body.

Mardavakara – It imparts softness to the body.

Rochana – It improves taste, appetizer

Chedana – has excising effect, breaks down particles

Sramsya Avakaashakara – causes movement of Doshas in downward direction

Mukha vidahakara – causes slight burning sensation in mouth.

Kapha praseka janaka – liquefies Kapha Dosha

Kapha Nissaraka – breaks down Kapha and causes its movement / excretion

Deepana – increases digestion strength

Pachana – carminative

Bhedana– causes break down of particles

As per Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 1st chapter, all types of Salts are –

Snigdha – unctuous

Ushna – hot

Teekshna – strong, piercing

Deepaneeya – improve digestion strength

They are used for alepana – anointment, Snehana (oleation), Swedana (sweating treatment), in Niruha and Anuvasana basti (decoction and oil enema), as part of diet, in nasya treatment, in surgical procedures, in rectal suppositories, etc.

Stambhana bandha samghata vidhamana – breaks down stiffness, tightening effect and obstructions.

Sarvarasa pratyaneekabhutaha – can dominate all other tastes

Kapham vishyandayati – liquefies Kapha

Lavana Rasa (salt) relieves rigidity, clears the obstructions of the channels and pores, increases digestive activity, lubricates, causes sweating, penetrates deep into the tissues, improves taste.

Generally salts are bad for the eyes (vision) except Saindhava – Rock Salt.

Used in excess, it causes vitiation of Asra (blood) and Vata, causes baldness, greying of hair, wrinkles of the skin, thirst, skin diseases, effect of poison and decrease of strength of the body.

**Excess of salt** causes increase of Pitta and Kapha, leading to following symptoms –

Pitta prakopa – increase and imbalance of Pitta

Raktavruddhi – Vitiation of blood

Trushna – excessive thirst

Murcha – unconsciousness

Vidaha, Santapa – burning sensation

Darayati – causes erosion

Mamsakotha – muscle degeneration

Kushta – skin diseases

Krushnati mamsani – depletion of muscle tissue

Pragalayati kushtani – sloughing of skin diseases

Shopha – inflammatory condition

Dantachyuti – teeth fall

Visham vardhayati – aggravates poison effects and symptoms

Napumsakata – infertility, impotency

Indriyanasha – depleted strength of sense organs

Vali, Palithya, Khalitya – grey hairs, facial wrinkles and hair loss

Shophan sphotayati – opens up swellings

Raktapitta – bleeding disorders due to high Pitta levels

Amlapitta – gastritis

Visarpa – Herpes

Vatarakta – gout

Vicharchika – worsens eczema

Indralupta – hair loss, alopecia

**While taking food,** Salt taste should be consumed next to sweet and sour foods in diet, in the early part of meals.

**Contra indications:** Gastritis, high BP, body swelling, high fever.

**Salts in Ayurveda –**

**Group of five salts:**

1. *Saindhava Lavana* - Rock salt

2. *Souvarchala Lavana* - Sochal salt or black salt (Primarily Sodium chloride with traces of Sodium sulphide, Sodium sulphate etc)
3. *Bida / Vida Lavana* - A type of black salt / Sodium sulphate
4. *Samurda Lavana* - Common salt (Sodium Chloride)
5. *Romaka / Sambhara Lavana* - Earthen salt.

**General consideration:**

In any Ayurvedic text book,

If the term Lavana is mentioned, then Saindhava Lavana (rock salt) is considered.

If the term Dwi lavana is mentioned, (combination of two salts) then, Saindhava and Souvarchala are taken.

If the term Tri lavana or Lavana Trika or Lavana Traya is used (combination of 3 salts), Saindhava, Souvarchala and Bida lavanas are considered.

If the term chaturlavana is used, Saindhava, Souvarchala, Bida and Samudra lavanas are considered.

If Panchalavana is used, then Saindhava, Souvarchala, Bida, Samudra and Sambhara lavanas are considered.

According to Rasa Ratna Samucchaya (A text book about the usage of minerals in Ayurveda), there are six types of salts.

**The Six Lavanas** – Samudra, saindhava, Bida, Souvarchala, Romaka and Chullika Lavana (Navasadara – Ammonium chloride) together are called as Shadlavana according to Rasaratna Samucchaya.

Of all the substances that improve taste of food, salt is the best.

**Effect on Dosha:** Mitigates Vata and increases Pitta and kapha.

Salts along with Sneha (oil / Ghee) bring about immediate Snehana (internal oleation) effect.

**Characteristic features of salt taste –**

Salt gets quickly dissolved in the mouth resulting in stickiness (kleda)

Vishyanda – moistness

Mardava – softness

Mukhasya Vidaha – produce burning sensation in the mouth.

**References:**

Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26th chapter

Ashtanga Hrudayam Sutrasthana 10th chapter



## **PUNGENT TASTE – QUALITIES, HEALTH BENEFITS, SIDE EFFECTS**

Pungent taste is called as Katu Rasa in Sanskrit.

### **Effect of Pungent taste on Tridosha –**

Pungent taste decreases Kapha. It increases Pitta and Vata Dosha.

### **Qualities:**

Laghu, Ushna, Rooksha – light, hot and dry in nature

### **Composition –**

Pungent taste is composed of Vayu (air) and Agni (Fire) elements.

When you think of air and fire together, you could imagine lightness, hotness and dryness. These three are the qualities of food having pungent taste. Hence it increases Pitta. Because of its air element, it increases Vata dosha. When air is heated by fire, its volume increases, hence fire also contributes to Vata dosha increase.

Because hotness and lightness are against to Kapha qualities – cold and heavy, pungent taste pacifies Kapha Dosha. Kapha can be compared to ice. So, if you expose ice to hot quality, it will melt, boil and evaporate.

### **Effect of Pungent taste on body and mind –**

Rasana Udvejaka – Stimulates tongue

Todaka – causes / worsens pain

Vidaha – causes / worsens burning sensation

Mukha, Nasa, Netra Sravakara – induces lacrimation and secretions from nose and mouth.

Mukhashodhana – cleanses oral cavity

Sphutikaroti indriyani – sharpens sense organs

Deepana – increases digestion strength  
Pachana – carminative  
Krimighna – helps to relieve intestinal worms  
Grahi – absorbent, bowel binding, useful in IBS, diarrhoea  
Hrudayottejaka – stimulates heart  
Raktasravakara – induces / worsens bleeding.  
Avrushya – decreases sexual interest and performance  
Karshana – causes weight loss,  
Lekhana – has scraping effect over the body channels  
Vishaghna - anti-poisonous, anti-toxic  
Vranan avasadayati – allay excessive growth of ulcers  
Krimeen Hinasti – kills germs and worms  
Mamsam vilikhati – scrapes down muscle tissue  
Bandhan chinatti – breaks down bonding,  
Sneha Sveda Kleda malaan Upahanti – helps in oleation, sweating, helps in elimination of sticky waste products  
Kushtaghna – useful against some skin diseases  
Alasaka – cures intestinal toper  
Shvayathu – cures inflammation  
Upachaya – helps in obesity  
Udarda – urticaria  
Abhishyanda – chronic conjunctivitis  
Kandughna– relieves itching. (Itching is a Kapha symptom. Since Katu Rasa decreases Kapha, it helps to relieve itching.)

Pungent substances cure diseases of throat, allergic rashes, skin diseases, Alasaka (indigestion) and oedema, reduces the swelling of the ulcers, dries up

the unctuousness (greasiness), fat, and moisture (water); Pungent taste increases hunger, it is digestive, improves taste, Shodhana (cleansing, eliminates the Dosas), dries up moisture of the food, breaks up hard masses, dilates (expands) the channels and balances Kapha.

**By over use,** it causes thirst, depletion of Sukra (reproductive element, sperm) and strength, fainting (loss of consciousness) contractures, tremors and pain in the waist, back etc.

Generally pungent tasting substances are non-aphrodisiacs and increase Vata except for Amrita (Giloy), Patola, Shunti (ginger), Krishna (long pepper) and Garlic.

**Excess of Pungent** causes increase of Pitta and Vata, leading to following symptoms –

Napumsakata– impotency

Glapayati, Sadayati, Karshayati – cause unconsciousness, weariness, leanness

Vishtambha – constipation

Vata, Mutra, Pureesha avarodha – constipation, urine flow obstruction / lack of obstruction,

Shukra Rodha – depleted sperm, semen production and deficient ejaculation.

Murcha – fainting

Glani - tiredness, weakness of sense organs

Krushata – Makes the body lean

Bhrama – Dizziness

Daha – burning sensation

Trushna – Excessive thirst

Vatarogas – diseases of Vata imbalance.

Because of the dominance of Vayu and Agni Mahabhutas (air and fire elements) they also cause giddiness (bhrama), burning sensation (Davatu), tremor (kampa) piercing (toda) and stabbing pain (bheda) in legs, hands, back etc.

**While taking food,** Pungent taste should be consumed in the last half part of the diet, after having consumed sweet, sour and salt tastes.

**Contra indications** – in bleeding disorders, Pitta disorders like burning sensation, high fever, gastritis, excessive thirst, very lean person, sexual disorders.

#### **Characteristic features of pungent taste -**

Pungent taste is ascertained by irritation and pain in tongue, burning and watering in the mouth, nose and eyes.

#### **Herbs with pungent taste:**

Hingu – Asafoetida,

Maricha – Black pepper,

Krimijit – Vidanga,

Panchakola – Chitraka, Pippalmoola, Pippali, Chitraka and ginger.

#### **References:**

Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26th chapter

Ashtanga Hrudayam Sutrasthana 10th chapter

## **BITTER TASTE – QUALITIES, HEALTH BENEFITS, SIDE EFFECTS**

Bitter taste is called as Tikta Rasa in Sanskrit. Let us learn in detail about the Bitter taste, what are the general qualities of substances having Bitter taste, how it affects health, mind, Tridosha and diseases, adverse effects on excessive intake etc.

### **Effect of Bitter taste on Tridosha –**

Bitter taste decreases Kapha and Pitta. It increases Vata Dosha.

#### **Qualities:**

Rooksha, Sheeta Laghu – dry, cold and light

### **Composition –**

- Bitter taste is composed of Vayu (air) and Akasha (ether) elements.  
When you think of air and ether together, you could imagine lightness, hollowness, cold and dryness. These are the qualities of food having Tikta Rasa.
- Bitter has air and ether elements, so is Vata Dosha. Hence, bitter increases Vata.  
When you blow air forcibly on to fire (Pitta), the fire extinguishes. Hence, bitter pacifies Pitta Dosha.
- Since it is opposite to heaviness (Kapha quality), it pacifies Kapha.

### **Effect of Bitter taste on body and mind -**

- Soon after tasting bitter substance, it destroys other tastes. But over a period of time, it helps to improve tasting capacity of tongue and relieves related diseases like anorexia.
- Mukha Vaishadyakara – cleanses oral cavity

- Kantha Shodhana – cleanses and detoxifies throat
- Mukha Shoshakara – causes dryness of mouth
- Shaityakara – acts as coolant
- Harshana – causes happiness, elevates mood
- Deepana – increases digestion strength
- Pachana – carminative
- Avrushya – decreases sexual interest and performance
- Krumighna – helps to relieve intestinal worms
- Rakta Prasadana – detoxifies blood
- Ahrudya – not good for heart
- Kaphaghna – useful to relieve sputum from respiratory tract
- Vranaghna – relieves wound
- Pooyaghna – heals wounds without pus formation, reduces pus formation
- Lekhana – has scraping effect over the body channels
- Kledahara – decreases moistness
- Medahara – decreases cholesterol
- Vishaghna – anti toxic
- Dahahara – relieves burning sensation
- Swedaghna – decreases sweating
- Kandughna – relieves itching
- Kushtaghna – useful in skin disorders. Most of the herbs that are used in skin diseases like Karanja, Neem, etc have bitter as one among their tastes.
- Stanya Shodhana – cleanses breast milk
- Lekhana – has scraping effect

- Jwaraghna – useful in fever. Most of the bitter tasting herbs like neem, Giloy etc have anti microbial and antipyretic benefits. Hence, it is useful against fever.

Bitter taste cleanses the mouth and destroys the organs of taste (makes perception of other tastes impossible).

Tikta by itself is not tasty, but it cures anorexia, worms, thirst, poison, skin diseases, loss of consciousness, fever, nausea and burning sensations;

Bitter mitigates Pitta and Kapha Dosha, dries up moisture, fat, muscle-fat marrow, faeces and urine;

Tikta Rasa is easily digestible, increases intelligence, cold in potency, dry (causes dryness), cleanses breast milk, and throat.

Used in excess, it causes depletion of Dhatus (tissues) and diseases of Vata origin.

Generally bitters and pungent tasting herbs are non-aphrodisiacs and aggravate Vata except for Giloy, long pepper and Garlic.

**Example for bitter tasting herbs – Vetiver, neem, turmeric, Loha Bhasma (iron)**

Trayanti – *Gentiana kurroa*,

Usira – *Vetiveria zizanioides*,

Chandana – Sandalwood,

Bhunimba – The creat (whole plant) – *Andrographis paniculata*,

Nimba – Neem – *Azadirachta indica*,

Katuka – *Picrorhiza kurroa*,

Tagara – Indian Valerian (root) – *Valeriana wallichii*,

Aguru,

Vatsaka – *Holarrhena antidysenterica*,

Naktamala,

Turmeric and tree turmeric,

Musta – Nut grass (root) – *Cyperus rotundus*,

Murva,

Atarushaka – *Adhatoda vasica*,

Patha – *Cyclea peltata*,

Apamarga – Prickly Chaff Flower – *Achyranthes aspera*,

Kamsya (bronze), Ayas (iron),

Guduchi – *Tinospora cordifolia*,

Dhanvayasaka,

Mahat Pancamula – Bilva, Agnimantha, Shyonaka, Gambhari, Patala

the two Vyaghri – Brihati and Kantakari,

Visala, Ativisha, Vacha etc

**Excess of Bitter** causes increase of Vata, leading to following symptoms –

- Due to dryness, roughness, non sliminess, bitter depletes Rasa dhatu (essence part of digestion), blood (rudhira), Mamsa (muscle tissue), Meda (fat tissue), Asthi (bone), Majja (marrow), Shukra (semen, female reproductive system)
- Dhatushosa – emaciation and dryness of tissues
- Srotokharatva – dryness, roughness, brittleness of body channels
- Daurbalya – debility, tiredness
- Karshya – emaciation, weight loss
- Glapana –weariness
- Murcha – fainting, unconsciousness. Excess of bitter tasting food / medicine leads to depletion of sugar levels in the blood leading to dizziness and fainting.



- Mukhashosha – dryness of mouth.

**While taking food**, bitter taste food should be consumed in the last half part of the diet, after having consumed sweet, sour, salt and pungent tastes.

**Contra indications** – Vata imbalance (because, bitter taste increases Vata and causes further imbalance) so not good for lean, emaciated person.

### **Characteristic features of bitter taste -**

Bitter taste is ascertained by –

- Weakening of taste perception of the tongue.
- Such substances by themselves are not tasteful;
- Causes non-sliminess, clarity (Vaishadya)
- Shosha – dryness of tongue
- Prahlada – delightness.

### **References:**

Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26th chapter

Ashtanga Hrudayam Sutrasthana 10th chapter

**Bitter taste has coldness. Kapha also has coldness. How astringent, being a coolant, can decrease Kapha Dosha?**

Being hot or being cold is one way in which substances affect Doshas. There is another thing called Maha Bhutas – basic elements.

Bitter taste has air and ether elements. So, clearly, there is lightness, there is dryness. Both these qualities are pro Vata and anti Kapha. Hence, bitter substances increase Vata Dosha and decrease Kapha Dosha.



## **ASTRINGENT TASTE – QUALITIES, HEALTH BENEFITS, SIDE EFFECTS**

Astringent taste is called as Kashaya Rasa in Sanskrit.

### **Origin of the word Kashaya**

*Kantasya Kashanaat*

When you taste any substance with astringent taste, such as a betel nut, it dries up the saliva and causes choking like feeling in the throat.

### **Effect of Astringent taste on Tridosha -**

Astringent taste decreases Kapha and Pitta and increases Vata Dosha.

### **Qualities:**

Rooksha, Sheeta, Laghu – Dry, cold and light

### **Composition –**

- Astringent taste is composed of Vayu (air) and Pruthvi (solid) elements. When you think of air and solid together, you could imagine heaviness (due to solidity), coolness (due to air) and dryness (due to air). These three are the qualities of food having Kashaya Rasa.
- Since it has air element, it increases Vata dosha.
- Since it has air and solid elements, it causes roughness and dryness. Both of these are against to Kapha dosha (which has smoothness and oiliness), hence it pacifies Kapha Dosha.
- When you put sand (solid) or blow air forcibly to fire (Pitta), the fire is extinguished. Hence, astringent pacifies Pitta Dosha.
- Astringents are usually cold (in potency) and obstruct body channels – except Haritaki – Chebulic Myrobalan (fruit rind) – Terminalia chebula.

### **Effect of Astringent taste on body and mind –**

- Samshamana – calming, healing
- Sangrahi – absorbing, constipative
- Peedana – causes pressure on body parts
- Shoshana – dries up moisture
- Jihva Vaishadyakara – clarifies tongue, relieves excess salivation.
- Mukha, Kanta Shoshaka – causes dryness in oral cavity and throat
- Hrut Shoolakara – may cause or worsen chest pain
- Ropana – healing
- Kaphanashaka – helps to relieve sputum
- Gauravakara – imparts heaviness to the body
- Stambhana – stops bleeding, causes constipation
- Avrushya – decreases sexual interest and performance
- Raktapitta prashamana – useful in bleeding disorders
- Shareera Kleda Upayokta – uses up body moisture
- Sandhaneeya – helps to heal fractured bones and wounds
- Ahrudya – not good for heart
- Mutra sangraheeya – decreases urine production and flow
- Dhatushoshaka – dries up the body tissue
- Glapayti – causes weariness
- Astringent taste inactivates the tongue (diminishes capacity of taste perception) and causes obstructions of the passage in the throat. Astringent balances Pitta and Kapha, it is not easily digestible; cleanses the blood, causes squeezing and healing of ulcers (wounds), has cold potency, dries up the moisture and fat, and hinders the digestion of undigested food.

- Astringent taste is water absorbent, thereby causes constipation, dryness and cleanses the skin.
- Used in excess, it causes stasis of food without digestion, flatulence, pain in the heart region, thirst, emaciation, loss of virility, obstruction of the channels and constipation.

### **Example for astringent substances –**

Haritaki, Bibhitaki, Khadira – Black catechu (heart wood extract) – Acacia catechu,

Madhu (honey), Mukta Bhasma (pearls), Pravala (Coral),  
dates, lotus stalk, lotus, mango seed kernel

Gambhari flower – Gmelina arborea

Pathya – Chebulic Myrobalan (fruit rind) – Terminalia chebula,

Aksha – Terminalia bellirica,

Shireesa,

Khadira – Black catechu (heart wood extract) – Acacia catechu,

Madhu (honey), Kadamba, Udumbara,

Mukta (Pearls), Pravala (Coral),

Anjana – Aqueous extract of Berberis aristata (antimony),

Gairika – Purified Red Ochre,

Bala kapittha,

Kharjura – dates,

Bisa – lotus stalk,

Padma – Nelumbium speciosum,

Utpala – Nymphaea stellata etc

**Excess of Astringent** causes increase of Vata, leading to following symptoms –

- Asyam shoshayati – dries up mouth
- Dhatushosa – emaciation and dryness of tissues
- Mukhashosha – dryness of mouth
- Hrit Shoola – chest pain
- Hrudayam Peedayati – causes pressure pain in chest and heart
- Adhmana – bloating
- Udaram adhmapayati – distension of abdomen
- Swarabheda – altered voice
- Vacham nigruhnati – obstruction of speech
- Srotovibandha – obstruction to body channels
- Vishtambha – constipation
- Srotamsi avabadhnati – constriction of channels
- Shyavatvam apadayati – imparts black complexion
- Mutra avarodha – obstruction of urine flow, depleted urine production
- Shukra avarodha – obstruction to ejaculation, depleted sperm and semen

#### Production

- Karhsya – weight loss
- Trushna – excessive thirst
- Pumstvam upahanti – causes infertility

**While taking food,** Astringent taste should be consumed as the last part of the diet, after consuming sweet, sour, salt, pungent and bitter tastes. This is because, soon after food intake, digestion process begins. In this early part of digestion, Kapha dosha will be high (that is why you feel heaviness and laziness

soon after food). Astringent food at the end leads to food satisfaction (due to heaviness) and balances Kapha dosha.

**Contra indications** – Astringent Causes Vata imbalance (because, Astringent taste increases Vata and causes further imbalance) So not suitable to lean, emaciated, excessive thirsty and hungry person and if the person is suffering from constipation.

### **Characteristic features of astringent taste -**

Astringent taste is characterized by,

- Vaishadya – non-sliminess
- Stambha – stiffness
- Jadya – inaction in the tongue
- Badhnateeva Kantham – obstructs the throat.

### **References:**

**Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26th chapter**

Ashtanga Hrudayam Sutrasthana 10th chapter

**Q: Astringent has coldness. Kapha also has coldness. How astringent, being a coolant, can decrease Kapha Dosha?**

A: Being hot or being cold is one way in which substances affect Doshas. There is another thing called Maha Bhutas – basic elements.

If you analyse, Astringent taste is made of air and earth elements – If you think about earth and air element, it causes dryness, harshness, roughness etc. – These qualities are opposite to Kapha Dosha. Hence, astringent taste decreases Kapha Dosha.

If, for example, earth was associated with water element (as in case of sweet taste), there is moistness, there is cushioning, there is coolant effects – which are qualities of Kapha Dosha. Hence sweet increases Kapha Dosha.



## **Abstinence, Sexual health**

## **ABSTINENCE: BRAHMACHARYA – THE GREATEST TOOL TO IMPROVE CONCENTRATION**

Of all the techniques, Abstinence – Brahmacharya is the noblest technique to improve concentration, memory, courage and positivism. It is not just a spiritual belief. Ayurveda also approves the benefits of abstinence.

### **Abstinence meaning:**

- Abstinence is restraining one's mind and body indulging in sex, sexual activities and thoughts.
- Abstinence is not just a physical process but also a psychological exercise. If you indulge in sex, there is a lack of abstinence. Same way, if you imagine about having sex, then also you fail to follow abstinence.
- It is almost impossible for common people to practice abstinence at the highest level but one can practise abstinence according to their capacity and comfort.

### **Benefits of abstinence:**

Brahmacharya is considered to be one of the three pillars of life. (Other two are – food and sleep). Secret to good health and longevity lies in Brahmacharya.

- **Ayurveda details:** The Ojas – the essence of immunity is told as by-product of Shukra (the hormones, semen and other components of sex). Hence, preserving Shukra leads to improvement in immunity.
- Swami Vivekananda was able to memorize whatever he used to glance in a book. Just by reading a few lines of a paragraph, he could get the meaning of rest of the paragraph. He used to say that if one practices absolute abstinence for a period of 12 years continuously, a special Nadi

(nerve power) called Medha Nadi (Medha = intelligence) develops in one's brain, which leads to tremendous memory and concentration.

- Abstinence leads to multi-fold improvement in concentration, memory and courage.
- For students, teenagers and children, abstinence is highly recommended.
- Abstinence leads to character building.
- Abstinence imbibes reliability, strength in character and trustworthiness.
- Abstinence is the fuel for spiritual journey. Spirituality is possible only when abstinence is practised.

### **How to practice abstinence**

- Though it looks almost impossible to follow absolute abstinence, with determination, practice and perseverance to follow it at least to some extent.
- If not absolute abstinence, teenagers can avoid sexual activities at least till a particular point of time in their lives.
- Married people can practise abstinence at certain situations. For example during pregnancy, menstrual periods, during festival days, when away from their partner etc.
- Keeping oneself away from stimulations such as TV, wrong company etc helps follow abstinence.
- Pranayama helps to keep the mind calm and relaxed. It also improves concentration.

### **Does night fall break the Brahmacharya?**

Night fall is the common term used for nocturnal emission, wherein the semen that is collected inside, overflows while the person is sleeping. This does not break Brahmacharya.

If retention of semen was the only criteria for celibacy, then a simple vasectomy operation would have made everyone to follow this noble path. But what actually matters in following Brahmacharya is purity of heart and mind and nothing else.

## AYURVEDA SEX RULES FOR A HEALTHY LIFE

Sex is part and parcel of everyone's life. But like most of the aspects of life, control and moderation are the keywords. Here are a few healthy sex rules as per ancient Ayurveda.

- 1. Sex position:** Women-on-top position should be avoided.  
Explanation: This concept is for people seeking conception. In olden days, there were no real contraceptives and sex was predominantly seen as the way to beget children. So, the olden Ayurveda teachers used to think that with women-on-top positions, the entry of semen into the vagina would not occur properly. As per Ayurveda, it would cause Vata Dosha imbalance, leading to pain and discomfort.
- 2. Avoid sex during menstrual period** – It is contra indicated from a health perspective.
- 3. One should not have sex with the person who is not liked (wicked),** whose activities are displeasing. This refers to the psychological aspect of sex.
4. Cleanliness and hygiene of private parts should be maintained to have a healthier and safer sex. Always clean genitalia before and after sex.
5. Sex is best avoided in people who are very emaciated. This is as similar to avoiding exercise by a person with emaciation.
6. Sex should be avoided soon after delivery and with pregnant women.  
After delivery, if it is a normal delivery, a gap of 2 – 3 months is considered desirable. If it is a C section, a gap of 5 – 6 months is recommended.
7. Sex with multiple partners should be avoided. Stick to your spouse.  
Ayurveda strictly recommends fidelity and being faithful. It concentrates more on love factor than lust factor.

8. Should not have sex with animals. Ayurveda is against bestiality.
9. Avoid sex in the abode of the teacher, Gods and kings in monasteries, burial ground, places of torture and of sacrifice and meeting of four roads.
10. One should avoid days of special significance (new-moon, full-moon, eclipse, festivals, mourning days and others) – This technique not only gives a break to both the partners from sex. It also fills freshness to their relationship. It helps them to understand that relationship is more than physical. Occasional restraint is a key for healthy and refreshing sex experience.
11. **Avoid violence during sex** – Ayurveda advocates sex as the means to express mutual love and respect and NOT anger, enmity and hatred.
12. **One should not indulge in sex after a heavy meal** – Sex is also a form of exercise. This advice is akin to the rule that one should not do exercise immediately after meals. In Ayurvedic terms, it will cause indigestion problems and Vata imbalance.
13. **One should not have sex when hungry and thirsty** – Sex is an intense physical activity and having it while hungry or thirsty leads to increase in Vata Dosha, dizziness, headache, body ache, bloating and gastritis.
14. Uncomfortable postures should be avoided which may cause injury.
15. One should not have sex when there is an urge to urinate or defecate.
16. One should not have sex during illness. As per Ayurveda, Sex and immunity power are inter-related. That is why, abstinence is highly recommended during youth.

In Ayurveda, the immunity power is explained with the term Ojas. During illness, Ojas is depleted. At that time, if you indulge in sex, it would further deplete the Ojas, leading to delay in healing process.

### **17. How frequently can one have sex?**

- During winter, person can have sex everyday as the body strength will be maximum, during winters.
- Once in three days in Vasanta (spring) and Sharat (autumn) – Moderate body strength during these seasons, hence moderate sex frequency.
- Once in 15 days in Varsha (rainy) and Nidagha (summer) – low body strength and hence very low sex frequency.

**18. Side effects of Improper sex** - Giddiness, exhaustion, weakness of the thighs, loss of strength, depletion of tissues, loss of acuity of senses and premature death occur from improper sex indulgence.

**19. Benefits of following healthy sex rules** – Good memory, intelligence, long life, health, nourishment, acuity of sense organs, reputation, strength and slow ageing accrue from disciplined and well balanced sexual life.

**20. After sexual intercourse**, after cleaning the genitalia, one should indulge in bath, applying scented paste, exposure to cool breeze, drinking of syrup prepared from sugar candy, cold water, milk, meat juice, soup, Sura – fermented liquor prepared from grains, Prasanna – clear supernatant fluid of Sura and then go to sleep.

## **HEALTHY SEX TIPS FOR A FRUITFUL RELATIONSHIP AND MEANINGFUL LIFE**

Healthy sex is very essential for a meaningful relationship and meaningful life.

‘Healthy sex’ involves balance, understanding, patience, co-operation and finding happiness together. While most of the people target on ‘excitement’ and ‘short-term happiness’ during sex, I would rather recommend targeting long-term happiness and a successful life of togetherness filled with love.

### **Healthy sex tips:**

- 1. Single sex partner:** Multiple partners, betrayal in relationships, one night stands and behaving impulsively causes imbalance in sexual life and breaks the backbone of the relationship – trust.
  - 2. Self control:** You come home with a plan of having sex and find that your spouse is not well or excessively tired, wisdom lies in controlling yourself. The practice of self-control helps to put love ahead of sex. Self control and restraint also helps to overcome premature ejaculation.
  - 3. Care for the partner:** In showing concern towards happiness of the spouse, avoiding possible painful postures and showing restraint when the spouse is ill.
  - 4. Using contraception:** Proper knowledge and adoption of contraception to avoid unwanted pregnancy helps unnecessary pregnancy and abortions. In some cases of premature ejaculation, use of condom helps to delay the stimulation and excitation and leads to sex power increase.
  - 5. Avoiding sex during periods:** Sex during pregnancy may cause many health problems.
  - 6. Forcing the partner:** Forcing the partner for everyday sex or to have sex many times a day or sexual alternatives such as anal sex, when the partner is not willing may lead to misunderstanding and bitterness in relationship.
- Overall, the difference between healthy sex and unhealthy sex practices can be summarized as follows.



<b>Healthy sex practice</b>	<b>Unhealthy sex practice</b>
Sex with single partner	Multiple partners
Self control and mental control over desire	No control, dominating and overpowering
Care for partner	Your enjoyment is what matters.
Long time perspective	Tonight is the night
Long and strong relationship	One night stands
Sex as part of life	Sex as aim of life
Sex at proper age	Sex at teenage

## HEALTHY SEXUAL LIFE

### Once in how many days sex is fine?

- It varies from person to person.
- Once a day or in two days is normal.
- Even multiple times a day is also fine, as long as you don't push yourself too much.

### Time:

- Night time is good.
- But to throw a surprise to your partner, once in a while, sex during day is also fine.

### Some basic etiquette:

- Cleaning the organs, before and after sex.
- Not hurting the partner.
- No awkward postures.
- No smoking or no too much alcohol before sex.
- Love is more important than sex.

### Tips to increase sex power:

- Decreased sexual interest haunts everybody at one or the other point of time.
- So, it is very important to use techniques to keep your sex life, pleasurable and enjoyable. Here are 12 tips for sex power increase.  
Hope they are useful to you.

**1. Don't have it everyday.** Maintain a gap of one or two days. Sex, as a part and parcel of daily routine may make you feel bored and eventually might lead to decreased sexual interest.

**2.** Always have an element of surprise in your moves, or your general behavior, or the gifts that you choose.

**3. Different sex postures** – You may start feeling bored by same postures. You can try new intercourse postures, which will not only make your sex life interesting, but also keeps you fit by burning few calories.

4. Try out some SAFE sex fantasies.

5. Do not undress all of a sudden. Slow and steady always wins the race.

6. Wear a condom; it delays the pinnacle, giving more time for foreplay.

**7. Exercise** - Sex and exercise are related to each other.

**8. Black gram** – Black gram has been hailed as one of the effective diet for sex power increase. So, eating Dosa, or other food dishes made of black gram for 2-3 times a week will help in good sex health.

**9. Get rid of diseases** – Maximum sexual bliss can be had only if you keep yourself healthy and hygienic. So, get proper treatment for your diseases and do not allow them to grow chronic. Diabetes and hypertension may be the causes for decreased libido, which needs proper treatment.

**10. Take care of your partner.** Love and understanding are important elements to ensure mutual enjoyment. So, try to understand what your partner is going through. For example, women, nearing to their periods, will have mood swings and working women will be usually encountering higher stress levels. So take care.

**11.** Ayurveda explains that food with sweet, salt and sour taste enhances sexual power and bitter, hot and excess spicy foods lead to decreased sexual interest.

**12. Sexual herbal supplements** – You might need herbal supplements if you have following conditions.

- If you have diabetes or hypertension, due to which you are suffering from decreased libido / erection difficulties.

- If you are suffering from / recovering from a chronic disease, which is leading to decreased libido for a prolonged period of time.
- If none of the above tips are working, even after trying consistently over a period of time.

## **HOW TO GIVE SEX EDUCATION TO YOUR KID?**

With the ever changing pattern of parenting, it is very important that certain things should be known to your kids at certain ages. Your child should know a few facts about sex.

### **Consider these sex statistics –**

More than 20% of children are sexually abused before the age of 8.

Evidence that a child has been sexually abused is not always obvious, and many children do not report that they have been abused.

Over 30% of victims never disclose the experience to ANYONE.

30-40% of the victims are abused by a family member.

So there are few things about sex, which your five year old should know.

### **Educate them with following words.**

1. What are genital organs and buttocks? Genital organs are useful in throwing out the waste products of food out of our clean body.
2. Nobody should touch or play with the genital organs or buttocks, because they are your property. Any injury caused to the genital organs will not be good for health. It is not a toy that somebody plays with.
3. You also should not touch genital organs of other kids. Because it might be dirty. It may lead to fever, the bad germs may attack your body.
4. If somebody is touching the genital organs repeatedly, forcibly hugging or kissing you repeatedly and if you are not feeling comfortable with it, tell that person, whoever he is, uncle, aunt etc that you do not like it and they should not be doing it to you. Then immediately you should come out of that room and tell that to your parent.
5. Suppose someone takes your clothes off, unnecessarily, do not allow him/her to do that. Do not allow someone to take your naked pictures. If someone is doing such things, then immediately you tell it to your parent.

6. Whenever you are talking to someone, and if they are using any kind of bad language, and if you get a doubt, come and tell to me.

7. If someone is showing you naked and dirty pictures of people, come and tell that to me immediately.

**Consider these parenting tips.**

Whatever your kid goes through, he or she should be encouraged to report that thing to you. It is your responsibility to create such an atmosphere in your home so that your kids have absolutely no problem whatsoever to tell anything in the world to you.

Never scold your kid whenever he comes and tells you something nasty.

Console him, cajole him and explain him in simple terms, what is right and what is wrong and what should be done in the future.

If you get a doubt that someone in your family or outside is behaving suspiciously with your kid, then do not wait till a disaster strikes. JUST ACT! Keep your kid away from that person; convey to that person that what is done is wrong. Remember, awareness and courage to act are the keys to stop child sex abuse.

**Sex education for teenagers:**

By the time your child turns to 18, it is good to convey the following message to him / her –

- Masturbation is absolutely safe but over indulgence is harmful.
- Unprotected sex brings diseases like AIDS.
- Sex with single partner is highly recommended.
- Avoiding sex till he/she is 21 years old is good so that the time can be invested to concentrate on studies and career.
- Infidelity, cheating your partner makes you lose your character.

If you are not comfortable talking about sex with your child, taking him to a sex expert is a good idea.

### **DO NOT HIDE THESE THINGS FROM YOUR HUSBAND**

Of course there will be a few secrets kept by both husband and wife. But a wife, according to me should not hide the following things. The important word here is – “matter of distress”. Whichever thing is causing you distress, you should not hide those from your beloved husband. Let me give you few examples.

#### **Example 1:**

Husband has gone for a business trip and your 5 year old kid falls sick. You may think – “If I tell him this, his concentration may get diverted or he may judge me as careless, it is just fever after all, let me handle it myself. Why disturb him?”

The mild fever may get associated with vomiting and diarrhoea, things get out of control and your kid ends up being admitted to a hospital. At this point, if you call your husband and tell what happened, he will feel aghast. When he comes back, you will have a lot of explanations to give.

I am not saying that if you tell your husband, your kid’s condition will dramatically improve. But your husband will be a part of this painful journey right from the beginning, so he will get a chance to understand you and the situation better.

#### **Example 2: You get harassed at work**

Say, your husband was not willing to send you for a job, you forcefully go to job, but unfortunately, you get sexually harassed at work place. If you tell this to your husband, he may fight with you about it; he may ask you to quit the job

immediately. That is quite fine; you can convince him about your next job opportunity after a while.

But if you do not tell him and if he gets to know about it from somebody else, then things will become very difficult to handle. “Why didn’t she tell me? She does not have confidence to share her distress with me, Was that harassment or...!”

Let us keep this simple. If someone harasses you, just tell it to your hubby and face the situation together, with love, boldly.

### **Example 3: You fall sick**

There is no worse pain for a loving husband than her wife hiding about her illness. He loves you and he wants to take a good care of you. Give him that chance. Do not let him down.

**Always remember...** better to inform at an early stage and set right whatever the small misunderstandings are, rather than waiting for things to get worse and then gasping for love and care with repent and despair.



## **Sleep and related aspects**

## **HOW TO WAKE UP EARLY IN THE MORNING? – 10 AYURVEDA TIPS**

If you open any Ayurveda text book, the first advice that you will come across is to wake up early in the morning. Ayurveda advises to wake up in “Brahmi Muhurtha” that is about 45 minutes before sunrise. While we all dream of enjoying the calmness and elegance of early morning hours, setting up our daily routine to achieve this task consistently needs some effort. Here are a few tips.

**Set up your target:** Decide the time in your mind and fix it as your aim. 5 O’ Clock, 6 O’clock, 6:30 ? Fix the time and concentrate all your mental energy to gather enough determination to target the time that you’ve fixed for yourself.

**Switch off the TV, Phones and laptop at night.** TVs and phones are the two big obstacles that delay your sleeping time at night. Be determined to switch them off, at least by 10 pm.

**Do not announce it to your family and friends.** If you say it to others, they may make fun of you and doubt your abilities. You have to believe and back yourself.

**Eat light at night** – Do not take heavy food at night. Avoid sweets, heavy, fried food stuff, frozen food stuff etc., because having a light dinner is crucial for feeling light in the morning, which makes it easier to wake up early.

**Drink half a glass of water at night** – This way, your bladder will be full by early morning and you will be forced to wake up. This advice is not suitable for diabetic patients, and people with frequent urination problem.

**Keep the alarm at a distance from your bed,** so as to avoid hitting the snooze button.

**After the first half an hour, it will be very easy** – Initially, when you get up at determined time, you will feel dizziness, heaviness of head, and laziness. At that time, instead of going back to bed, at least, try going to bathroom, brush your teeth, read news paper, warm up for your morning dose of exercise / yoga and keep yourself awake for initial half an hour with some effort. After first half an hour, it will be amazingly easy.

**Take cold water bath** – Having cold water bath improves your alertness and concentration.

**After waking up, do not stay in bed for long** - Soon after you wake up, get out of the bed and stay away from it. Do not give excuses to yourself by planning the day in the bed. It may put you back to sleep.

**Do not have unreasonable target.** If you usually get up at 8 o'clock, do not set yourself a target of 5 o'clock, instead, target 7' O'clock and improve gradually, week after week.

**Remember** - all the difficulties that you face in initial days are only temporary but the mental and health benefits that you enjoy will be permanent.

## **SLEEP, DAY SLEEP**

Through sleep, you are relaxed, your body undergoes growth, repair, mind gets refreshed, all the negative thoughts are booted out.

### **Duration:**

I recommend at least 7 hours of night sleep. The duration varies from person to person based on age, body type, work, daily habits etc.

But in this fast paced life, minimum 7 hours of sleep is very essential.

### **How the bed room should be –**

It should be neatly arranged, gentle fragrance is recommended, if you are not allergic to smell. It should be dark.

### **How to sleep naturally?**

- Make a strict daily schedule for the dinner time and time to go to bed and stick to it.
- Try not to sleep during afternoons. This will improve night sleeping hours. (Day nap is recommended for elderly people).
- Drink a glass of warm milk at night time.
- Take a warm water bath during evening hours, after you return from office.
- Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, drink juices, and get your nutrition status to optimum levels.
- Mild to medium exercise during evening period, so that you feel tired, followed by a hot shower and then a warm cup of milk will definitely send you straight to bed.
- If you are too sensitive to noise, use ear plugs.
- If you are sensitive to light, then put off light or use eye band.
- For some people, light music is a good aid for sound sleep.
- Applying a little Ksheerabala taila (oil) to forehead helps in sound sleep.

## **Afternoon nap / day sleeping –**

Day sleep is one of the most debated topics. There are many opinions about sleeping in the day. One of the basic treatises of Ayurveda, Charaka Samhita written about 2500 years ago, has complete details about sleeping during day, who can sleep during the day, who should not have day sleep, how it affects life and health etc. Let us find out the full Ayurvedic explanation.

### ***Who can sleep during daytime?***

- **Singers** - Singing involves a lot of Vata activity and causes overall vata increase. To balance Vata, day sleeping is advised for singers.
- **Students** – who continuously read- Sleep is related with memory and to digest all the read subjects. It is better to give brain rest so as to give time to assimilate. Students may not sleep for hours during day, but a little afternoon nap works wonders for them.
- **After having alcohol** - It is better for alcoholics to sleep during daytime rather than driving a car.
- **Those having sex daily** – *Sex everyday* causes tiredness. Hence the day sleep is recommended.
- **Heavy work** – Those who work hard will have temporary increase of Vata and suffer tiredness. To compensate, they should have day sleep.
- **People having indigestion** – This refers to *indigestion* arising due to Vata imbalance.
- **People having injuries** -To balance Vata.
- **People having underweight and undernourished body** - Our daily calorie intake through food should balance the calorie needs of the body for the normal daily activities. So, if people seeking weight gain, sleep during daytime, it helps them to save calories, which helps to gain weight.

- **Elders and children** – They obviously need rest to keep up their energy levels.
- **Patients** – Especially with less strength, suffering from excessive thirst, diarrhea, abdominal pain, respiratory diseases, hiccups and who are excessively tired.
- **Who have traveled long distances** – Traveling causes Vata imbalance and tiredness, hence sleep is advised.
- **People with excessive anger** – Sleep relaxes brain and cools the temper. So, after the sleep, it helps the person to deal with the issue with patience.
- **People with grief** – For them, sleeping during daytime helps to forget the pain and decrease depression.

All these people above are advised to sleep during day time in all seasons. In these people, sleep helps to restore all the healthy tissues, energy, and Kapha will be balanced and body gains strength.

### **When everyone can have day sleep?**

For all healthy people, day sleep is advised during summer, due to less night-time and due to lack of energy during summer.

In other seasons, it is not recommended for normal people to have day sleep, as it may cause kapha and Pitta imbalance.

### **Who should never have day sleep?**

- Those who are suffering from obesity
- Who are taking ghee or oil daily
- Those suffering from Kapha diseases, who have Kapha body type
- Who are suffering from toxicity should never sleep during day.

Kapha diseases refers to diabetes, obesity etc. In these people, the calorie burnt with daily activity should exceed the calorie of food taken. Hence it helps

to reduce weight or maintain blood glucose levels, if they don't sleep during day time.

**If a wrong person sleeps during daytime, what happens?**

Swelling / edema, tastelessness, vomiting sensation, aggravation of cold, migraines, skin diseases, itching, lassitude, cough, throat diseases, lack of good memory and intelligence, fever, weakness in sense organs, increase in toxicity, occurs. If a person has these conditions, then it would worsen, if he / she sleeps during daytime.

Hence, based on suitability and timing, one should have day sleep.

**Duration of nap:**

For elderly and children – half an hour to one hour.

For young people – 10 to 15 minutes. If young people sleep for more hours during day, it may harm the night sleep hours, causing imbalance

If you have missed sleep for an hour during night, it is better to have nap for half the time (half an hour) during day.

**A general rule** – Nap should always be had before lunch. Ayurveda says that nap after lunch causes indigestion.

## **WHAT IS THE RIGHT TIME TO SLEEP? HOW TO PLAN YOUR SLEEP?**

The number of people having difficulty in maintaining a regular night sleep pattern is increasing day by day. Unfortunately, most of them are youngsters, who fail to sleep early and wake up early. If your daily routine becomes irregular at a very young age, it surely fails to lay a good foundation for your future health and life. Try to follow these tips to sleep at a fixed time at night, preferably by 11 PM

### **Why 11 PM is the right time to sleep?**

There are many factors to decide the right time to go to bed. For most of us, it is better to fix the sleeping time to not-later-than 11 PM. As per Ayurveda, sleep is influenced by Kapha Dosha.

Those with Kapha body type sleep more. Those with Pitta or Vata body type, usually sleep less.

If you divide the night into three parts, the first part of night, – about 9 pm – 12 mid night is dominated by Kapha. So, irrespective of your Dosha body type, you will have some sort of Kapha dominance during this period. Hence, if you sleep within this time, the chances of you getting a good night sleep are very high.

### **Do not wait till 12**

Though Kapha time lasts till 12 mid night, it is not wise to wait till 12 to go to bed. Between 10 – 11 is the good time to sleep. If you delay your bed time beyond 12 o'clock, the middle one third of the night is dominated by Pitta, which is not conducive to sleep.



### **Avoid Pitta imbalance:**

This means that, people who sleep late, usually suffer with Pitta imbalance disorders, such as migraine, burning sensation, gastritis, grey hairs, hair loss, worsening of skin diseases, worsening of blood toxins, etc. This also means that, if you already have these disorders, better to sleep early, or your symptoms may worsen.

### **Enabling you to wake up before 6 am-**

Sleeping by 11 pm also enables you to wake up by 6 am. This will give you a good rest of about 7 hours of night sleep, which is quite ideal. Waking up by 6 has its own distinct advantages.

### **Plan to sleep by 11 pm**

- If you have the habit of having coffee/ tea at night, it should be before 7:30 pm. No beverages after that.
- Have Food on or before 9 pm. This will give you a good gap of 2 hours, between dinner and bed time, which is ideal. This helps to avoid indigestion disorders.
- Unless very thirsty, avoid drinking anything after 10:00 pm.
- Do not watch TV / internet half an hour before sleep. By 10:30 pm, your laptops, tablets and phones should be at a very long distance from you.
- **10:30-10:40 pm** - Exercise for 10 minutes. It can be a few easy Yoga exercises, or just walking.
- **By 10:40**, stop talking to all your family members. More you talk, more you activate the thinking process, more the brain will be kept engaged. This will delay brain relaxing. This will delay sleeping time.

- **10:40 – 10:50 pm** - Read your favorite book or magazine (not on your phone or tablet)
- The last 10 minutes can be used for brushing, toilet visits etc. Now you are ready to hit the bed.
- Make sure to keep the room dark. If you have trouble sleeping, do not even switch on dim light, while sleeping. Keep the phone etc away from your bed.

**Other tips:**

- Avoid spicy foods and foods that cause bloating, during night.
- Avoid sweets, fried foods, heavy-to-digest non vegetarian food at night.
- Take cold water bath in the morning.
- Drink good amount of water throughout the day, based on your thirst. A well hydrated body will help in maintaining better energies and better sleeping habits.

**A request to youngsters:**

I have seen the late sleeping disorder mainly in youngsters. I get that you are busy, you have your own priorities, your relationships, your friends, your hobbies, classes and what not. I understand that whenever someone gives free advice, you get annoyed pretty easily. (used to happen to me as well).

I understand that you have your own world, completely different than anyone else.

But,

You can also lead a disciplined, healthy and energetic life, which enables you to achieve your future dreams.

Or, you can lead a haphazard irresponsible life, where you can achieve a few

things, pretty quickly, but you may not live long enough to enjoy those achievements.

I know that it is 24X7 world. Like you, I also work for 10 hours, 12 hours, 15 hours a day, but definitely not at the cost of my health.

You concentrate on all the aspects of your life. – Your friends, hobbies, classes, tuition, studies, relationships, affairs and what not. But care for your health as well. All the best for that!

## **WAKING UP EARLY IN THE MORNING IS VERY IMPORTANT**

Getting up early is the best habit to have. For some, it is quite difficult to practice, but if it is incorporated, it will have huge health benefits. Here are the seven good reasons why every honest health seeker should wake up early in the morning.

**1. Active Vata Advantage:** According to Ayurveda, if we divide night into three parts, the last part of the night is dominated by Vata Dosha. So, if you wake up early in the morning, you will have the active Vata advantage.

Vata Dosha is responsible for body movement, flexibility, functioning of sense organs, enthusiasm, mental activities such as understanding, recalling, proper secretion and release of hormones, enzymes etc. A well-balanced Vata keeps the body and mind in optimal condition. Hence getting up early injects enthusiasm into the mind and stimulates all the body organs.

**2. Best time for gym:** According to Ayurveda, the morning is the best time for gym and workouts. Hence the enthusiasm derived out of getting up early can be well-directed and utilized through gym, exercise, Pranayama and Prayer.

**3. Brahmi Muhurta:** Ayurveda explains “Brahmi Muhoorta” as the time to wake up. This is the early morning period (last 48 minutes of the night). Around 5 30 am. This time is very auspicious and *Satwik* in nature. Hence, if one wakes up early in the morning, the mind will be filled up with all the positivity and energy. It helps to plan the day better.

**4. Body clock:** The natural body mechanism has a virtual clock inside. This is known as biological clock. All the activities of the body such as secretion of hormones and enzymes are pre-scheduled. The body naturally is accustomed for sleeping during night and for being active during the day time. Hence maintaining a fixed time schedule for sleep and getting up early in the morning is very essential for healthy maintenance of organs and body systems.

**5. Cortisol hormone:** Early morning is the time when cortisol hormone secretion is maximum. Hence waking up early in the morning helps proper stimulation of all the body organs.

**6. Plan the day:** Getting up early in the morning gives you time to arrange your daily activities more elegantly with less stress.

6. For students, Brahma Muhurtha is the best time for studying, since concentration level is high.

7. Early morning is the best time for prayers, Yoga and Pranayama.

Hence waking up early in the morning not only has health benefits, but also social benefits. So let's wake up early, kick-start every day with huge amounts of energy & enthusiasm and make everyday successful, healthy and happy.

## **Best Medicine For Obesity, Allergy, Rheumatoid Arthritis etc – Wake Up Before 6 am**

Waking up early has lot of psychological benefits. But did you know that it is a remedy for certain diseases like rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, skin allergy, allergic rhinitis, obesity etc as well? Let me explain.

In diseases like Asthma, Skin allergy, allergic Rhinitis (running nose), Obesity etc, Kapha plays an important role. For example, chest is the natural place for Kapha, hence it is involved in asthma.

Itching is a symptom of Kapha imbalance. Hence allergic skin disease (allergic dermatitis) is due to Kapha imbalance, wherein itching is a predominant symptom.

Any respiratory disease has Kapha involvement. Therefore rhinitis, cough, cold etc are also included under the current topic.

Oiliness and heaviness are characteristics of Kapha Dosha. Thus obesity is also a Kapha disease.

Stiffness in Rheumatoid arthritis is contributed by Kapha Dosha.

In Ayurveda, day and night, both are divided into three parts. The first one third of both day and night is dominated by Kapha, second one third is dominated by Pitta dosha and last one third is Vata dominant.

Since the last one third of the night, i.e. 3 – 6 am is dominated by Vata and after that Kapha domination starts, if you wake up before 6 am, your body and mind will be active because Vata is dominant at that point of time. This way you can minimize the effect of Kapha dosha on your body. If you delay waking up beyond 6 or 7 am, the Kapha will be already dominant and your excessive sleep will further increase Kapha (because sleeping itself is a Kapha Dosha activity).

So if you wake up before 6 am and indulge in some Yoga / morning exercise,

- Your body will be ready to face the morning Kapha period.
- The joints will be more flexible and in turn reduce joint stiffness of rheumatoid arthritis.
- Breathing will be easier and hence chances of getting wheezing (Asthma) is less.
- Body will be more flexible and active. So good for controlling obesity and diabetes.

“So, to enjoy good health, win the battle between mind and mattress”. Robin Sharma

**A reader asks** – Morning 6 to 9 is Kapha period. If we are awake in this time, it's good for many problems. I agree with this. But what about the evening time 9 to 12? Is it also Kapha period according to the Tridosha chart? I am little bit confused. You also said early to bed is good for health?

**Answer:** Kapha Dosha is the cause for Asthma, obesity etc, Kapha is not a bad factor. Our body needs Kapha Dosha so as to function properly. At night, it is best to sleep during the Kapha period i.e. between 9 and 12 because Kapha is an inducing factor for sleep. If you sleep at this time, you will have a sound sleep. If you delay the sleeping time beyond 12 midnight, Pitta will be active at that point of time and sleep may not be induced smoothly.

## **SIMPLE AYURVEDA TIPS FOR A BETTER SLEEP**

Sleep is a natural body urge, similar to hunger and thirst. Though sleeping is a natural phenomenon, some find it difficult to sleep naturally and suffer from sleep deprivation and related diseases. Before you consider taking medication for sleeping, consider these simple yet effective sleep tips on how to sleep better.

### **Sleep tips for better sleeping:**

**Make your room ready:** The sleeping room and your bed should be very neat and clean. Neatness helps to have a calm mind, which leads to good sleep.

**Dark room:** Darkness helps to calm the mind faster. It helps to avoid unnecessary thoughts and self-chatting which are the barriers for a sound sleep. If your room is not dark enough, consider using an eye band.

**Sound proof:** Sound is another barrier for natural sleep. To overcome this, you can use an ear plug. Eye band and ear plug are useful for night shift workers to sleep during day time. **Choose the right bed and pillow:** Hard or smooth, choose the one which suits you.

**Bed spread colour:** Make sure the bed spread, covers and pillows are light in colour. Light blue, light purple or whatever soothes your mind.

**Keep your arms in right position:** Some get good sleep when they keep their arm above the head level. Some wake up from sleep due to a pain in the arm, which was kept below a pillow. Your arm should be in a comfortable position, which is critical for a better sleep.

**Foot massage:** Convince your beloved to massage your feet, (may be without any oil). It really helps the body and mind to relax better.

**Fixed timing:** It really helps to keep a fixed schedule for sleeping; it sets up the body rhythm. It will set the body and mind clock.



**Avoid TV /Computer /** – Avoid watching TV / Computer, at least one hour before going to bed.

**Avoid horror books, movies, tragedy serials etc** – Entertainment should make your mind happy and calm. It should not stimulate your mind the wrong way, at least late night.

**Avoid day sleep** – If you are feeling it difficult to sleep at night, avoid day sleep

**No heavy dinner** – Since the energy requirement at night is very less, it is better to avoid heavy dinner. Light dinner gives your stomach and body a light experience, inducing natural sleep.

**Ditch the smoking habit** – Smoking causes sleep deprivation. It is one of the many reasons why you should quit smoking.

**No altercation / anger / heavy thinking** – Morning is the better time for sorting out issues. Late night is the time to keep the mind calm and relax the body and mind.

**Oil massage at least once a week** – Oil massage should be a part of weekly routine, if not daily routine.

**Exercise at night** – For a few, exercising at night helps in sleeping, because the body is so tired that it finds sleeping as the way to relax and regain strength.

**Rose water home remedy** – If your eyes are really tired or totally red, before going to bed, dip two pieces of cotton in rose-water and place it over your closed eyelids for a few minutes. Strained eyes sometimes cause sleep deprivation.

**Very light music** – Playing a light music at a very low volume helps to relax your mind.

**Applying oil to hair, taking shower at night** helps in a few to get over sleeplessness.



## **FACTORS THAT MIGHT BE DISTURBING YOUR GOOD NIGHT SLEEP**

There are many types of sleeping disorders like difficulty in falling asleep, disturbed course of sleep, waking up too early in the morning, small pockets of sleep etc. While certain health conditions cause sleepless nights, there are many small mistakes that you might do unknowingly which might be a big cause for your sleepless nights.

**Spicy food at night** – We have already learnt that it is not good to have sweet and oily **food at night**. It is also important to avoid spicy and oily food at night.

**Curds** - According to Ayurveda, curd should also be avoided at night.

**Sleeping in the day** – For people, who suffer from insomnia, sleeping in the day, is discouraged. This helps to get the body tired by evening, which increases the chances of falling asleep naturally.

**Bumpy Pillow** – Sometimes, we ignore those little nodes, knots, and irregular surface or too much smoothness / hardness of our pillows. But it might cause you difficulty in falling asleep or disturb the sleep by awkward neck postures, pain, dust etc. Also, please do remember to change and wash the pillow covers regularly.

**Too rough / too smooth bed** – Neither of the two are good for your sleep or for your back. Choose the bed that suits you.

**Light or noise** - If you find light and sound disturbing at night, better to use an eye band and plug your ears.

**Ventilation** – Fresh air improves the chances of natural sleep. Avoid completely closed, ventilation-less bed rooms.

**Aches and pains** – According to Ayurveda, massage relaxes your body. I recommend it at least once a week, preferably in an Ayurveda centre

**Lack of physical activity** – For some, sedentary lifestyle habits, spending most of the day glued to laptop screens or TV, causes sleeplessness. Try working out. For some, gym at evening hours make them tired by night and helps to fall asleep easily.

**Sleeping soon after dinner** – After dinner, it is advisable to give a gap of at least 1 – 2 hours before going to bed.

If you have to sleep soon after dinner, say, to attend an early scheduled meeting on the next morning, then at least walk for 5 – 10 minutes, then go to bed.

**Late night horror shows / internet browsing** – They obviously take away your peace of mind and cause difficulty in sleeping at night.

**Irregular food and sleep timings** – It causes digestion impairment. It also disturbs body's natural rhythm and body clock, leading to sleeping difficulties.

**Excess alcohol or smoking causes** sleeplessness along with other obvious problems.

**Relationship problems** – Avoid discussing controversial topics with your spouse, while going to bed. It might cause sleeping disturbance to both of you.

**Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Fear** – While there are a lot of techniques to overcome these problems, my usual and simple advice is to adopt hobbies.

## **Causes for loss of sleep / insomnia**

- Irritation caused due to Nasya medication
- Repeated vomiting
- Fear, Anxiety, Anger, Hatred
- Exposure to dust, smoke etc
- Physical exercise
- Blood letting
- Fasting
- Uncomfortable bed
- Old age
- Colic pain
- Insecurity of life and situation
- Dissatisfaction in life, job, circumstances etc

## **FEELING SLEEPY ALL THE TIME? 18 REASONS AND SOLUTIONS AS PER AYURVEDA**

If you had less sleep last night, and today you're feeling sleepy, throughout the day, then it is quite normal. But if you feel sleepy during daytime, everyday then there is a problem in the body or mind which needs to be fixed.

Feeling sleepy throughout the day causes many problems such as,

- Lack of concentration
- Difficulty in coping with the work schedule
- Impaired digestion
- Body pain, headache, backache
- Lethargy, lack of interest
- Lack of night sleep
- Boredom, depression etc

According to Ayurveda, there can be many physical and mental causes for feeling excessive sleepy during day time. The solutions are hidden in the causes itself.

**1. Fix your sleep – awake schedule:** One of the major reasons for feeling sleepy during day time is lack of proper night sleep. Make sure that you have at least 6 – 7 hours of good night sleep. Follow all the sleeping etiquettes like avoiding coffee, at least three hours before sleep, keeping your room dark at bed time etc.

**2. Tamas – The negative force** – If you are lethargic by nature, do not have a positive outlook towards your future, it is time to change that and lead a

physically and mentally active life. Include Yoga, Pranayama, prayer, reading positive self help books in your routine.

**3. Stress, fear, anger, and depression** – All these factors can make you dull and tempt you to avoid active life, leading to sleepiness all throughout the day. Fix your issues with relationships, duties and your responsibilities. Ask for help from friends or go for a counselling session or find solution for your emotional problems in self-help books. Get rid of depression.

**4. Body type** – As per Ayurveda, people with Kapha body type, usually require a little more sleeping time, than others. If your Ayurvedic doctor has told that you have a Kapha body type, then consider increasing sleep period during night.

**5. Age** – Naturally, aged people and children require day sleep to balance the energy deficit. For them, Ayurveda recommends day sleeping to avoid feeling sleepy all the time.

**6. Plan the day sleep** – Certain type of people and patients require day sleep. If they avoid it, they will have sleepy feeling all the time. As a general rule, 15 – 30 minutes of sleep before lunch is healthy.

**7. Diet – avoid heavy meal** – If you feel sleepy after a heavy meal, then consider reducing quantity of food. Instead, have light food many times a day.

**8. Digestion** – People with digestive problems may have excessive sleepiness. In them, use of ginger and pepper or proper treatment for indigestion helps to

resolve the issue.

Ayurveda recommends having 1 gram of ginger along with half a gram of rock salt with water just before having meals.

**9. Regular exercise** – Lack of an active body and mind is root cause for many diseases, including sleepiness. Regular exercise will pump oxygen to all parts of your body. It also helps lungs to draw in more oxygen and keeps you energetic.

**10. Have bright light** – During daytime, keep the room sufficiently bright. Dark room or absence of light leads to melatonin secretion, which in turn leads to sleepiness. Hence always sit in a bright room.

**11. Proper ventilation** – Keep the room properly ventilated so that the fresh breeze brings in refreshing energy.

**12. Pranayama** – Breathing exercise will help you make use of available energy in a better way, leading to energetic days.

**13. Avoid alcohol and smoking**

**14. Stimulant** - small dose of coffee, tea, sugarless lemon juice, and honey with luke warm water will help you to be alert and active.

**15. Have fruits and water** – Keep your body well nourished and hydrated. Lack of nutrition leads to lack of energy, lethargy and sleepiness.



**16. Sit straight and alert** – Casual sitting postures, with head resting, with pillows all around, will definitely make you sleepy.

**17. Hidden disease** – Certain diseases like diabetes, hypothyroidism, etc. also bring in weakness and sleepiness. Consult your doctor for a proper analysis and treatment.

**18. Ayurvedic medicines** – There are a few medicines, which help to keep you energetic and awake during the day. There are also herbs and remedies such as Ashwagandha and Brahmi, which help you to sleep better. Consult your doctor for the right prescription.

Not always, lethargy and laziness are cause for excessive sleepiness. Success in solving this problem lies in finding out the exact reason and solution.

## **HOW TRIDOSHA INFLUENCE BODY AND MIND DURING SLEEP?**

A reader asked – Can you explain more on the splitting up of the night into 3 aspects? What happens distinctly during these times?

The night time is specifically influenced by Kapha Dosha, because of coolant nature of the Moon. Hence, our sleep is especially influenced by Kapha Dosha. This means that people with Kapha domination sleep more.

**Acharaya Sushruta explains** – “The pleasure and sorrow, nourishment and malnourishment, gain and loss of strength, libido and poor sexual virility, good intellect and poor memory, pleasure and sorrow are dependent upon proper and improper sleep of an individual respectively.”

### **How sleep occurs?**

According to Ayurvedic classical literatures, the mind gets exhausted due to continuous work, pressure, fear, pleasure etc. So, the mind cannot do its routine functions and hence the coordination between senses and objects is lost partially or fully, involuntarily for few minutes to few hours. Thus person undergoes to sleep.

According to modern science also, the mind including sensory and motor organs, when get fatigue, retire spontaneously from their objects. The stage is referred as sleep. Further it is important to note that disturbed sleep, untimely sleep and excess sleep will reduce the pleasure and longevity.

**Natural urge:** Ayurvedic seers have considered sleep as natural urge also. So it should not be suppressed. Its suppression causes yawning, body ache, drowsiness, headache, heaviness of the eyes etc.

## **Sleep inducing factors:**

Ayurvedic experts classified sleep into 6 types as below:

- Sleep caused due to increase of tamas (depression , inferiority, loneliness etc)
- Sleep caused due to aggravation of kapha dosha( heavy foods and drinks, unctuous food intake, oil food intake)
- Sleep caused due to exhaustion of body and mind (travel, work, uninterested job, job dissatisfaction, heavy work etc.)
- Sleep produced due to bad prognostic condition (in critical illness, disorders where vital organs or vital points are affected, electrolyte imbalance etc)
- Sleep caused due to subsequent complications of diseases (diseases which cause electrolyte imbalance, lethargy, wasting, vital organ affliction etc.)
- Sleep which is caused during night time/ natural sleep.

## **Effect of Dosha on Sleep:**

Though Kapha is the dominant Dosha during night, if you can split night hours into three parts, each part is dominated by one Dosha.

The first part – around 9 – 12 midnight is dominated by Kapha Dosha.

Mid part – 12 midnight to around 3:30-4 am is dominated by Pitta Dosha.

The last part – between 3 – 6 am is dominated by Vata Dosha.

Hence, it makes sense to sleep well within 11 PM, because, Kapha is dominant and it is related to sleep. Hence, you can sleep better.

If you delay sleep beyond 12, by that time, Pitta Dosha is dominant. Not only sleeping will be uncomfortable, but also you make yourself prone to headache, grey hairs, and skin diseases.

This is why; you need to stay away from gadgets and computers ahead of hitting the bed. Involving with them, makes you think more and more, triggers Vata which is not ideal, because, you need to boost Kapha to allow yourself to sleep.

### **In the first one-third of night sleep:**

During this period, Kapha Dosha is dominant. Earth and water elements are dominant.

In stomach, food gets mixed well with digestive juices and initial stages of digestion sets in.

There is heaviness in head, eyes and whole body, which makes sleeping easier.

Most part of relaxation happens at this initial time period.

Mind is calmer in this part of time, than the other two.

### **Second one-third of sleep:**

In second one-third of night, Pitta is dominant. Fire and water elements are dominant.

Most part of the digestion and metabolism occurs at this stage.

### **Last part of sleep:**

The digested nutrients are circulated to all parts of the body, supplying energy.

Mind becomes more and more active.

Lungs, heart and intestines become slowly active as a couple of hours pass by.

Stool and urine formation happens more at this stage.

Thus, the body is influenced by all the three Doshas at night.



## AYURVEDIC HEALTH TIPS FOR NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS

Working in night shift is something unavoidable for many professionals.

Working in night shifts for a long period of time causes a disease called as Shift Work Sleep Disorder. Here are a few Ayurvedic home remedies and tips that can keep this disorder at bay.

### Symptoms of Shift Work Sleep Disorder:

- Lack of sleep or disturbance in sleep
- Irritability, short temper
- Hair fall, dry skin
- Headache, migraine and dizziness
- Menstrual irregularities in women
- Confusion and lack of concentration.

### Health tips:

- **Have a teaspoon of ghee:** Ayurveda explains that waking up at night tends to increase Vata and dryness in the body. Hence while you go for your work at night, have a small spoon of ghee. This will balance out dryness of the body.
- Do not take colas, and junk food while at night shift. They will further add to the ill effects.
- Go for home-made foods that are light to digest and are not very dry.
- Make sure that you apply good hair oil every day, before you go to sleep during daytime. You can also apply the oil before you go for work.  
**Brahmi Taila, Bhringa Amalaka Taila** are good Ayurvedic hair oils.
- Have **complete rest and sleep** during holidays.

- It is advisable for night shift workers to undergo massage and steam therapy at least once a week. This will help them to relax, rejuvenate, improve concentration and relieve all pains and headaches.
- While on your work, take time to do Pranayama for a couple of minutes. This will help you to hold your concentration and to avoid irritability and drowsiness.

## **I SLEEP TOO MUCH! I WANT TO SLEEP LESS – 35 EFFECTIVE, PRACTICAL TIPS**

I sleep too much! I want to sleep less – You might have told these sentences quite often without getting any success. The problem has psychological, physical, spiritual and social aspects. Let us explore them and find permanent solutions.

### **Setting up the sleep hours**

Knowing the target is very important. If we can fix the target in numbers, it really helps to aim better at the target. There are many researches that show that sleeping for less than six hours is not good for health.

So, minimum target should be ***six hours sleep***. Many people may find six hours sleep insufficient. But it is better to aim at a difficult target so that at least we can settle for 6 -7 hours of sleep.

### **An Idol To Follow**

Usually Real Spiritual Gurus, your successful role models sacrifice sleep to achieve success.

If you are a cricket fan, here's a real story for you – During his school days, Sachin Tendulkar went to an inter-school tournament. On the match day, at 3 am, the team coach, Mr Ramakant Achrekar heard sound from the top floor. When he went to check what's happening, Tendulkar was throwing the ball against the wall and was practicing sweep shot.

All the successful people sacrifice sleep to gain success.

### **A definite goal to reach**



You need to set physical goals to achieve, to make the most of your day, by sleeping less. These short and long term goals keep you pumped up throughout the day, taking away lethargy.

Examples:

### ***Short term goals***

- To finish all the homework
- To master ten dance steps a day
- To practice 1000 cricket shots a day
- To learn 10 new food recipes a day
- To finishing reading a particular book

### ***Long term goals***

- To become the best and most useful housewife ever
- To construct most innovative building ever, as an engineer
- To be the best and most productive manager in the office
- To be the best student in the state
- To be the best dancer ever

### ***Materialistic goal***

- To own that dream house with a swimming pool
- To drive that BMW
- To become CEO of a tech company

### ***Idealistic goal***

- As a doctor, to spread health everywhere.
- As an actor, to make sure that the audience have best relaxing and exciting entertainment, ever.
- As a housewife, to be the most selfless and helpful member of the family.

These goals help to bring satisfaction in what you do, but still keep you hungry for more.

If you have these types of goals, then there are chances of disappointment but it is better to aim at something, rather than wandering purposeless.

### **Pre-requisites-**

**Fit body** - The first prerequisite for you to sleep less and work more is maintaining a well nourished and fit body.

Try incorporating these nourishing food stuffs in your diet – Milk, Ghee, raisins, amla (chyanprash, amla juice), sugarcane juice, meat soup, cereals and pulses, protein rich diet, aloe vera juice.

**Correct posture** – Try to sit straight as far and as long as possible. It helps to improve concentration and keeps you alert.

**Seating arrangement** – Make sure that your seating arrangement is good enough to keep you free and relaxed while you concentrate on your work / study.

**Lighting** – The room, where you work should neither be too bright nor too dark and should be neat and tidy. A healthy environment will force you to be more productive and less sleepy.

**Light but satisfied stomach** – If the stomach is full, then it drives you sleepy and if it is empty, it will make you tired. Eating light food and keeping stomach light is the basic need to control sleep.

**Pranayama and Yoga** - Prayer and meditation helps to keep your body and mind fit and focussed.

**Coffee / tea** – A cup of tea or coffee can postpone sleep temporarily.

**Avoid these things that make you sleep more**

**No aerated drinks,** smoking, alcohol, no too heavy oily foods, onions, garlic, too much non vegetarian, too spicy food stuff. It helps to maintain good stomach health. Stomach health is critical for alertness and activeness.

**No exercise in evening** -Being awake burns calories. Exercise in the morning is better than in evening. It makes you less tired. Too bright computer screen - strained eyes will drive you straight to bed.

**Avoid direct Sun in the afternoon** – It strains the body and mind. If you have to go out, consider wearing a hat or taking an umbrella with you.

**Watching TV /computer for long hours** – Avoid watching TV and computer for long hours. It will strain your eyes

**Do not over exercise** – If you are over exercising, and if it is causing excess tiredness, consider reducing the exercise time a bit.

***Do not be lenient with your mind***

When you try to drive your mind towards productivity and positivity, it pulls you on the opposite direction. Let your mind listen to you and it should not be the other way round.

***But be little lenient with your body***

Watch for these symptoms, if you have them, may be, you need to go a little easy. – Headache, dizziness, body pains, vomiting sensation, feeling drowsy all through the day, feeling heavy.

Your efforts to sleep less should not push the sleep to the next day.

**A few more power tips**

**Try cold water bath**

Cold water bath is stimulative and hot water bath is relaxing. However the decision on this issue is often person-specific.

**Organized mind and organized work**

Try to organise the work and schedule it properly.

At every point of time in a day, you should know what you will be doing for next 4 – 5 hours.

### **Do not over target your short term goals**

Like, if you are aiming to read 1000 pages a day, you may fail repeatedly and this repeated failure may cause mental fatigue and force you to give up.

### **Get treatment for your illness**

Make sure that your illness does not come in between you and power-packed, super-productive days.

### **Think about your competition**

Whenever you feel drowsy and lazy, just think about your competitor (your colleague, classmate) burning the midnight oil while you are finding comfort on your pillow. That kind of competition is positive.

### **Relax a bit on Sunday**

While you crush the six days, have a couple of relaxing hours on Sunday.

An oil massage on Sunday is quite necessary to keep your mind toned and relaxed.

In Ayurvedic terms, restricting your sleep to work more tends to increase in Vata. And oil massage is best to balance Vata.

### **Wear loose cloth past office hours**

This helps to keep the body relaxed while you concentrate on your work on evening hours.

### **Three home remedies to sleep less**

Take a teaspoon of Triphala powder, add a little honey to it, make it a paste and swallow it with warm water. Do this morning or evening, only once a day for about 15 days.

**Rose water** – Whenever your eyes are strained, dip two cotton swabs in rose water, close your eyes and keep the swabs over the lids. This helps in quick relaxation.

**Lemon juice** – More sour, less sweet, helps to keep you alert all through the day.

**Power nap** – There are certain section of people, for whom, nap is very necessary. A quick nap of 10 – 15 minutes, pre-fixed with an alarm clock, before lunch, recharges your engine.

**Pinch / punch yourself** – Whenever you feel lazy, gently hurt yourself or do 5 push ups. This helps to gush your brain with oxygen rich blood and keeps you awake.

All the above tips may not apply to you, pick the ones that suit you, get rid of excess sleep hurdle and reach the pristine heights in whatever you do the best.

## **IMPROVE SLEEPING HABITS OF YOUR ELDERS AND INCREASE THEIR MEMORY**

The relationship between sleep and memory has always been scientifically proven since long. Good sleeping habits and hours leads to good memory. A recent research demonstrates this truth beyond doubt, especially in elders. Here are a few tips.

**Assign them with some productive work.** Though they may not be fully physically fit to do all the routine work, let them be physically active. Assign them some simple works which they can do on their own. It keeps them busy. It will show their importance and contribution to the household. It will boost their confidence and protects them from depression.

**Do not expect them to multi-task.** Multitasking is not a great way to boost productivity even in young people, let alone the elders.

**Make sure that they enjoy their daily routine.** Make sure to add fun value to their life. After all they spent the good part of life to make sure that you are having fun in your life. It is time to give it back.

**Make sure their room is dark at night.** – Keeping the room dark at night. It ensures good amount of melatonin production in brain, which causes normal sleep. If the room is well lit at night, it depletes the melatonin production.

**No coffee or tea, 3 hours before they go to bed** - Caffeine is not recommended, three hours before sleep. It stimulates and excites the brain, which delays sleeping. It is also ideal if they can limit tea or coffee for not more than 2 cups a day.

**Arrange for Ayurveda therapies** – Oil treatments like Shirodhara (dripping oil over forehead, while the patient lies flat on the treatment table) and Abhyanga – general body massage really helps to relax the body and mind. It causes them to sleep naturally without any oral medicines. Though Shirodhara is a bit costlier treatment, Abhyanga – massage is quite cheaper.

It will be ideal if they have Shirodhara 7 day treatment, at least once in three months and Abhyanga twice or thrice a week.

Give them good Ayurvedic supplements for rejuvenation, sleep and for memory. Just consult an Ayurveda centre near you and things will be good to go.

**Early morning and evening walking** – Physical activity, fresh oxygen help them to keep themselves fit and sleep better.

**Give them good Ayurvedic supplements for rejuvenation** – Ashwagandha, Brahmi, Sarpagandha, etc herbs help to get good sleep. But before deciding on this, you need to consult an Ayurveda doctor, because BP, Diabetes, other health complications, other allopathic medicines that the patient is taking and other such factors should be kept in mind, before deciding on the right Ayurvedic medicine / supplement.

**Make them tutors** for their grand children. No one loves elders better than their grand children. So, if you give the task of tutoring kids, then it will stimulate elders' brains and also makes learning, a lot fun for your kids.

**Make them join Facebook!** Because, a preliminary research conducted in Arizona University, has revealed that, in elders more than 65 years old, who

learn to use Facebook, have improvement in their cognitive function (ability to process thoughts).



## **Dairy products and more**

## **BUFFALO MILK AND BUFFALO PRODUCTS – BENEFITS AND AYURVEDIC EXPLANATION**

Buffalo milk and Buffalo products are widely used in Ayurvedic treatment for various diseases, starting from insomnia to bleeding disorders. Let us explore the benefits of Buffalo products and usage according to Ayurveda.

### **Buffalo Milk Benefits:**

- Of all the Ayurvedic home remedies for inducing normal sleep, buffalo milk is the best. If you have sleep problems, try drinking half a cup of warm buffalo milk at night, one hour before food.
- Buffalo milk is sweet, coolant, takes time to undergo digestion.
- Decreases digestive fire, improves strength and immunity
- Nourishes the body.
- Calms Pitta, relieves burning sensation and useful in improving skin conditions.
- Buffalo milk with sugar is the drink of choice in summer, as per Ayurveda summer regimen.

mahiShINAM gurutaraM gavyAt shItataraM payaH |  
snehAnyUnamanidrAya hitamatyagnaye cha tat | |219| |

Milk of buffalo is

Guru – heavier and colder compared to the cow's milk.

It has more of unctuousness, oiliness and it is useful for people suffering from insomnia and too rapid digestion.

### **Buffalo Yoghurt:**

Buffalo yoghurt is highly nutritious, natural aphrodisiac, relieves tiredness, useful in conditions like heavy menstrual bleeding, nasal bleeding etc.

**Buffalo Ghee:**

- Buffalo ghee improves skin complexion and quality
- Improves digestive power and good for eyes
- Calms Vata and Pitta, improves Kapha
- Useful in bleeding due to intestinal problems, piles, Ulcerative colitis and sprue.

**Buffalo urine:**

Buffalo urine is hot and pungent. It is used in the treatment of skin diseases, diabetes, abdominal bloating, haemorrhoids, oedema, eye disorders and itching.

**Buffalo meat:**

Hot, nutritious, induces natural sleep, natural aphrodisiac, increases muscle bulk, calms Pitta, increases breast milk.

**Buffalo liver:** good for eyes.

**Ayurvedic medicines with Buffalo milk as an ingredient:**

**Pinda Thailam** – Used in the treatment of Gout.

## COW MILK BENEFITS ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA

Various products of cow are used for many purposes in Ayurveda, cow milk being on the top in the list.

### Cow milk benefits:

- It is sweet in taste (Swadu paka), heavy to digest, has coolant effect on the body (and mind).
- Improves Ojas (immune strength)
- Nourishes body tissues (Dhatu vardhaka)
- Acts as natural aphrodisiac
- Does rejuvenation, increases life expectancy. As per Charaka, Cow milk and ghee are excellent anti aging foods
- Improves intelligence, strength
- Increases breast milk in a feeding mother
- Assists in easy movement (peristalsis) of intestines
- Relieves tiredness, dizziness, excessive thirst and hunger
- Useful in diseases like severe debility, relieving stage of fever, diseases related to urinary system, bleeding disorders such as nasal bleeding, heavy menstrual bleeding etc
- **Cow milk for newborn baby** – Cow milk is the next best thing to breast milk for the newborn

svAdu shItaM mRRidu snigdhaM bahalaM shlakShNapichChilam|

guru mandaM prasannaM cha gavyaM dashaguNaM payaH||217||

tadeva~NguNamevaujaH sAmAnyAdabhivardhayet|

pravaraM jlvanyAnAM kShIramuktaM rasAyanam||218|| – Charaka Samhita

Sutrasthana 27

Cow milk has ten properties.

1. Swadu – Sweetness
2. Sheeta – cold
3. Mrudu – soft
4. Snigdha – unctuous, oily
5. Bahala – density, thick
6. Shlakshna – smoothness
7. Picchila – sliminess, stickiness
8. Guru – heavy
9. Manda – slowness
10. Prasanna – calming, clarity

These are also the properties of Ojas. So milk having identical properties as Ojas, is conducive to the promotion of Ojas. Thus milk is an elixir par excellence (Rasayana)

### **Effect of cow milk on Tridosha**

Cow milk calms Vata and Pitta. Increases Kapha.

### **Who should not drink cow milk?**

- Those who are allergic to cow milk
- Who have Kapha imbalance symptoms
- Who are obese
- Who have severe low digestion power, as in case of early stages of fever.

### **Various uses of cow milk in Ayurveda –**

**1. Milk with herbs:** When we wish to use certain herbs with pungent and hot properties, in children or in person with less strength, the herbs are processed with cow milk. This serves three purposes

- a. The herbal remedy gets the extra nutritional quality of milk
- b. The pungency and the strength of the herb are lowered. Thus the herbal formula is made suitable for patient with less strength.
- c. Milk acts as a fat and water soluble media for the active principles in the herb to dissolve.

**Example:** Garlic processed with milk, used in digestion problems.

**2. Cow milk in Ayurvedic oils** – In processing many oils, where the oil is desired to have nourishing and rejuvenating effects, milk is added and processed along with the oil and other herbs.

This is very beneficial in Ayurveda oils that are,

- Used for massage against degenerative diseases like osteo-arthritis
- Used to calm burning sensation
- Used to heal nerve irritation and nerve pain
- Used to nourish and strengthen muscles and ligaments.

**Example:** Ksheerabala Taila.

Most of the herbal oils, which are used for nasal instillation or for internal administration, are processed along with milk.

**3. Shirodhara with cow milk** – Shirodhara is a procedure, where continuous stream of liquid is directed uniformly over the forehead region. Milk is used in the cases where Vata and Pitta are involved, like headache, dizziness, insomnia with Vata and Pitta imbalance.

**4. Cow Milk in Basti** – Basti is a Panchakarma procedure and is a type of enema. In Ayurveda, milk processed with herbs is used for Basti in many acid peptic disorders.

**5. Cow milk for gargling:** To relieve burning sensation and oral ulcers, cow milk is used for gargling.

**Controversy with the modern science:** Many argue that as we grow older, the enzymes helpful for digestion and metabolism of milk will no more exist in the body. Note that Ayurveda not only takes chemical effect of any substance into account, but also considers the physical effect as well.

#### **Milk – a source of calcium**

Milk is a rich source of calcium. Regular intake of milk and yogurt is associated with higher bone mineral density in the hip. A research study also suggested that choosing low-fat milk / yogurt over cream can increase intake of protein, calcium and vitamin D while limiting intake of saturated fats.

#### **Incompatibility with other substances:**

- Milk along with sour substances and sour fruits is not recommended.
- Milk along with horse gram is not recommended, because milk is coolant and Horse gram is hot in nature.
- After consuming green leafy vegetables and radish drinking milk should be avoided.

### **A1 or A2 – which type of milk is best for whom?**

Classification of A1 and A 2 comes from the presence of A1 or A2 types of beta casein – milk protein.

There is lot of marketing strategy around this to promote certain type of milk is good for certain people, depending on their habitat.

Hence, I will have to restrict my statement to – “Milk from locally grown cows, in their most natural habitat is the best”.

Locally grown cows will eat and live in the same environment as the local population. Hence, the milk from such cows will surely be congenial to the local people.

### **GOAT MILK BENEFITS ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA**

Goats have lean built and they do not drink much water, do lot of physical activities and eat grass and plants that are hot, pungent and bitter in taste.

These qualities of goat get attributed to Goat milk. Hence goat milk has its own special importance in Ayurveda.

#### **Goat Milk Benefits:**

- Goat milk is best suited for dry, dehydrated and emaciated patients.
- Goat milk improves digestion.
- Goat milk is useful in respiratory disorders. Hence, for patients with respiratory diseases, it makes sense to choose goat milk over cow milk and buffalo milk.
- Goat milk is beneficial in bleeding disorders.
- For those having mild diarrhoea or who defecate more than twice a day, goat milk is beneficial.



- Goat milk is not very coolant to the body.
- Goat milk improves breast milk production.
- Among those substances that relieve emaciation, improve breast milk, blood cell production, absorbent (useful in IBS) and bleeding disorders, goat milk is the best. (Reference – Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 25)

Goat milk is,

Grahi – absorbent, bowel binding, useful in IBS, diarrhoea

Laghu - light to digest

and it is useful for the person suffering from

Raktapitta (a disease characterized by bleeding from various parts of the body), diarrhoea, Kshaya – emaciation, cough and fever.

#### **Ayurvedic medicines with goat milk as ingredient:**

Kumkumadi tailam – Used for acne, scar, blemishes

Pinda Thailam – Used in the treatment of Gout.

Saraswata Ghrita – Used in treating children with neurological developmental disorders.

Somanatha rasa – Used to treat frequent urination.

In Gout, ointment made of ghee, the powder of Godhuma – wheat and goat's milk is prescribed. (Charaka Sutrasthana 3rd chapter)

## **COW MILK AND BUFFALO MILK – A COMPARISON**

Both cow milk and buffalo milk are very high in nutrition. When both are available, the choice of milk should be made based on your personal needs, health condition and digestion power.

### **Similarities:**

- Both cow milk and buffalo milk are sweet in taste and have cooling effect.
- Both of these act as natural aphrodisiac.
- Both are high in nutrition and improve strength.
- Both the milks calm Pitta and help to relieve burning sensation.

### **Differences**

- Buffalo milk is slightly heavier to digest than Cow milk.
- Buffalo milk induces natural sleep better than cow milk.
- The protein content in buffalo milk is more.
- Fat content is more in buffalo milk.
- Ghee prepared from buffalo milk increases Kapha, while ghee prepared from Cow milk calms Pitta and increases digestion power.
- Cow milk is more used in Ayurveda than buffalo milk.

## **COW MILK VS GOAT MILK – ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA**

Cow milk and Goat milk are extensively used in Ayurveda, but for different purposes. Both have their own unique qualities and benefits.

### **Cow milk and goat milk – similarities:**

- Both cow milk and goat milk are highly nutritious.
- Both types of milk are useful to treat emaciation and lack of strength.
- Goat milk and cow milk both improve breast milk production in feeding mothers.

### **Cow milk vs. goat milk benefits- differences**

- Goat milk increases digestion while cow milk (or buffalo milk) does not. Hence, if you have indigestion problem, it is better to consider goat milk over cow milk and you should not take buffalo milk during indigestion problem.
- Goat milk is used in the Ayurvedic treatment of respiratory diseases such as cold, cough and asthma.
- Cow milk has more coolant effect over the body than goat milk.
- Cow milk is slightly heavier to digest than goat milk.
- Cow milk helps in easy bowel movements. But goat milk is useful in stopping repeated defecation.
- Though both have their own distinct qualities, it is found in Ayurveda that cow milk is used more than goat milk.

## **SHEEP MEAT AND SHEEP MILK BENEFITS – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Sheep meat is also called as lamb or mutton. It is coolant, heavy-to-digest and contributes to weight gain. It is explained in Ayurvedic text books since the times of Charaka.

### **As per Charaka Samhita -**

mAMsaM madhurazItatvAdguru bRMhaNamAvikam | |62| |

yonAvajAvike mizragocaratvAdanizcite |63| – Charaka Sutrasthana 27/62-63

Mutton is,

Madhura - sweet

Sheeta – cold

hence, it is Guru – heavy to digest.

Bruhmana – nourishing.

**Categorization:** Usually all the non vegetarian food items are categorized into 8 divisions, based on their habitat. But it is not possible to include goat and sheep in any of the eight categories mentioned above since they inhabit at times marshy land, at times deserts and sometimes both.

### **Lamb compared to goat meat:**

Goat meat is comparatively lighter to digest. Lamb is heavy to digest. When compared to goat, lamb contributes more to the weight gain. Hence, if you are seeking weight gain, sheep meat is a better choice than goat.

Bhasma prepared from horn of goat is used as ingredient in **Kombanchadi**

**Gulika**, used in treating headache, fever, cough and cold in children.

**In Snehakarma:**

There are four types of fats used in Snehakarma – oleation treatment (preliminary part of Vamana and Virechana Panchakarma treatment). These four are – ghee, oil, fat and bone marrow.

In certain cases, in people who are accustomed to non vegetarian food, fat of sheep is used for the purpose of Snehana.

**Sheep milk and sheep ghee:**

Among milks, sheep milk is most unwholesome, hence, it is to be avoided for daily usage.

Among all the milk ghee, sheep milk ghee is most unwholesome and hence, to be avoided. It is damaging to the heart.

**Sheep milk qualities:**

Milk of sheep is hot. It aggravates hiccup and dyspnoea. It also alleviates Pitta and Kapha.

Milk of elephant is strength- giving, heavy and stabilizing.

Among all the substances that increases Pitta and Kapha, sheep milk is the best.

## **HUMAN BREAST MILK BENEFITS, WAYS TO INCREASE PRODUCTION**

Apart from being best food for babies, breast milk is also used in Ayurvedic treatment. It is not only used in oral administration, but also in a few Panchakarma therapies as well. It is also known as Stanya, Nari Ksheera, Nari Paya in Sanskrit.

### **Qualities and benefits of Human milk:**

jIvanaM bRMhaNaM sAtmyaM snehanaM mAnuSaM payaH |  
nAvanaM raktapitte ca tarpaNaM cAkSizUlinAm | | 224 | | – Charaka Samhita  
Sutrasthana 27 chapter

mAnuSaM vAtapittAsRk abhighAta akSirogajit | tarpaNa azcottanai: nasyai: | -  
**26** Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutra 5th chapter

Human breast milk is,

Jeevana – enlivening

Brumhana – nourishing, nutrition rich. Useful in Brimhana therapy

Satmya – congenial to human body

Snehana – unctuous, increases body oiliness, useful in relieving dryness.

Abhighata – it is useful in people suffering from injury with haemorrhage.

**Breast milk for Nasya treatment** – In cases of bleeding disorders (Raktapitta), such as bleeding through mouth, nasal bleeding, ear bleeding etc, breast milk is administered as nasal drops. This helps to pacify Pitta and relieve bleeding.

**As eye drops:** It is useful as eye drops for eye irritation, excess eye secretions, redness, eye pain and discomfort. It is used in Tarpana and Aschottana type of eye treatments.

**Effect on Tridosha** – Balances Vata and Pitta Dosha

### **Human milk for leech therapy:**

Leech therapy is a form of blood-letting therapy. Here, leech is made to bite a

particular part of the body, to let out impure blood. In the initial stages of leech therapy, to make the leech stick to the body part, breast milk is applied over the part to attract the leech. Other than this, even ghee and mud is also applied to attract leech.

### **How to enhance breast milk production?**

**Feeding** is the best way to increase the breast milk production. The nipple suckling by the baby acts as a stimulant to mother's brain to induce hormones which enhances breast milk. This is why, soon after the birth, mothers are encouraged to feed the baby, though the milk production will be very low initially. If they do not feed, then there will be no stimulation, leading to lack of production.

### **Herbs and treatments that decrease human milk production:**

- If there is decrease in breast milk production, then usage of astringent tasting herbs like **Haritaki**, betel nut etc should be avoided. Astringent taste is dry in nature.
- All treatments which cause increase of body dryness, such as dry powder massage, excess exercise should be avoided.

### **Herbs and medicines that increase breast milk:**

- **Dill seed** paste is administered to mother for this purpose.
- Vidaryadi Kashayam, Stanya Janana Rasayanam, Padmakadi Kashaya, Stanya Janana Kashaya help in improving breast milk production.

**Stanya Shodhana Kashaya** – It cleanses and detoxifies breast milk. It is given to the mother, when baby starts getting frequent cold, cough, skin eruptions etc. It is also useful when the milk thickens causing plugging of milk ducts. Usually it is administered for a maximum period of 4 – 6 weeks.

### **Human milk usage in Ayurvedic medicines:**

It is used as an ingredient in **Mrita Sanjeevini Sura**, an alcoholic Ayurvedic preparation, wherein it is used to grind certain powders used in this medicine.

**Kachuradi Churna** – This is a powerful herbal powder for treating headache. This powder is made into paste with breast milk and applied over forehead.

### **Human milk vs Cow milk**

- Human milk is the best food for babies, in the absence of which, cow milk is the second best choice.
- Of all the milks for the purpose of treatment, cow milk is the best.
- For the new born baby, human milk is easier to digest, compared to cow milk.



## **WHAT IS CURD? HOW TO MAKE CURD?**

Curd is one of the common kitchen ingredients, used in various curd recipes. Ayurvedic books have explained different types of curd, how to make curd etc in detail.

### **What is curd?**

Curd is a dairy product. Curd is prepared from milk. Curd has its own special health benefits.

### **How to make curd?**

- During evening time, take 500 ml of boiled and cooled milk in a vessel.
- Take previously made curd – two spoons. Add this to the milk and keep it over night.
- Next day morning, the curd is ready.
- If you do not have two spoons of curd, pre-hand, then you can add one spoon of lemon juice to half a glass of milk. The milk curdles. Add two table spoons of this curdled milk to the 500 ml of milk during evening and keep it for one night. Next morning, curd will be ready.
- If you wish the curd to be sour, then add about three to four table spoons of curd to 500 ml of milk.
- Ayurveda explains different types of curd with different curd benefits.

### **Types of curds according to Ayurveda:**

- Thick curd
- Sweet curd
- Sweet-sour curd
- Sour curd

- Very sour curds

## **CURD BENEFITS: FULL AYURVEDIC DETAILS**

Ayurveda, the Indian system of medicine explains curds benefits based on different types of curds. These types are explained as per the taste and method of production. If used wisely, curds can be an excellent Ayurvedic home remedy for many health conditions.

### **General curd benefits:**

Amla rasa – sour taste

Amla paka – undergoes sour taste conversion after digestion

Grahi – absorbent, useful in diarrhoea,

Guru – heavy to digest

Ushna – hot in nature

Vatajit – balances Vata

Increases Meda (fat), Shukra (semen), Bala (strength), Kapha, Raktapitta (bleeding disorders), Agni (digestion strength) and shotha (inflammation).

Rochishnu – increases taste

Useful in

Aruchau – useful in anorexia

Vishamajwara – chronic, recurrent fever

Peenasa – rhinitis

Mutrakruchra – dysuria

Grahani – malabsorption syndrome

rocanaṃ dīpanaṃ vṛṣyaṃ snehanaṃ balavardhanam |

pāke' mlamuṣṇaṃ vātaghnaṃ maṅgalyaṃ bṛṃhaṇaṃ dadhi | | 225 | |

pīnase cātisāre ca śītake viṣamajvare |

arucāu mūtrakṛcchre ca kārśye ca dadhi śasyate | | 226 | |

śaradgrīṣmavasanteṣu prāyaśo dadhi garhitam |

raktapittakaphottheṣu vikāreṣvahiṭaṃ ca tat || 227 || -Charaka Samhita

Sutrasthana 27

### **Curd is**

Rochana – improves taste, appetizer

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Vrushya – aphrodisiac

Snehana – imparts oiliness

Balavardhana – improves strength and immunity

Amla Vipaka – Sour taste conversion after digestion

Ushna – hot

Vataghna – Balances Vata

Mangalya – auspicious

Brumhana – improves nourishment

Useful in,

Pinasa (rhinitis),

Atisara – diarrhoea,

Sheetaka (fever with cold),

Vishamajwara – irregular fever,

Aruchi – Anorexia, lack of interest in food

Mutrakrichra – dysuria, difficulty to pass urine

Karshya – emaciation

It is generally harmful during autumn, summer and spring seasons. It is invariably harmful in diseases caused by the vitiation of blood, Pitta and Kapha.

[225-227]

### **Types of curds according to Ayurveda:**

- Thick curds (semi formed curds)
- Sweet curds

- Sweet-sour curds
- Sour curds
- Very sour curds.
- The method of preparation of curds is pretty much the same. But the sweetness or the sourness of the curds depends on
  - How old is the curd – Older the curd, more the sourness.
  - Amount of curd added to the milk during making curd.
  - Chemically or microscopically there might not be much difference in these types of curds. But according to Ayurveda, different tastes have different effects over the body. Ayurveda considers the physical nature as well as the chemical nature of any food or herbs.

#### **Curds benefits based on types:**

- **Thick curd (semi formed curd):**

This type of curd is not fully formed and does not have any particular taste. It is not good for consumption. It causes **Tridosha** imbalance and ill-health.

- **Sweet curd:** It is the sweet and thick curd. It increases body fat and Kapha Dosha. It calms Vata and Kapha. Useful in certain blood and Pitta related diseases. It is a natural aphrodisiac.
- **Sweet-sour curd:** Its qualities are similar to that of sweet curd.
- **Sour curd:** It increases digestive fire, hot in nature and increases Pitta and Kapha.
- **Very sour curds:**

It also increases digestive fire, hot in nature and increases Vata and Pitta.

- Overall, sweet curd is cold in nature and sour curd is hot in nature and improves appetite.

#### **A few other types of curds and their benefits:**

- **Curd prepared from goat's milk** is an excellent remedy to balance Tridosha. It is used in respiratory conditions and to improve digestion.
- **Curd prepared from Buffalo milk** takes a long time for digestion. Increases Kapha and calms Vata and Pitta. It is a natural aphrodisiac.
- **Curd prepared from fat-free milk** is a natural coolant. It improves taste and digestive power. It is useful in digestive problems.

**Curd mixed with sugar** is an excellent thirst reliever. So is the curd mixed with jaggery. It is also an aphrodisiac. It is good for those who want to gain weight.

Note: Curd with sugar, on a daily basis is contra indicated, in healthy people for long term use.

In disease conditions involving excessive thirst, emaciated and persons seeking aphrodisiac treatment, curd with jaggery or sugar is indicated as part of the treatment.

Benefits of curd are innumerable, if prepared and used wisely.

#### **Interesting Ayurvedic facts about Curd:**

- Curd should not be heated. It loses its properties due to heating.
- It is best to avoid curd in people with obesity, Kapha disorders, bleeding disorders and inflammatory conditions.
- Curd consumption at night is not recommended.
- Sour curd should be avoided if you have gastritis.

#### **Ayurvedic medicines with curds as ingredient:**

- Maharajaprasarini Thailam

- Kottamchukkadi Thailam

## **CURD CONSUMPTION AT NIGHT? CAN YOU TAKE CURD AT NIGHT?**

Ayurveda explains curd as having sour and sweet property. It increases Kapha dosha in the body. The mucus generation is also attributed to the effect of Kapha. During night, there is natural predominance of Kapha in the body. So, curd consumption at night will further increase kapha leading to many complications.

### **Curds benefits are explained as follows –**

Amla paka rasam grahi guru ushnam dadhi vatajit |  
meda shukra bala shleshma pitta rakta agni shopha krut || Ashtanga Hrudaya  
Sutrasthana

Curds is sour in taste, hot in potency, is heavy to digest (takes a longer period to undergo digestion). It increases fat, strength, Kapha, Pitta, digestive power. Whenever there is swelling or inflammation, if curd is taken, it worsens the inflammation.

Note that these properties are attributed to sour curds.

### ***Naivaadyaa nishi naivoshnam vasantha ushna sharatsu na |***

Sour curd should not be consumed by making it hot (ushna).

Curds should not be consumed during night (nishi).

It should not also be consumed during spring and summer seasons.

### **Solution:**

Try to avoid consuming curd at night because night is basically Kapha predominant period. Sour curd also increases Pitta. Hence, taking it at night might cause indigestion problem.

If at all you are accustomed to taking curd at night, add a small pinch of pepper powder to curds before consuming. (Do not add too much as it may cause burning sensation). You may also try adding fenugreek powder if you can



tolerate a slight tinge of bitterness. (This combination is useful in stomach pain generated due to indigestion).

Buttermilk is the best substitute for curds at night. Buttermilk clears the channel and checks mucus secretion.

### **Rules for using curd as mentioned in Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 7/61-62**

- One should not take curd at night
- If one desires to take curd at night, it can be taken along with ghee, sugar, green gram soup, honey or Amalaka (Amla – **Indian Gooseberry.**)
- It should not be heated.
- If one does not follow these rules, he is likely to suffer from diseases like fever, Raktapitta (bleeding disorders), Visarpa(Erysipelas), Kushta (skin diseases), Pandu – (Anemia, initial stages of liver disorders), Bhrama - dizziness, psychosis (dizziness) and Kamala (Jaundice).

## HOW TO MAKE BUTTER? – THE AYURVEDIC METHOD

Butter is one of the important dietary articles. There are different opinions on *How to make butter*. Here is the Ayurvedic method of making butter.

### Steps of making butter:

1. First you need to collect at least 100 – 250 grams (3 ounce to 8 ounce) milk cream.

### How to make milk cream?

1. Boil milk. Allow it to self cool. Collect the upper cream part. Keep it in refrigerator. Do it every day, till the time you have sufficient amount of milk cream to make butter.
2. After having sufficient milk cream collected in refrigerator, take it out from refrigerator and add a little amount of curd or buttermilk at night time. Leave it over night in the room temperature.
3. Next day morning, churn it. You can adopt different techniques for churning.
4. **Churning in a bottle.** Take thus prepared milk cream in a bottle. Fill it up to 75 % of the bottle. (3/4th volume of the bottle.) Close the lid tightly. Keep on shaking till you can see the butter collecting as the top layer of milk cream. Once the top layer of butter is completely formed, collect it and keep it in air tight container.
5. **Mixer method** – You can churn the milk cream in a mixer.
6. Churning with the help of a churning machine.
7. Make sure to stop churning once you can clearly see the collected top layer of butter. If you over churn butter may get dissolved, leading to less yield.



## **BUTTER BENEFITS: AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Butter is one of the food items that is used in many health conditions in Ayurveda. Here are the benefits of butter.

### **Butter benefits:**

Ayurveda, the Indian system of medicine explains butter benefits as follows –

- Butter is sweet in taste and is a natural coolant.
- Butter improves taste and digestion.
- Butter nourishes the body.
- Butter calms Vata and Pitta.
- According to Ayurveda, Butter is used as a dietary ingredient in conditions like indigestion and Pitta imbalance.
- Butter is also useful in eye disorders.

### **Freshly prepared butter benefits:**

Vrushya – aphrodisiac

Sheeta – coolant

Varna, bala, agnikrut – improves skin complexion, strength and digestion strength.

Sangrahi – absorbent, useful in diarrhoea

Vatapittasruk jit – balances Vata, Pitta and detoxifies blood

### **Useful in**

Kshaya – chronic respiratory disorders leading to emaciation

Arsha - Hemorrhoids

Ardita vata – paralysis

Kasa – cough

The butter made directly from milk is

Sangrahi – absorbent, useful in diarrhoea

Raktapittajit – useful in bleeding disorders

Akshirogajit – useful in eye diseases.

sa~NgrAhi dlpanaM hRRidyaM navanItaM navoddhRRitam|

grahaNyarsho vikAraghnamarditAruci nAshanam | |230| | – Charaka Samhita

Sutrasthana 27

Fresh butter is digestive, stimulant and cardio tonic. It is useful in mal-absorption syndrome (IBS), Piles, facial paralysis and anorexia.

## **HOW TO MAKE BUTTERMILK, AYURVEDIC METHOD?**

Buttermilk is one of the widely used food item. There are many variants of buttermilk with different health benefits. Here are the details about how to make buttermilk from milk.

### **Interesting things about buttermilk:**

- It is very easy to make it at home.
- If curd is ready, you can make it within five minutes.
- It is said in Ayurveda – “Nectar is for Gods and Goddesses, buttermilk is for human beings.”

### **How to make buttermilk from milk:**

- First you need to prepare curd from milk.
- Take 400 ml of curds. Add 100 ml of water to it. Churn the curds just for one to two minutes. You can churn it in a bottle / jar / mixer.
- This 100:25 = curds: water ratio buttermilk is the most widely used type of buttermilk. There are a few other types of butter milk.

### **Types of buttermilk:**

There are five types of making buttermilk.

**Full cream buttermilk:** Curd is prepared from milk with cream. Such curd is churned without adding any water.

**No cream buttermilk:** Curd is prepared from milk devoid of cream. This curd is churned without adding any water.

**Buttermilk:** Prepared from the above-mentioned method.

**Half water buttermilk:** Take 100 ml curds add 50 ml of water and churn it to get half water buttermilk.

**No fat buttermilk:** Churn curd till butter is formed. Remove butter. The remaining watery part is no fat buttermilk. It is also commonly used as buttermilk.

Each of these can be used interchangeably as buttermilk substitute to one another.

## **BUTTERMILK BENEFITS – AYURVEDIC EXPLANATION**

Buttermilk is one of the widely used diet article, in Ayurvedic treatment.

Buttermilk is called as Takra in Sanskrit. There is a simile given for buttermilk.

Nectar is for Gods and Goddesses, buttermilk is for human beings.

### **Butter milk benefits –**

- Ayurveda uses buttermilk both to maintain health and to treat diseases.
- Butter milk is easy to digest, has astringent and sour tastes and is hot in nature.
- Buttermilk improves digestion and mitigates Kapha and Vata Dosha.
- It is useful in the treatment of inflammation, digestive disorders, gastro intestinal disorders, lack of appetite, spleen disorders and anaemia.
- Buttermilk is highly beneficial during winter, in indigestion and in Vata imbalance related disorders.
- It is given in cases of excessive ghee consumption

### **Types of buttermilk and benefits**

**Full cream buttermilk:** Full cream buttermilk, added with sugar, calms Vata and Pitta. It is nourishing in nature and is similar to curds in qualities.

**No cream buttermilk:** It calms Kapha and Pitta. It is good for people with diabetes.

**Buttermilk:** Qualities are explained above.

**Half water buttermilk:** Improves strength and digestive power.

**No fat buttermilk:** It is a natural coolant. It calms Pitta, Vata and Kapha and relieves tiredness,

According to Ayurveda, Curd at night is contra indicated. During night, curd is substituted with buttermilk.



### **Buttermilk uses:**

shophArshograhaNIdoShamUtragrahodarArucau |

snehavyApadi pANDutve takraM dadyAdgareShu cha | |229| | – Charaka

Samhita Sutrasthana 27

### **Buttermilk is useful in**

- Shopha – oedema
- Arsha – Haemorrhoids
- Grahani – Malabsorption syndrome, Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Mutragraha – urine retention
- Udara – Ascites
- Aruchi – Anorexia, lack of interest in food
- Snehavyapat – in case of ghee and fat indigestion
- Affliction with Gara type of poison
- Pandu – Anaemia, initial stages of liver disorders
- It is also used for alleviating the complications of oelation therapy.

### **Buttermilk contra indication:**

Since buttermilk is hot in nature, it is to be avoided

– During summer,

– In people with injury

– In debilitated persons

– Person suffering from giddiness and in diseases related to Pitta imbalance.

### ***Ayurvedic reference on Buttermilk benefits:***

*Takram laghu Kashaya amlam deepanam kaphavatajit |*

*Shopha udara arsha grahani dosha mootragraha aruchihi |*

*pleeha gulma ghritavyapat gara paandu aamayaan jayet || – Ashtanga  
Hrudaya Sutra sthana – 5th chapter*

**Ayurvedic medicines to be taken along with buttermilk**

In following Ayurvedic medicines, buttermilk is advised as a co-drink.

Kutajavaleha, Chinchadi Lehyam, Mandoora Vatakam, Punarnava Mandoor

## **HOW TO USE GHEE FOR SKIN CARE? A SIMPLE AYURVEDA METHOD**

It is a common notion that ghee is used only orally. But in Ayurveda, it is extensively used for skin care. A special but very simple ghee preparation is used in many skin conditions like burns, wound scars, skin marks, burning sensation etc.

### **How To Use Ghee For Skin?**

This ghee remedy is called as Shata dhauta ghrita in Ayurveda.

- Shata = 100
- Dhauta = washed with water
- Ghrita = ghee or clarified butter.

### **What you need?**

Ghee – 10 ounce

Water – sufficient quantity.

In this home remedy for skin care, we are taking ghee, adding equal quantity of water, mixing it thoroughly with hand or a machine for 3 – 5 minutes, letting out the water. Then again we are adding fresh water and continuing mixing. Like this, we are repeating it for as many times as possible. In Ayurveda, it is advised to repeat the procedure for 100 times. But in practice, it is usually done for 20 – 30 times.

### **Changes –**

- The ghee turns to white colour. It will be smoother to touch and will have butter like consistency.
- When you touch it, you can feel that it is lot cooler.

### **Benefits of ghee for skin –**

- This Shata dhauta ghrita is used to relieve burning sensation, to relieve burn wounds, wound scar, herpes wounds, chicken pox scars, etc.
- It acts as natural skin moisturizer, if used daily. It can be applied over face, left for 10 minutes, washed with warm water.
- In pregnant woman, with unexplained bleeding or spotting, traditionally, it is advised to apply this Shata dhauta ghrita around umbilicus.
- In Ayurvedic leech therapy, after the treatment, to reduce the burning sensation and to check further bleeding, this ghee is applied around the affected area.

**Shelf life:** 4 – 6 months.

Because this ghee eventually contains some remnant moisture inside, it is not ideal to store it for more than six months.

It should be stored in a clean, dry air tight container.

Over exposure to air will cause foul smell.

Question: The first time I made it was with homemade ghee, filtered tap water, and mixed it by hand in a glass bowl and it turned out great. The second time I used store bought ghee, mixed it in a copper bowl, and mixed it on the low speed on a machine. It is very gritty and has too much water in it. Are there any tricks or tips for me for making the best batch possible? Thanks you so much and I appreciate your help.

Answer:

Using homemade ghee is the best option, since there is maximum chance that everything goes all right.

More the number of times you churn the ghee with water, more effective will be the ghee.

If you have bought ghee from the store, then heat it in very low flame for just two minutes. Allow it to cool down. Use that ghee for churning.

**Question:**

What happens if I would mix some herbs in the washed ghee?

And if by any chance would be useful then when should the herbs be mixed in it?

**Answer:**

1. This remedy is just to explore all the skin benefiting qualities of unprocessed pure cow ghee.
2. This remedy does not involve any process that helps to extract the medicinal chemicals of plants into the ghee medium. For example, if we heat ghee with some herbs, then there is extraction of phyto-chemicals from plant to the ghee. But here there is no heat at all. There is just the ghee and we are churning it with a little water. So, adding any herb to it might not be that beneficial.
3. The shelf life of this product is relatively lower than regular ghee, because it contains embedded water molecules and the ghee undergoes rancidity within one or two months.
4. There is no reference in Ayurvedic text books that directs us to add any herb to the ghee in this method.

So, all these tell us not to add any herb / spice to it.

**Question -**

**Hi, can this ghee be applied on extensive open wounds? The skin condition is called lichen planus.**

**Answer:**

No. There are better herbal oils like Jatyadi Taila which can be used on open wounds.

**Can the Shata Dhauta Ghrita be stored in refrigerator?**

Yes, it can be stored in refrigerator for 3 – 4 months of time.

## HEALTH BENEFITS OF HONEY AS PER TRADITIONAL AYURVEDA

Here is a collection of qualities of honey as per the original Ayurvedic text-book, Sushruta Samhita.

### Benefits of honey:

- Improves appetite and digestive fire (Agnideepanam)
- Improves skin complexion (Varnyam)
- Cleanses and heals wounds (shodhanam ropanam)
- Good for eyes (chakshushyam)
- Scrapes the inner side of the channels (lekhanam)
- Good for heart (hrudya)
- Penetrates deep into body channels (sookshma marganusari)
- Anti toxic, useful in poisoning and toxic conditions (visha prashamanam)
- Breaks up hard masses (Chedi)
- Relieves excessive thirst (Trut)
- Balances Kapha (Shelshmahara)
- Useful in

Visha – Toxic conditions, poisoning

Hidhma – Hiccup

Asrapitta – Bleeding conditions

Meha – diabetes, urinary tract diseases

Kushta - skin diseases

Krumi – Worm infestation

Chardi - Vomiting

Shwasa – dyspnoea, chronic respiratory diseases

Kasa - cough, cold

Atisara – Diarrhoea, Dysentery

Vrana shodhana – cleanses wounds

Vatala – increases Vata

Ruksha – dry

Kashaya, Madhura – astringent and sweet

As per Charaka, it is one of those ingredients, which can be taken on daily basis. (Pathya). (Reference: Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 5/12)

**There are four types of Honey** as per Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 27/243-248.

1. Makshika (honey collected by the red variety of honey bee)

2. Bhraamara (honey collected by Bhrunara type of bee)

3. Kshaudra (honey collected by small type of honey bee)

4. Paittika (honey collected by Puttika type of bee- they are of big size.)

Of them, Makshika is the best; Bhramara is especially heavy.

Makshika type of honey is of til oil in colour.

Paittika is of ghee colour.

Kshaudra is brown in colour and

Bhramara is of white colour.

Honey, in general, is the aggravator of Vata, heavy, cold in potency and detoxifies blood, pacifies Pitta as well as Kapha. It promotes healing and depletion.

Warm honey or honey taken by an individual suffering from excessive heat and burning sensation is fatal. Honey should be taken in small quantities because it is heavy, unctuous, astringent in taste and cold in potency.

**Precaution for honey consumption:**

Nothing is as troublesome as Ama (indigestion) caused by the improper intake of honey.



Ama produced by the improper intake of honey causes instantaneous death like poison.

### **Importance of honey:**

As it originates from flowers having different tastes and potencies, honey is the best Yogavahi – catalyst substance. That is, it carries the properties of the drugs added to it.

### **Clinical Research Honey as a remedy for cough:**

A research study was conducted by Cohen and colleagues, in Israel, with children from six community clinics during 2009. Total 300 children took part in the study. The research revealed that honey extracts suppressed the cough symptoms very significantly. Cohen and colleagues concluded that honey given at bedtime was more effective than placebo, in reducing the frequency and severity of night time cough. Improvement was universally much greater for the honey extracts, by as much as 20%, compared with the placebo extract. They suggest that honey could be used as a safe and effective cough suppressant for 1 year and older children.

American Academy of Paediatricians (AAP) suggests avoiding honey for children below one year, due to the threat of botulism.

### **Beneficial against diseases like –**

- Diseases of fatty tissue origin (like obesity)
- Respiratory disorders (used as vehicle in herbal powders and herbal jams used for respiratory conditions such as Talisadi Choorna, Sitopaladi Choorna, Agasthya rasayana etc)
- Diarrhoea, vomiting, worm infestation.

### **How much honey can be consumed in a day?**

As per Ayurveda, honey has Lekhana property .This means “scraping out the cholesterol” and “useful in obesity, weight loss”. Thus, a teaspoon of honey

with luke warm water is considered to be a remedy for weight loss. But, since honey is sweet and sweet substances bring with them, nourishing qualities, it is not good to have excess of honey, if you are targeting weight loss.

Hence, Ayurveda recommends usage of up to 2-3 teaspoons of honey, per day. This is the maximum limit per day, for an adult.

### **Honey as a co-drink for Ayurvedic medicine –**

Honey is an excellent co drink for many Ayurvedic medicines as it acts as a catalyst and helps to deliver medicines to the target area at a faster pace.

E.g. in Musli Khadiradi Kashayam, honey is used as a co drink.

### **Side effects of honey and contra indications:**

- Honey is not recommended for people with diabetes.
- Equal quantity of honey and ghee is incompatible and should not be consumed.
- Equal quantity of honey and sesame oil is also incompatible.
- Honey along with ghee, even in unequal proportions, should not be consumed along with water. (Reference: Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutrasthana 7th chapter)

### **Can a woman with PCOS take honey?**

Honey contains good amount of sugar. Hence, PCOS woman cannot take honey in large quantities. However, honey also has cleansing properties. Hence, just one teaspoon of honey, along with a teaspoon of lemon and a cup of water in the morning, 30 minutes before breakfast can be very beneficial in maintaining weight, which is a crucial part of PCOS management.

## **HOT WATER HONEY BENEFITS – HOW FAR IT REALLY HELPS?**

There are many Ayurvedic home remedies for weight loss. Hot water honey is one of the most hailed weight loss drinks. Though it is quite simple to make, there are some reservations to consider.

**Meaning:** Daily taking honey along with water is a remedy for obesity.

### **Method:**

Take a teaspoon of honey. Mix it with half a glass of hot water. Drink it.

### **Time:**

Early morning with empty stomach. Do not eat or drink for at least 15 minutes, before and after drinking.

### **How long to take water – honey –**

As long as you are not diabetic, this weight loss drink can be taken for 3 – 6 months.

### **Can diabetic people take this?**

It is better not to follow this method if you are diabetic.

### **Can this be followed by obese kids?**

It can be followed by anyone who is obese and wants to decrease weight.

### **Any precautions are required?**

There are some advices for taking hot water with honey since according to Ayurveda, hot water and honey are not compatible with each other. So instead of hot water, lukewarm or boiled and cooled water can be used with honey. Heat processing of honey or using it with too hot substances is contra-indicated as per Ayurveda. (Reference: Ashtanga Hridayam Sutrasthana 5/53 and Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 26/84)

**Q: Is it safe drinking warm water with lemon and honey in the morning for pregnant women?**

Warm water, lemon juice extract and honey combination is used for cleansing, detoxifying, weight reducing purposes, called as **Langhana therapy** or Shodhana in Ayurveda.

During pregnancy, the opposite of it – **Brihmana – nourishing therapy** is required. Hence, the above combination is not advised during pregnancy.

## **COW URINE THERAPY BENEFITS – INDICATION AND CONTRA INDICATIONS**

Since many centuries, cow urine is widely used for many health problems in India. Cow is seen as a sign of spirituality and hence cow urine is used in devotional practices as well. Cow urine comes with a bunch of health benefits. But it is also important to know, who can drink cow urine? For how long? Who should avoid cow urine? Dosage etc.

### **Benefits of cow urine:**

- Being hot and pungent, cow urine reaches to the deep tissues of the body.
- Increases Vata and Pitta, due to its bitter and pungent principles.
- Improves digestion and intelligence.
- It is useful in the treatment of abdominal colic pain, bloating, constipation and indigestion.
- Useful in conditions like intestinal worms and skin diseases.
- Useful against obesity, anaemia.
- Acts as natural detoxification formula for Kapha Dosha and related problems such as obesity, tumours etc.
- Cow urine is having immense scope of research in areas like cancer.

### **General qualities of all types of urine, including cow urine:**

As per Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana chapter 1, all types of urine have following qualities.

Ushna - hot

Teekshna -Piercing

Arooksha - not completely dry

Katu - pungent

Lavana - salty taste

Useful in,

Utsadana and Alepana – external application to relieve excess oiliness.

Virechana (Purgation Panchakarma treatment)

Asthapana Basti (decoction enema)

Svedana (sweating treatment)

Indicated in

Arsha – Haemorrhoids

Gulma - abdominal tumor, distension

Kushta – skin diseases

Kilasa – type of leprosy

Deepaneeya – improves digestion strength

Vishaghna – anti-poisonous, anti-toxic

Krimighna – useful in intestinal worm infestations

Pandu – Anaemia, initial stages of liver disorders

It balances Kapha Dosha.

**Cow urine is especially indicated in:**

Kriminut – useful in intestinal worms

Kushtanut – useful in skin disorders

Kandu Shamana – relieves itching

Udara – useful in ascites

**How to take cow urine?**

- For all practical purposes, it is better to drink distilled cow urine.

- Since boiling is involved, cow urine distillate will be free from microbes.
- There are many companies that sell distilled cow urine in the name of Godhan Ark, Go Ark, Gow Arka etc.
- If you get fresh urine, you can consider preparing the distillate by the following method:

Cow urine is taken in a pressure cooker. The opening at the top, where whistle is to be placed is attached with a heat resistant pipe. The other end of the pipe opens to a clean vessel kept dipped in water bath. The cow urine in the pressure cooker is heated and the cow urine distillate is collected in the vessel kept in water bath.

The pressure cooker catches the smell of cow urine, and hence cannot be used for any other purpose than this.

The distilled cow urine can be used for 1 – 2 months, if preserved in an air tight container.

### **Cow urine dose:**

It is better to start with 3 -4 drops of cow urine one or two times a day, after food.

After a week, the dose can be increased up to one teaspoon, once or twice a day. While there is no fixed dose as such, I suppose, that is the maximum advisable dose of cow urine (or distillate).

If it is freshly available, then it can be taken directly, within 10 – 15 minutes of collecting it.

### **Precautions:**

- Cow urine may be infected, in case the cow is infected.
- It is not advisable to store raw cow urine for more than an hour.

- It is better to take the cow urine for the prescribed time period only. For example, if used for indigestion, cow urine should be taken only till proper digestion power is restored.
- It can be used for long time of 3 -4 months, in the treatment of obesity, chronic inflammatory conditions etc under medical supervision.
- Cow urine has some benefits for people with diabetes, but it is better to consult an Ayurvedic expert.

### **Who should avoid cow urine?**

- People, who are very lean, emaciated, tired.
- People suffering from fatigue.
- Children below age of 10.
- People suffering from male infertility.
- People with lack of sleep.

**Remember:** cow urine therapy is not nourishing in nature. It is detoxifying and cleansing in nature. Hence a concept of *cow urine tonic* is not quite apt.

### **Ayurvedic medicines with cow urine as an ingredient:**

**Shiva Gutika** - used for a variety of diseases like liver and spleen disorders, respiratory conditions, neuro-psychiatric conditions etc.

**Panchagavya Ghrita** - used as medicine and also in preparatory procedure called snehakarma for the treatment of neurological and psychiatric conditions, fever, liver diseases such as jaundice.

**Maha Panchagavya Ghrita** – Herbal ghee, used in the treatment of fever, epilepsy, fistula, inflammation, piles, liver diseases, anemia, cough and psychiatric conditions.

**Gomutra Haritaki** – Used in oral disorders



**Mandoora Vatakam** - used in treating anaemia, liver and skin conditions.

**Ayurvedic medicines where cow urine is advised as co-drink (Anupana)**

- Punarnavadi kashayam - used in the treatment of inflammatory conditions like myxedema, ascites.
- Mahayograj Guggul - in the treatment of anaemia
- Vyoshadi Guggulu - used in the Ayurvedic treatment for obesity.
- Khadiradi Kashayam – Used to treat worm infestation
- Kankayan Vati – to treat abdominal lump due to kapha origin
- It is used along with Pathyadi Lepa churna, a herbal powder, to prepare a paste, which is applied externally to relieve skin diseases such as dermatitis.
- It is used in the process of making of Loha Bhasma
- It is used in the purification procedure of Vacha – Acorus calamus.

## Spices, Oils and More

## **SESAME AND SESAME OIL BENEFITS – TOTAL AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Sesame is one of the most widely used Ayurvedic medicines. If sesame seeds were not there, I would say, 40 % of Ayurvedic formulas would have been non-existent. Sesame is used in multiple dosage forms – powder, paste, oil, in the form of sesame recipes. The wonder herb is used in multiple ways through different routes of administration, externally, internally, orally, over the eyes, nasally, rectally etc. It is high time that we explore the sesame benefits.

### **Sesame facts:**

Botanical name: *Sesamum indicum* Linn. Ayurvedic Name: Tila.

### **Difference between black and white sesame seeds:**

There is no much difference between the two. The white variety is hulled black sesame seed. Black contains more calcium content than the white.

**Sesame synonyms:** benne seed, til, sim sim, abongra, Hu ma, Zhi ma, Sesamzaad, Cham kkae, Sesamo, Shiro goma, Semilla de ajonjolí, Sesam, Sésamo, Sezam indyjski. Graines de sesame, Sésame blanc.

**Indian Synonyms of sesame:** Tila, Til, Ellu, Tara, Gumbulu etc.

**Parts used:** Sesame seed, oil and whole plant. The whole plant is used in the preparation of special Ayurvedic medicine called Tila Kshara.

**Sesame oil composition:** Sesame is rich in Vitamin E. Hence, it acts as a natural anti oxidant. It also contains Vitamin K. Sesame contains magnesium, copper, calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamin B6.

### **Sesame benefits:**

Master Charaka – Of all the varieties of oil, sesame oil is best for improving strength and imparting oiliness to the body. (Charaka sutrasthana 13th chapter).

Master Sushruta enlists Ayurvedic properties of Sesame with the following terms. All these terms can be attributed to sesame seed benefits -

***Dantya*** - Good for teeth. Hence sesame is used in three ways for good teeth.

- Advised for chewing.
- Its paste is kept at the place of tooth ache.
- Sesame oil is used for oil pulling.

In conditions like tingling of the teeth, weak teeth, and disease of the mouth caused by Vata imbalance, water mixed with sesame seed paste is held in the mouth for 3 – 5 minutes. It is called as Gandusha treatment.

***Pathya*** - One of the things to be taken regularly. Hence sesame oil is one of the widely used oil for cooking in the Indian household.

***Agni janana*** – Improves digestive power.

***Medha janana*** – Improves intelligence.

***Vranashodhana*** – Cleanses wounds.

- Sesame, made into the form of paste, is traditionally applied over wounds for quick wound healing.
- Sesame oil is used for oil pulling to heal mouth ulcers.
- Sesame oil is processed with many herbs having wound healing property to prepare wound healing oils.

**Twachya, Balya, Keshya** – Improves the quality of skin and hair. Improves overall strength of the body. If you ever wish to do a massage with oil, please consider sesame oil. Sesame oil is used as the base for most of the herbal oils.

Sesame calms Vata and Kapha, slightly increases Pitta.

Sesame oil is an excellent laxative.

Sesame oil is an excellent skin moisturizer and skin softener.

Sesame oil is safe oil for massaging babies and children. It helps to strengthen the bones, muscles and joints.

Sesame oil is used for massage, Shirodhara, etc procedures which help to calm the mind and induce deep relaxation and helps to have **natural sleep** and relieves **headache**.

#### **Various uses of sesame –**

- Sesame oil is used in Ayurveda for food preparation, massage and oil pulling.
- Sesame oil is used as a base to prepare many medicated oils which are used in **panchakarma** procedures like Basti.
- Sesame paste is used for internal administration and also for application over wound.
- Oil prepared with Sesame oil base is used for nasal installation, as ear drops etc.
- Sesame seeds are used in various food recipes.

#### **Ayurvedic medicines with Sesame oil as ingredient:**

90 % of the herbal oils of Ayurveda are prepared with Sesame oil base.

Sesame oil is also used as ingredient in many herbal jams like Kalyanagulam.

### ***Benefits of sesame oil head massage:***

One who applies sesame oil on his head regularly does not suffer from headache, baldness, greying of hair, nor do his hair fall. Strength of his head and forehead is specially enhanced; his hair become black, long and deep-rooted; his sense organs work properly; the skin of his face becomes brightened; applying sesame oil on the head produces sound sleep and happiness.

Sesame oil is sweet with accompanying astringent taste, suitable (can penetrate through the suitable channels of the body), hot in potency and Vyavayi (which undergoes Paka or chemical change after it is pervaded all over the body). It aggravates Pitta, binds bowel and reduces the quantity of urine but it does not aggravate kapha. It is the best to balance Vata. It promotes strength, skin health, intelligence and power of digestion. In combination with various drugs (Samyoga), sesame oil is said to cure all diseases. In the ancient time, kings of demons, by virtue of the use of oil overcame aging, got rid of diseases as well as fatigue, acquired great strength instantaneously and fought battles (successfully). – Charaka Sutrasthana 27

**A simple tip:** If you use sesame oil for massage, better to follow it up with **hot water bath**. It helps to calm Vata, and also to get rid of oil from skin. The gap between the massage and bath can be half an hour to many hours. Longer the gap, better will be the effect.

**Question:** Can application of plain Sesame oil in knees and legs at night before going to sleep lead to developing pains? I have a Vatha body. And I have developed such pain. Only thing I am doing differently these days is applying plain sesame oil in eye lids, sole of foot and oil on knees and legs like

moisturiser. What am I doing wrong here? Thank you for your time. Looking forward to hearing from you.

**Answer:**

There are two probabilities:

1. The sesame oil that you are using might have moisture in it, causing the pain. To rule out this possibility, I suggest you to heat the oil for 2 – 3 minutes in mild fire before application.
2. If there is hidden stiffness in your joints, then applying oil can cause increased stiffness and pain. To rule this out, Take a teaspoon of black pepper, add it to 200 ml of sesame oil and heat it for 4 – 5 minutes, filter it and store in an air tight container. Or use **Maha Narayana oil** for applying, instead of regular oil.

## **CASTOR OIL BENEFITS, RESEARCH, SIDE EFFECTS, HOW TO USE, DOSE**

Castor oil is used both externally and internally in Ayurvedic treatment. Its usage is mentioned in a variety of disorders. It is also told as a rejuvenative and anti aging medicine. It is excellent in relieving Vata and Kapha disorders. It is also used in Panchakarma therapy.

Castor oil is best oil for purgation – Virechana Panchakarma treatment.

Has the capability to enter minute channels of the body.

### **Effect on Tridosha:**

Castor oil balances Vata and Kapha Dosha. But when mixed and processed with herbs possessing astringent, sweet and bitter tastes, it alleviates Pitta as well.

**Sanskrit synonyms:** Eranda taila, Gandharvahasta taila.

### **Medicinal qualities:**

Taste – Madhuram – sweet,

Kashaya Anurasa – astringent sub-taste, Satikta, Katu – bitter and pungent sub-taste

Vipaka – undergoes sweet taste conversion after digestion.

Ushna– hot in potency

Teekshna – piercing into minute body channels

Sookshma – minute

Picchila – sticky

Guru - heavy

Sara – laxative, promotes movement of liquids in channels



### **Castor oil health benefits:**

Sroto Vishodhana – cleanses body channels

Tvachya - improves skin quality, useful in skin diseases

Vrushya - aphrodisiac

Vaya sthapana – anti aging, rejuvenating

Yoni Vishodhana – useful in cleansing vagina

Shukra Vishodhana – useful in cleansing semen, to improve motility and to treat sperm defects.

Arogyakara – improves health

Medhakara – improves intelligence

Kantikara – improves skin glow

Smrutikara – improves memory

Balakara – improves immunity

Adhobhaga Doshahara – expels vitiated Doshas from lower part of the body (Virechana)

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Vishama Jwara - chronic recurrent fever

Hrudroga – cardiac disorder

Prushta shoola, guhya shoola – useful in low backache

Vatodara – useful in gas, bloating

Gulma - abdominal tumor, distension

Anaha – gaseous distension of abdomen

Ashtila – proctitis

Katigraha – low back stiffness

Vatashonita – gout

Vid bandha – constipation

Bradhna – prolapsed rectum

Shotha – swelling, inflammatory conditions

Ama Vidradhi– initial stages of abscess, where pus is yet to be formed completely.

Amavata – rheumatoid arthritis

Castor oil is sweet in taste, heavy, increases Kapha and balances Vata, Raktagulma (a type of abdominal tumour, especially in females), heart disease, indigestion and fever.

Reference – Charaka Sutrasthana 27

FDA has recognized castor oil as – generally safe and effective.

#### **Internal administration:**

- It acts as tonic, laxative, rejuvenator.
- It is also useful in relieving worm infestation, Abdominal colic, intermittent fever, skin diseases, Rheumatoid arthritis, haemorrhoids with hard stool problem and constipation.

#### **Upon external application,**

- Castor oil improves blood circulation, increases body warmth.
- It also helps to relieve pain and stiffness in joints. Hence, it is often used as the oil of preference for massage in case of rheumatoid arthritis.
- In cases of prolapsed uterus and rectum, castor oil is heated, then allowed to cool down, and then it is applied to the prolapsed part. The particular part is placed in its normal position and bandaged.

#### **Virechana – Purgation treatment:**

Purgation treatment is of two types. – Snigdha (oily) and Rooksha (dry)

In case of Snigdha Virechana (oil purgation), in Pitta disorders involving Vata,

such as gout, skin disorders with scaling, redness, burning sensation and dryness, in case of rheumatoid arthritis, castor oil is preferred for oil purgation. Here, the patient is first administered with spices to improve digestion, for three days. He is made to take medicated ghee orally for 3 – 7 days. Next, massage and sweating treatment are done for 2 – 3 days. Then castor oil is given in high dose to induce loose stools. This helps to expel imbalanced Pitta Dosh out of the body.

#### **Side effects and contra indications:**

- Because of its purgative nature, castor oil is contra indicated in Diarrhoea, Amoebic dysentery.
- Other common side effects with castor oil are – stomach cramping, nausea, vomiting, dizziness.
- It is contra indicated during pregnancy and can be used under strict medical supervision during lactation period, and in children.

#### **Home remedies using castor oil:**

For rheumatoid arthritis patients with constipation, castor oil home remedy with Haritaki is very effective.

#### **Dose of castor oil:**

- The dose depends upon the severity of disease, patients gut, health and age.
- For the purpose of regular treatment (not Panchakarma), the dose is – half to one teaspoon – 2.5 – 5 ml, once a day.
- For children, maximum advised dose per day is usually 2.5 ml.

### **How to use?**

For regular use, castor oil can be consumed readily. For those who find its odour offensive, castor oil capsules are also available. The dose of such capsule is 1 – 2 capsules once or twice a day.

**For the purpose of purgation** (Virechana treatment), Castor oil is administered in a dose ranging between 30 – 120 ml, based on doctor's discretion. But such a high dose, without medical supervision can be dangerous.

### **How long to use?**

In a very minimal dose, it can be used for a period of 7 days. If you wish to continue further, consult your doctor.

### **Time of castor oil intake:**

Usually castor oil is administered on empty stomach, that is – half an hour before food or 2 hours after food.

### **Castor oil for body massage:**

Whenever there is pain associated with stiffness, castor oil is preferred. It can be used as daily massage oil.

### **Castor oil for hair –**

It can be applied 30 minutes to 1 hour before hair wash / shower. After application, it is washed off with herbal hair powder mix or with a mild herbal shampoo.

In USA & holistic community castor oil is promoted as a way to regrow eyebrow hair that has either been over-plucked or lost due to maturation & menopause. It is said to unclog the pores and allow the hair to push through.

### **Castor oil for eyes:**

In some parts of India, as a traditional practice, castor oil is applied as Kajal (collyrium) over the eyes. They say, this helps to improve vision.

### **Ayurvedic medicines with castor oil ingredient:**

**Gandharvahastadi taila** – Used in abscess, splenic disorders, Abdominal bloating, Oedema and inflammatory conditions of abdomen and ascites.

**Brihat Saindhavadi Taila** – Saindhava means rock salt. Wherever there is stiffness, usually rock salt is used for external application. Castor oil also does the same job of relieving stiffness, hence this combination. It is used in low back ache, sciatica, rheumatoid arthritis, abdominal colic, Ankylosing spondylosis and such other musculo-skeletal diseases.

**Hingu Triguna Taila** – It is used to treat bloating, acid peptic diseases and ascites.

**Vatari ras** – It is used in the treatment of neuritis, arthritis, neuralgia, paralysis, facial palsy, spondylosis, gout.

**Kalyana Kshara** – **It is used** for haemorrhoids, constipation, bloating, difficulty in urination, cough, and asthma.

**Amavatari ras** – used in rheumatoid arthritis and osteo-arthritis

**Simhanada Guggulu** – used in skin condition, abscess, gout, respiratory condition, abdominal colic, anaemia.

Interestingly, castor oil is also added in many allopathic medicines such as Miconazole, Tacrolimus, Xenaderm ointment, Paclitaxel etc.

### **Castor oil for semen and uterus cleansing:**

**Q:** It would be interesting to know how castor oil is used for Shukra vishodhana and Yoni vishodhana. It would be a great boon for young couples to know how to prepare themselves for a child by cleansing themselves physically, mentally, emotionally and how to clean the sperm and ovum.

**A:** Shukra Shodhana and Yoni Vishodhana effect is brought about by undergoing Virechana Panchakarma treatment. Before planning for conception, if the couple can visit an Ayurveda center, then they will be guided through the procedure. If they cannot visit, I think they can safely take around 5 ml of castor oil during weekend. The next morning, they may have loose stools for 2 – 4 times, which would stop by itself.

They may repeat it for upto four weekends.

If the loose stools are not getting under control, they can take Kutaja Ghanavati tablet – 2 tablets 2 times a day, after food, till it stops. Better to have this tablet ready, well ahead. If things are not getting under control, they will have to consult a doctor immediately. So, it comes with certain amount of risk. Hence, a doctor's direct advice is recommended.

### **Castor oil for clogged milk ducts in lactating mothers:**

Sometimes, breast feeding mothers experience clogging of milk ducts leading to pain and inflammation. Castor oil, having piercing qualities, helps to get rid of the clog, on external application.

Soon after you have finished breast feeding, dip a cotton swab in castor oil and apply it over the nipple for 10 minutes and then wipe off cleanly and wash with warm water.



## **COCONUT OIL- BAD OR GOOD, BENEFITS, AYURVEDIC AND CONTEMPORARY VIEWS**

Coconut oil is one of the most debated dietary substances for its benefits and hazards. Coconut oil is used in Indian customs since thousands of years. The Coconut oil is in use since the time of Sushruta Samhita, around 2000 years before

### **Coconut oil- Ayurveda details –**

Coconut and coconut oil are widely used in Ayurveda, in the form of –

- Food ingredient
- For external application
- For internal administration.

**Sushruta** has described Coconut oil health benefits as follows –

- It is a natural coolant.
- It takes relatively long time to undergo digestion.
- Improves hair quality and strength. Promotes hair growth.
- It is a natural aphrodisiac
- Nourishes the under-nourished body tissues
- Useful in the treatment of certain diseases like emaciation, debility, respiratory disorders, diabetes, urinary system disorders.
- **Coconut oil for skin:** Quickens wound healing and helps in filling up of skin depression in wounds and skin pores.
- Calms Vata and Pitta, Supports Kapha.

There are a number of Ayurvedic medicines with coconut oil as base that are used predominantly externally and also internally for many health conditions.



**Example:** (Caution: Meant only for information. self medication is dangerous)

- Asana Eladi Kera Tailam (Asana Eladi coconut oil) – useful in the treatment of skin diseases and disorders related to head and ear.
- Chemparuthyadi Keratailam – useful in eczema, and pediatric conditions.
- Dhurdhurapatradi Keratailam – Useful in dandruff, itching and eczema.
- Eladi coconut oil – Useful in skin conditions.
- Karpooradi coconut oil – pains, cramps, rheumatic joint complaints.
- Kayyanyadi coconut oil – Used in the treatment of headache and improves quality of hair.

### **Contemporary views about coconut oil –**

Coconut oil is rich in saturated fatty acid, which is bad for heart and cholesterol. Coconut oil is considered under solid fats, and is advised to be replaced with oils wherever possible.

Coconut oil is a major source of Lauric acid, a fatty acid, which is claimed to benefit in dealing with viruses and bacteria causing diseases such as herpes, influenza, and cytomegalovirus.

Though coconut oil is rich in saturated fatty acid, there is a structural difference. It is rich in medium size triglycerides.

### **Coconut oil is good or bad? Discussion and conclusion:**

- According to Ayurveda, coconut oil is nourishing in nature, when taken internally. Hence used in emaciation, debility etc.
- Ayurveda also explains coconut oil's benefits in respiratory condition, which is supported by the clinical trial proving its efficacy in Pneumonia in children.
- Ayurveda hails external use of coconut oil to promote hair growth, wound healing, as natural coolant and in conditions like eczema.

- Coconut oil is processed with medicinal herbs and used in many diseases.
- Convincing research evidence is present to prove that coconut is not really the direct cause for obesity or high cholesterol. In Kerala, India, coconut oil is used in almost all the dishes. If coconut oil was really the cause for obesity, Kerala should have been the abode of obese people, which is not the case.
- For preparing hair oils, no other base is as good as coconut oil.
- Coconut oil can be used as skin moisturizer & softener.
- For a normal healthy individual, coconut oil is very good to be included in regular diet, but in limited quantities.

**Non sticky coconut oil** – I do not believe or endorse ‘thin’ and ‘non sticky’ coconut oil for hair. Natural form of coconut oil is the best form to apply to hair or to skin.

#### **Coconut oil for diabetes:**

I do not recommend coconut oil as a remedy to diabetes; however, usage of a teaspoon per day, in diet, would help in improving blood sugar levels. Before using it, take 500 ml of coconut oil in a pan, add 15 – 20 neem leaves or curry leaves (Kadi Patta) and heat the oil in mild fire for five minutes. Take care not to burn the oil. Then filter it. Use this oil for cooking. It helps to improve its effectiveness against diabetes.

If diabetic people have burning sensation in hands and feet, coconut oil can be applied to relieve it.

## SESAME OIL, COCONUT OIL, CASTOR OIL, MUSTARD OIL – COMPARISON

In traditional Ayurvedic text books, we find a lot of medicated oils. All such herbal oils (Taila) are prepared with the base of sesame oil. Whenever oil (taila) is referred, in a Sanskrit verse of a formula, by default, sesame oil is taken. This is because, it is mentioned that, “*Tailam yat Tilodbhavam*” which means, Taila is one which is obtained from Sesame (Tila). However, Sarshapa taila (mustard oil), Eranda taila (Castor oil) and Narikela Taila (Coconut oil) also have huge therapeutic importance in Ayurveda.

Criteria	Sesame oil	Castor oil	Mustard oil	Coconut oil
<b>Taste</b>	Sweet, bitter astringent	Sweet, bitter	Pungent mixed sweet	Sweet
<b>Quality</b>	Warm, Severe (penetrative)	Heavy, warm, motile, bad odour	Light, warm, severe (penetrative)	Heavy, cold, mild, slow, thick and dense
<b>Effect on Tridosha</b>	Pacifies Kapha vata	Paittic and vata pacifier	Imbalances Pitt a, Balances Vata Kapha	Increases Kapha
<b>Therapeuti c action</b>	Hair tonic, Tonic (rejuvenator), Complexion enhancer, wound healer, Focal bulk enhancer,	Tonic , laxative, Rejuvenator	Wormifuge, Rubificent, Anti inflammatory	Hair tonic,shiny smoother and body soothing agent

	Brain tonic			
		Worm		
	Vatic disorders (Neuro muscular disease),	infestation, Abdominal colic, Skin diseases, Hernia, Gaseous tumour,		
<b>Indication</b>	Worm, Itching, Ulcers, Premature greying of hair.	Abdominal disorders, intermittent fever, Rheumatoid arthritis, constipation	Worm infestation, Skin diseases, Itching, Stoutness, Headache,	Hair fall, Burning of the eyes, premature greyness of the hair, eye disorders etc
	Pitta disorder	Diarrhoea,		
<b>Contra indication</b>	s, Blood borne diseases	Amoebic dysentery, fungal infections	Blood borne disorders	Indigestion and diarrhoea
<b>Formulation contains the respective oil</b>	Ksheerabala taila Gandha taila Mahanarayana tailaMasha taila etc	Vatari gugguluSimhanada guggulu etc	Ashta katwara taila Ayama kanjika etc	Neelabhringadi keramKayyunya di keram, Neelinyadi keram, Chemparutyadi keram etc

### Sesame oil home remedies:

1.Sesame oil mouth gargling helps to relieve the recurrent complaint of mouth

ulcers.

2. Sesame oil is taken with a pinch of table salt and warmed slightly. This is applied to the joints once in two days. This prevents from the joint pain which is commonly manifested in late 50s.

#### **Castor oil home remedies:**

1. Daily application of castor oil to the sole, before going to bed improves the quality of sleep.

2. Calcified lime (dehydrated lime) is mixed with equal amount of castor oil and fine paste is made. Application of this over the abscess helps in early maturation of the abscesses.

#### **Mustard oil home remedies:**

1. Mustard oil is mixed with lemon juice and instilled to the lesions of onychomycosis (nail bed infections). 5-8 days application helps to relieve the pain effectively.

2. In case of severe headache, mustard oil is added with a pinch of salt and mixed well. 2 drops of this mixture is instilled to both the nostrils. This relieved the headache immediately.

#### **Coconut oil home remedies:**

1. Coconut oil is mixed with equal amount of lime water (supernatant liquid obtained on mixing 2 gram of calcified lime powder mixed with 480 ml of water.) and rubbed well. This becomes a liquid viscous oily emulsion. This is applied over the area of burnt wounds. It helps to subside the burning sensation immediately.

2. Hibiscus flowers (white) are taken and cooked with coconut oil, till complete evaporation of moisture. This is applied to the scalp. This simple oil helps to arrest the hair fall and promotes thick and dense hair.

Article by Dr MS Krishnamurthy MD(Ayu), PhD (Ayu) and Dr Hebbar



## **WHY SESAME OIL IS BETTER FOR HAIR THAN COCONUT OIL**

Both sesame and coconut oil are excellent for hair growth, to prevent hair fall, to fight dandruff etc. But usage of coconut oil comes with some disadvantages, because of which, I choose sesame oil to be the best.

### **Skin and hair related benefits of sesame oil (gingelly oil):**

- Twachya – improves skin tone and skin quality
- Keshya – Promotes hair growth
- Balya – improves strength of skin, muscles, tendons and joints on massaging.
- Useful against greying of hair.
- Relieves itching and pain
- Rich in Vitamin E, good for skin.
- Useful against headache, arthritis etc.

### **Skin and hair related benefits of coconut oil:**

- Relieves burning sensation
- Useful in relieving hair fall and premature greying of hair.
- Useful in relieving wounds.

### **Why sesame oil is better than coconut oil?**

#### **Ayurvedic preaching:**

Of all the vegetable sourced oils, sesame oil is the best.

This is why, it is the number one used base for all kinds of traditional herbal oils (Taila)

If sesame oil is good for improving skin health, if it is good for massage, if it is good for improving nourishment, if it is the preferred base of oil for almost all

massage oils explained in ancient traditional Ayurvedic text books, it should be the oil of choice for hair as well.

There is also a reference (Sharangdhara Samhita) that, in any Sanskrit verse of any Ayurvedic medicine, if taila (oil) word is mentioned but the specific type of Taila is not mentioned, then sesame oil should be considered by default.

**Quality comparison:** Gingili oil does all the good things to hair than coconut oil does.

### **Worsening of sinusitis, rhinitis, cold cough etc.**

The main problem with coconut oil is that it is coolant in nature. Coldness increases Kapha. Hence, for many people, who are prone to allergies, cold, cough, asthma, which are Kapha symptoms, coconut oil based hair oils lead to worsening of symptoms. Even in some healthy people, who do not have cold problems, tend to have running nose, upon applying coconut oil (or hair oils with coconut oil base) at night.

### **For people living in Cold climate**

I have heard from many of my clients from cold countries, they tend to experience hair fall with coconut oil (or herbal oils with coconut oil base) usage. This is because coconut oil being coolant, added with the cold nature of their place, increases Vata. Increased Vata causes hair fall. Such a problem is not seen with sesame oil (or herbal oils with sesame oil) application because, it is primarily a Vata balancing oil.

### **Worsening of headache / migraine--**

It is another problem, related with Kapha and Vata increase, caused due to coconut oil. Whereas, sesame oil being Vata balancing, helps to relieve headache.



### **Time of oil application:**

Longer the oil stays on the skin, more percentage of the oil will get absorbed, hence better will be the effect. Hence, head massage or hair oil application done at evening time is very beneficial. If you divide day time into three parts, evening time is dominated by Vata Dosha. At this time, coconut oil application may worsen Vata, because of its coolant nature, whereas sesame oil will calm Vata down.

Also, at night, when Kapha is dominant, again coconut oil increases Kapha. This is why, people suffer with cold and related symptoms with coconut oil, when it is applied at night.

Hence, if you wish to apply coconut oil, morning is the best choice.

### **How coconut oil usage became popular?**

Kerala Ayurvedic text books came up with many of the coconut oil based herbal oils, not only for hair, but for other skin conditions as well.

Example: Eladi keram, Chemparuthyadi keratailam etc.

The reason is quite obvious. Entire Kerala, for most part of the year is hot and humid. Kerala is a coastal state of South India. Because of hotness, naturally Kapha and Vata are well under control. Hence, usage of coconut oil for hair or as part of diet is actually very beneficial for them.

### **Where coconut oil is beneficial?**

For people living in hot climate,

For people with burning sensation – Pitta dominant conditions, coconut oil application over hair is very beneficial. But for the rest of us, Sesame oil makes better sense.

### **Mixing of black pepper**

Some advise that, if you are really in love with coconut oil, but have cold and sinusitis problems, then mix a teaspoon of black pepper powder to 100 ml of

oil, heat it for five minutes, filter it and use it. But, usage of sesame oil, in place of coconut oil is a very simple solution.

**Hair oils with sesame oil base:**

For USA and other countries, there are a few companies manufacturing hair oil with sesame oil base. Even if you do not get any such hair oil, you can surely use plain sesame oil itself as hair oil.

## **CINNAMON BENEFITS, DOSE, HOME REMEDIES, SIDE EFFECTS**

Cinnamon improves digestion strength, is useful in diabetes, high cholesterol.

Its oil is applied externally for premature ejaculation and insect bites.

**Botanical Name** - Cinnamomum zeylanica Blume (C. Verum J.S)

**Family** - Lauraceae

### **Cinnamon in different languages:**

Hindi Name - Dalchini

English Name – Cinnamon

Kannada Name – Chakke

Telugu Name - Lavanga patta

Tamil Name - Ilayangam

Bengali Name - Daruchini

Gujarati Name - Taja

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Tanutvak, Chocha, Darusita, Varanga,

Svadvi – because of sweet taste

Mukha shodhya, Mukhashodhana – cleanses mouth

Vanapriya – grows wildly in forest

Saimhala – from Sri Lanka,

Utkata, Bahugandha, Gandhavalka – having good smell

Lataparna, Tvak patta, Swarna Bhumika, Ramapriya, Rama Vallabha, Bhringam,

Kavacha, Shakala, Saihala, Latapatra, Ramapriya

### **Classical categorization**

Susruta - Eladi

Vagbhata - Eladi,

Trijataka - a group of three spices – cinnamon, cardamom and Cinnamomum tamala

It is also a member of Chaturjata, which is Trijata plus Nagakeshara.

### **Different varieties**

Ancient Nighantu writers mention two varieties viz.

- Native cinnamon – Cinnamomum zeylanicum and
- Imported Cinnamomum cassia. Cassia).

There are three varieties in the trade.

- Indian Cinnamon – Cinnamomum tamala
- Ceylonese Cinnamon – Cinnamomum zeylanicum
- Chinese Cinnamon – Cinnamomum cassia

**Distribution-** Found wild in the southern coastal region of western India.

### **Twak – Cinnamon Benefits – Medicinal Properties**

Rasa (taste) – Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter), Madhura (sweet)

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (light to digestion), Rooksha (dryness), Teekshna (piercing, strong, sharp)

Veerya – Ushna (hot potency)

**Effect on Tridosha** - Balances Vata and Kapha

**Part used** - Stem bark, leaf, Cinnamon oil

**Dosage** -

Powder 1-3 grams in divided dose per day

Cinnamon oil 2-5 drops – once or twice a day

Oil is also used externally, either directly or after dilution with sesame oil.

**Cinnamomum zeylanicum – medicinal uses:**

Vishapaha – anti toxic, useful in toxic conditions

Kanta Vaktra Rujahara – relieves throat and oral pain

Shiroruk hara – relieves headache

Basti Shodhana – cleanses urinary bladder. It acts as diuretic. Hence, fights urinary retention, dysuria

Pittala – slightly increases Pitta Dosha

Hrut Bastigata Jantujit – relieves microbe infestation related to bladder, lungs and heart

Useful in,

Peenasa - rhinitis

Aruchi – relieves anorexia

Kandu – relieves itching, pruritis

Amavatahara – useful in rheumatoid arthritis

Shukrahrut – not ideal to improve semen, sperm quality and quantity

Vataja Arsha – useful in painful haemorrhoids

Krumihara – useful in worm infestation, infected wounds

Peenasahara – relieves allergic rhinitis, running nose

Kaphakasahara – relieves cough with sputum

Amahara – Relieves ama – a product of indigestion and altered metabolism.

Kanta Shuddhikara – cleanses, clears throat, Improves voice.

It helps to lower BP, by its cardiac tonic and diuretic effects.

Because of its Pitta increasing property, it is useful in treating amenorrhea, delayed periods.

### **Cinnamon oil for wound healing and insect bites**

Cinnamon oil, when applied externally heals wounds quickly. 2 – 5 drops of the

oil is applied over the site of insect bites to detoxify local area and to relieve stinging pain.

**Cinnamon to improve teeth strength:** To strengthen teeth, a small piece of cinnamon is kept in mouth, chewed for 5 – 10 minutes and the juice is swallowed. It also helps to relieve bad breath problem. For the same reason, cinnamon oil is used as ingredient in herbal toothpastes and herbal tooth powders such as Dashan Sanskar Churna.

**Cinnamon oil for premature ejaculation:**

Cinnamon oil – 10 ml is diluted with 100 ml of sesame oil. This combination is applied over the penis, 10 minutes before bath, to improve blood circulation and for longer erection.

**Cinnamon side effects:**

- Because of its hotness, it is not suitable for people with burning sensation and gastritis.
- It is not suitable for people with Pitta body type, who are sensitive to Sun heat.
- Because of Pitta increasing quality, it is not suitable for people with bleeding disorders such as nasal bleeding, heavy periods etc.
- It is best to avoid usage of cinnamon during periods.
- It is safe to use it in very low dose during pregnancy, lactation and in children.

Some people may have cinnamon allergy, with symptoms like runny nose, skin rashes, eye redness, lip and tongue swelling etc.

## **Cinnamon Home remedies**

Juice of cardamom leaves, cloves & Cinnamon made into pills are prescribed for worms, to improve appetite, to relieve flatulence, diarrhoea.

## **Cinnamon and honey**

One gram of cinnamon along with a teaspoon of honey, once a day, relieves itching, indigestion and also a useful way to use cinnamon for weight loss.

Cinnamon powder in small quantities is used in making coolant fruit juices, used as part of healthy Ayurvedic summer regimen.

Mango juice is mixed with fragrant substances like cinnamon, cardamom, to quench the thirst in the afternoon, as part of healthy spring regimen

## **How to use cinnamon regularly?**

- It is best used as part of diet in making dishes.
- If it is not used in culinary, half a gram of cinnamon along with honey or water can be consumed once a day.
- In people with dental caries, a small piece of cinnamon can be chewed daily.
- Its bark and leaf powder in small quantities is added to fruit juices to improve flavour and to boost the health benefits of the juice.

## **Ayurvedic medicines and cinnamon supplements:**

- **Sitopaladi Churna** – A very famous Ayurvedic powder medicine to treat cough, cold, anorexia
- **Vayu Gulika** – used in abdominal pain, cold, cough, rhinitis and bronchitis

- **Himsagar taila** – it is an excellent pain and burning sensation relieving herbal oil.



## **CINNAMON AND HONEY BENEFITS**

Cinnamon (bark powder) and honey, both are widely used in numerous Ayurvedic herbal preparations & Ayurvedic home remedies. Cinnamon is used in Ayurvedic herbal powder mixes, tablets, Gulikas, avalehas (herbal jams) dosage forms.

While Honey is used extensively in Asavas, Arishtas, Lehyams (herbal jams such as Chyavanprash and Brahma Rasayana) and also as a vehicle for many Ayurvedic tablets and herbal powders. So, here are a few tips to make best use of honey and cinnamon benefits.

**1. How to lower creatinine levels** – Cinnamon is one of the rarest herbs to be found, beneficial to naturally lower serum creatinine levels. For this purpose, 1-2 grams of Cinnamon powder can be administered along with a teaspoon of honey. Honey has been explained as *Yogavahi* in Ayurveda. It acts as a positive catalyst and fastens the absorption of the herbs, with which it is being administered.

**2. For wound healing** – Cinnamon is an excellent antimicrobial herb and used in healing wound. Honey is also a very good wound healing agent. So, a paste of honey and cinnamon applied over the wound will help in healing the wound faster.

**3. Skin itching** – Cinnamon is explained as '*Kandunashana*'- Meaning cure skin itching. A paste of cinnamon along with honey is used to treat itchy skin and can be used against skin allergy by applying at the affected region.

**Home remedy for indigestion** – Both Cinnamon and honey tend to balance Vata and Kapha, and explained as '*amanashana*' and '*aruchi nashana*'. The combination is effectively cures Ama, tastelessness and indigestion.

**Cinnamon and honey for weight loss:** A pinch of cinnamon with one teaspoon of honey, with warm water, early in the morning, on empty stomach is

traditionally used for weight loss. It is better to avoid coffee or tea till half an hour after taking this home remedy.

## **ALOE VERA BENEFITS, RESEARCH, HOME REMEDIES, SIDE EFFECTS**

The beauty of Aloe Vera can be matched with the beauty of its health benefits.

Aloe vera benefits are not only limited to cosmetics.

**Botanical Name-** Aloe Vera Chinensis, Aloe barbadensis Mill., Aloe indica, Aloe chinensis

Family Name- Liliaceae

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi name- Gheekuvar

English Name- Indian Aloe

Telugu Name- Kalabanda

Kannada name- Lolisara, Lolesara

Malayalam Name- Kumari, Kattar Vazha

Tamil Name- Kathaazhai

Bengali Name – Ghrita Kumari

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

- Aloe vera is called as *Kumari* in Sanskrit. Kumari refers to a young girl. This name has two derivations.
  - It is used in diseases of young girls like pimples and menstrual problems.
  - The plant is beautiful and looks young even after it grows old. 😊
- Gruha Kanya, Sthula dala, Dirgha patra, Gandala.
- Ambudhisrava, Vipulasrava – Having profuse gel in the leaves.
- Maataa – It is like a mother to the patient.
- Deerghapatrika – Having long leaves.
- Ghrita Kumarika – Leaf having slimy pulp similar to ghee.

- Amara, Ajara – Has rejuvenating and anti aging properties.

**Different varieties-** At present, Aloe vera chinensis, Aloe Barbadensis, Aloe vera are mainly being used as Kumari. It is also noticed that several other species of Aloe those are being sold or cultivated in the name of Kumari in Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

**Distribution-** cultivated throughout India.

Aloe Vera chinensis- smaller FLESHY, Lanceolate leaves 30 cm long and recurved at tips, rounded beneath , blue green with white marking and whitish teeth; flowers orange.

### **Aloe vera medicinal properties**

Rasa (taste) – Tikta (bitter)

Guna (qualities) – Guru (heaviness), Snigdha (oily, unctuous), Picchila (sticky, slimy)

Vipaka- Katu – Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion.

Veerya – Sheeta – Cold potency

**Effect on Tridosha** - Balances all the three Doshas.

**Part Used-** Leaves

**Dosage-** Fresh juice 10-20 ml; Aqueous Extract 100-300 mg

Leaf pulp – 1 – 3 grams

### **Aloe vera uses:**

Bhedani – Useful in constipation

Gulmahara – Useful in abdominal tumours

Pleehahara – Useful in spleen disorders, splenomegaly

Yakrut Vruddhahara – Useful in hepatitis, hepatomegaly  
Kapha Jwarahara – Useful in fever  
Granthihara – Useful in small tumors, fibroids, lymphadenitis  
Agnidagdha – Useful in treating burn wounds  
Visphotahara – Relieves boils and blisters  
Raktapittahara – Useful in bleeding disorders such as nasal bleeding, heavy periods, etc  
Tvak Roga – Useful in skin disorders, psoriasis.  
Chakshushya – Improves vision, good for eyes, useful in eye disorders  
Vishahara – Anti toxic  
Vatahara – Useful in treating disorders of Vata Dosha imbalance such as neuralgia, paralysis, constipation, bloating, etc  
Balya –Improves strength and immunity  
Vrushya –Aphrodisiac, improves vigor  
Rasayana – Anti-aging, causes cell and tissue rejuvenation  
Pittaja Kasahara – Useful in cough and cold of Pitta origin  
Shwasahara – Useful in treatment of asthma and chronic respiratory disorders.

### **Aloe vera for haemorrhoids:**

Because of its mild laxative action and wound healing properties, regular intake of mild doses of aloe vera in the form of capsule or juice, is very beneficial in haemorrhoids treatment.

### **Aloe vera for heart –**

Aloe has blood thinning action. It is very useful against cholesterol. So, it is very useful in treating atherosclerosis (blood vessels clogged with clot and fat deposition).

**Aloe vera for women:**

Aloe vera improves ovulation chances, it induces menstruation, hence used in treating amenorrhea – absence of periods or decreased bleeding.

It improves hair quality, prevents hair fall, cures dandruff, also useful in acne and blemishes.

**Aloe vera for constipation:**

To relieve constipation, 10 grams of pulp made into paste, added with 2 grams of rock salt, mixed well, and boiled to evaporate water content. It is administered in a dose of 3 – 6 grams, once a day.

**Aloe vera flower** balances Vata and Pitta Dosha, Guru (heavy) and is useful in worm infestation and healing of infected wounds.

**External Application of aloe vera pulp:**

The leaf pulp is useful to heal burn wounds, boils, acne, blisters, and allergic skin disorders.

Its pulp is added with turmeric powder and heated for a minute and this is applied externally.

The same paste can be applied over the mouth ulcers two or three times a day.

Oil prepared with Aloe vera in sesame oil or olive oil base is very useful against diaper rashes.

**Home remedy for Asthma:**

Aloe vera leaf is heated on burning charcoal, cuticle is removed and pulp is scraped and squeezed in cloth to get the juice. One teaspoon of this juice is

added with two drops of ghee and 4 drops of honey and licked hourly to relieve from the attack of breathlessness and wheezing

**Aloe vera for eye redness and burning sensation:**

2 grams of above purified (dry roasted) alum powder is mixed with 20 grams of *Aloe vera* pulp and tied into two packets with clean pieces of cloth. These cloth packs are tied on eyes and kept overnight while sleeping. By this eyes become clear, vision improves, redness and burning sensation get subsided.

**Aloe vera juice benefits-**

Aloe vera juice is good for stomach

Aloe vera juice can be used in skin diseases

It has anti-microbial properties.

It also acts as a blood thinning agent and detoxifies blood.

**Daily dose of aloe vera juice** 30 – 50 ml. in single or divided dose, before food.

If you are consuming market available aloe vera juice, then it may require mixing equal quantities of water. Go with the label instructions.

**Aloe vera for diverticulitis –**

**Question:**

I understand that aloe vera juice helps patients with problem of diverticulitis. It is said that it can cure the diverticulitis. Can you tell me whether it is true and if so what should be the dosage and how it should be taken? Should it be diluted or taken straight? Does it also alleviate the pains caused by it during early in the morning before the bladder is emptied and bowel movement?

**Answer:**

It will be wrong to say that Aloe vera juice completely cures Diverticulitis. However, it relieves many of diverticulitis symptoms such as constipation (Aloe vera is a mild laxative), abdominal pain and vomiting sensation. Regular adult dose of Aloe vera juice is – 30 ml mixed with 30 ml of water, once or twice a day. It helps to relieve early morning pain before the bladder and bowels are emptied.

### **Aloe vera side effects:**

Aloe vera induces purgation and hence it is not ideal to take it during diarrhoea.

Care should be taken while using aloe vera in children and during lactation. It is best to avoid it during pregnancy.

### **How to use?**

Its pulp is used in small quantities as a vegetable. But over-dosage should be avoided.

Its leaf is soaked in a cup of water over night. Next day morning, the water is consumed.

Its extract in the form of capsule / tablet is administered under medical supervision.

Its ready-to-use juices are available in the market.

Because of its anti dandruff properties, its dry powder or pulp is used in making anti dandruff hair oil.

### **Ayurvedic medicines containing Aloe as ingredient:**

**Kumarayasav** – used in abdominal distension, bloating, cough, cold, piles etc.

**Raja Pravartini Vati** – used in treating amenorrhoea and scanty bleeding.



**Mukta Panchamrit Ras** – used in the treatment of Chronic fever, Pthisis, Emaciation, Cough etc.

**Karutha Gulika** – used in treatment of headache.

**Aloe vera in preparing Bhasma** –

Aloe vera is used in incinerating copper metal into Tamra Bhasma (Copper calx).

Similarly, it is used in preparing Pravala bhasma (coral), Shankha Bhasma (Conch Calx), Kapardika Bhasma (Cowries).

## **ASAFOETIDA HEALTH BENEFITS, MEDICINAL USES, SIDE EFFECTS – AYURVEDA**

Asafoetida is an ancient Indian culinary ingredient, loaded with immense health benefits. A pinch of its powder along with buttermilk is a very famous Indian home remedy for bloating. It is called as Hingu in Sanskrit and also in many other languages.

**Botanical name** -Ferula narthex / Ferula foetida / Ferula asafoetida

Family - Umbelliferae

Hindi name - Heeng, Hing

Kannada name - Hingu

Telugu name - Inguva

Bengali, Marathi name - Hing

Gujarathi name - Badharani

Tamil name - perungayam

Malayalam name - Rungayam

Farsi name - Angajah, Angoj

Arabbi name - Hilteel

### **Sanskrit Synonyms and meaning:**

Hingu, Sahasravedhi – effective in thousands of ways

Jatuka – similar to Laksha herb, having exudate

Bahleeka, Ramatha – Available in places like Bahlika and Ramatha

Ugragandha – has offensive smell

### **Classical categorization:**

#### **Charaka samita:**

Deepaneeya – herbs that improve digestion power

Svasahara – herbs that are useful in asthma and other respiratory disorders

Sanjnasthapana – herbs that are useful to restore consciousness

Katuskandha – pungent tasting group of herbs

**Sushruta** : Pippalyadi and Ushakadi

**Vagbhata** : Pippalyadi

**Distribution** : Afghanistan, Baltistan

**Medicinal qualities:**

Rasa (taste) - Katu (pungent)

Guna (qualities) - Laghu (light to digest), Snigdha (unctuous, oily), Teekshna (piercing, enters deep tissues)

Vipaka (taste conversion after digestion) - Katu (pungent)

Veerya (potency) - Ushna (hot)

Effect on Tridosha - Balances Kapha and Vata. Increases Pitta.

**Asafoetida – medicinal benefits:**

Hingu is

Chedaneeya – scrapes channels

Deepaneeya – carminative

Anulomana – restores normal movement of Vata, useful in bloating

Pachana – digestive

Hrudya – cardiac tonic, good for heart, It is a very good natural blood thinning agent, useful to reduce high blood pressure.

Pittavardhana – increases Pitta.

Chakshushya – good for eyes, improves vision power

Useful in Shula – abdominal colic pain

Gulma – Abdominal tumour, bloating

Udara - Ascites

Anaha – bloating

Krumi - worm infestation (in wounds and in intestines)

Vibandha - constipation

Adhmana - bloating, gaseous distension of abdomen

vAtazleSmavibandhaghnaM kaTUSNaM dlpanaM laghu |

hiGgu zUlaprazamanaM vidyAt pAcanarocanam | |299| | – Charaka Samhita

Sutrasthana 27

The gum resin of Hingu – Asa foetida( Ferula narthex Boiss) is balances colic pain, carminative and palatable.

**Part used** : Resin

**Dosage** : Asafoetida powder 125–500 mg per day or as directed by Ayurvedic doctor.

**Asafoetida side effects:**

- Over-dosage may cause Pitta increase, burning sensation, worsening of gastritis.
- It is not indicated in conditions with Pitta dominance, like gastritis.
- It is best to avoid its use during menstrual periods.
- It is best to avoid this in bleeding disorders – such as nasal bleeding, menorrhagia, ulcerative colitis etc. It has blood thinning effect, hence it may delay clotting.
- It is best to avoid in children, during pregnancy and lactation period.
- People taking medicine for high blood pressure should take care while using Heeng, since it reduces blood pressure.

**Famous Ayurvedic medicines prepared with Heeng:**

Ashta Chooranam – very famous carminative medicine

Phalasarpi – useful in gynaecological disorders

Kankayan Vati – useful in bloating, piles etc.

## **BENEFITS OF ORANGE FRUITS – TRADITIONAL AND MODERN VIEWS**

Orange fruit is one among the most widely consumed fruits around the globe.

Orange fruit is loaded with treasure of health benefiting qualities. While today's researchers are unearthing the health benefits of orange, ancient Ayurvedic text books have attributed this wonder fruit with many qualities.

### **Traditional Ayurvedic view on benefits of orange –**

Sanskrit word for orange is Naaranga. In fact the word orange has its root in the word Naaranga.

### **Qualities of orange as per Ayurveda-**

- Sour and sweet in taste.
- ***Vishadam*** - Clears the channels of the body, clarifies the blood vessels, and cleanses the gastro intestinal tract.
- Increases the taste of food
- Improves taste perception
- ***Hridya*** – Good for heart – acts as cardiac tonic
- Imparts heat to the body. Hot in nature.
- Improves strength and boosts immunity.
- Balances Vata
- Relieves tiredness
- Helps in relieving indigestion, abdominal pain, worm infestation and colic pain.

### **Modern views on orange benefits –**

**Vitamin C** - Orange is rich source of vitamin C and beta-carotene which are powerful antioxidants. The heart protective claim of Ayurveda is thus justified.

Recent research on orange shows that orange contains bio-flavonoids (hesperidins), which help to improve the absorption of vitamin C and also useful in the treatment of varicose veins and haemorrhoids.

Apart from Vitamin C, orange is a source of Vitamin A, Phosphorus, Calcium and Potassium.

### **Suggestions –**

- Fresher the orange, richer is the bio-flavonoid content.
- Organic / naturally grown is always better than genetically engineered. Do not get carried away by the pulpy shiny looks. Shrunken, naturally looking small ones are usually better.
- A fruit is always better than fruit juice. You can avoid extra calories of sugar.
- Fruit salad will be a better idea for improving taste and to add variety.

## **BENEFITS OF COCONUT AND COCONUT WATER – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Coconut is used in Ayurveda since thousands of years. Apart from culinary uses, coconut and coconut water are also used for medicinal purposes.

### **Coconut benefits according to Ayurveda –**

- Coconut pulp is nourishing in nature and useful for gaining weight. It is a coolant, sweet in taste and improves body strength.
- Coconut pulp takes longer to digest, improves muscle strength and cleanses bladder naturally.
- Coconut causes constipation.

### **Effect of coconut on Dosha –**

Coconut calms Vata and Pitta Dosha and increases Kapha Dosha.

### **Use of coconut in Ayurveda treatment –**

- Coconut is used in small quantities to calm excessive burning sensation, gastritis, and heart burn.
- Tender coconut is useful in the treatment of fever and skin diseases that occur due to Pitta imbalance.

### **Benefits of tender coconut water according to Ayurveda –**

- Tender coconut water is a natural coolant. So it calms stomach, relieves gastritis, cleanses urinary bladder.
- It helps to relieve abdominal pain due to indigestion. It also acts as natural aphrodisiac.
- Coconut water gets digested easily.



- It relieves excessive thirst, hiccups, tiredness, and other related Pitta imbalances

## **BISHOP'S WEED – OMA – BENEFITS, USAGE, SIDE EFFECTS – AYURVEDA**

### **DETAILS**

Bishop's weed is called as Yavani in Ayurveda. It is a famous Indian spice and is commonly available throughout India. It is used extensively in digestive disorders.

**Family** - Umbelliferae

Botanical name - Carum copticum / Trachyspermum ammi

Hindi name – Ajavan

Telugu name – Vamu

Gujarati name – Ajamo

Punjabi name – Jabain

Kannada name – Oma, omada kalu

Malayalama name – Omam

Tamil name – Amam

Arabbi name – Kyunulmuluki

Farsi name – Nanakhaha

English name – Bishop's weed

**Sanskrit Synonyms:** Ajamodika, Deepyaka, Bhutika, yavanaka, Brahmadarbha,

Yavasahva, Deepai, Bhumikadambaka, Yavagraja

Teevragandha – has strong odor.

### **Classical categorization:**

Charaka Samhita –

Shulaprashamana – herbs that relieve colic pain

**Distribution:** It is cultivated extensively throughout India.

**Bishop's weed – medicinal qualities:**

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (light to digest), Rooksha (dry), Teekshna (piercing, enters deep tissues)

Rasa (Taste) – Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter)

Vipaka (taste conversion after digestion) - Katu (pungent)

Veerya (potency) – Ushna (hot)

Effect on Tridosha – Kaphavatahara – balances Kapha and Vata, increases Pitta.

**Yavani benefits:**

Pachani – digestive

Ruchya – improves taste

Deepani – improves digestion strength

Shukrahara – decreases semen

Shulahara – useful in abdominal colic pain

Useful in the treatment of,

Udara - ascites

Anaha – bloating

Gulma - abdominal tumor, distension

Pleeha - Spleen related disorders, splenomegaly

Krumi - worm infestation (in wounds and in intestines)

Vishamaya – toxic conditions, poisoning

Shula - abdominal colic pain

**Oma side effects:**

It is best to avoid oma in people with oligospermia / male infertility.

**Part used:** Fruits

**Dosage:**

Fruit powder – 1 – 3 grams

Oil – 1 – 3 drops

Distillate (Ajamoda arka) – 5 – 10 drops

**Ayurvedic medicines:**

- Yavani Shadava Churna – useful in indigestion, anorexia, haemorrhage, etc
- Sarpagandha Ghan Vati – useful in insomnia, high BP etc.
- Lohasava – useful in anemia, fistula, liver and spleen related disorders.

## **BLACK CUMIN BENEFITS, USAGE, DOSE, SIDE EFFECTS – AS PER AYURVEDA**

Black cumin is an ancient Indian spice. It is widely used as post delivery care for the mother. It is good for eyes, bloating, vomiting etc. It is also used in children's medicines. The little spice has huge health benefits with almost nil side effects.

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi name – Syah jeera, Kali Jeera

Marathi name – Shahaajire

Gujarathi name – Shaahjeeru

Telugu name – Sheema jilkar

Tamil name – Shimayishiragam

Kannada name – Kari jeerige

Arabbi name – Kamoone aramani

Farsi name – Jeera e syaah

**Sanskrit Synonyms:** Kashmira jiraka, Udgara Shodhana, Sugandha, Danta Shodhani

**Availability:** It is available in Kashmir, Gadhaval, Kumavu, Afghanistan, baluchistan, at 6000 – 11000 feet height regions.

### **Varieties:**

There are two herbs used in the name of Black cumin.

- Carum bulbocastanum / Bunium bulbocastanum – Black cumin, Black caraway
- Nigella sativa – small fennel / Simple nigella / Kalonji

**Black caraway medicinal qualities –**

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (light to digest), Rooksha (dry)

Rasa (Taste) – Katu (pungent)

Vipaka (taste conversion after digestion) – Katu (pungent)

Veerya (potency) – Ushna (hot)

**Effect on Tridosha** – Kapha Vata Shamaka – balances Kapha and Vata, increases Pitta

**Medicinal qualities-**

- Deepana – improves digestion strength
- Sangrahi – absorbent, useful against diarrhoea
- Medhya – improves intelligence
- Garbhashaya Shuddhikara – cleanses and detoxifies uterus
- Jvaraghna – Useful in fever
- Pachana – carminative
- Vrushya – natural aphrodisiac
- Balya – improves strength and immunity
- Ruchya – improves taste
- Chakshushya – good for eyes, improves vision power
- Ruchya – improves taste
- Dantashodhani – cleanses teeth

Useful in the treatment of,

- Adhmana – bloating, gaseous distension of abdomen
- Gulma – Abdominal tumour, bloating
- Chardi – vomiting
- Atisara – diarrhoea, dysentery
- Shopha – inflammatory conditions
- Jeernajvara – chronic stages of fever

**Dosage**– 1 – 3 grams

**Use of Black Cumin after delivery:**

In South Indian custom, after delivery, a water decoction made with black cumin is administered to the mother from day 2 to 10<sup>th</sup> day, in a dose of 15 ml in the morning, empty stomach. It is done to fight post delivery infection and to strengthen mother's internal system.

**Ayurvedic medicines using Black cumin seeds:**

- Madana Kameswari Lehyam – An Aphrodisiac herbal jam
- Vayu Gulika – Used in cold, fever, bloating etc.
- Virechana Gulika – Used to induce purgation.
- Kombanchadi Gulika – Used in fever, cough and cold in kids.

**Black Cumin Side Effects:**

There are no known side effects with Kala Jeera with the above said dosage. It is used in mothers, soon after delivery and also in kids. There is no record to say that it is unsafe during pregnancy. However, it is best to avoid during pregnancy.

**Black cumin seed oil benefits –**

- This oil is also widely used to improve skin tone, to treat acne, scar, dark spots and as moisturizer.
- It is known to promote hair growth.
- The oil contains omega-6 linoleic acid, omega-9 oleic acid, thymoquinone, nigellone, melanthin, nigilline, damascenine, and tannins. It is also known to help body produce prostaglandin E1, which is

useful to treat erectile dysfunction.

However, its over-dosage must be strictly avoided, due to fear of toxic symptoms.



## **BLACK PEPPER- PIPER NIGRUM BENEFITS, USAGE DOSE SIDE EFFECTS**

Black pepper has not got its well deserving credit. It certainly is not just another spice. It removes toxin conditions, heals, and stimulates organs. It is also used as antidote in insect bites. It is one among the three ingredients of very important Ayurvedic medicine – Trikatu.

Botanical Name - Piper nigrum Linn.

Family - Piperaceae

### **Vernacular Names**

Hindi Name - Kalimirch, Mirch, Gulmirch, Golmirch, Choco mirch.

English Name - Black Pepper, Common Pepper, Pepper

Persian Name - Filfile siyah, Pilpil, Filfile aswad

Arabian Name - Filfil aswad

Telugu Name - Miriyalu

Bengali Name - Golmarich, Vellajung, Murichung, Kolukung, Muricha, Kalamorich.

Tamil Name - Milagu

Marathi Name - Mirin

Gujarati name - Kalamri, Kalamuri, Kalominch, Kalamire.

Kannada name - Kari Manesu, Kalu Menasu, Olle Menasu,

Malayalam Name - Nalla muluka, Kurumulaku, Lada, Nallamulaku.

Konkani Name – Kare Menasu

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Ushana – Pungent in taste, hot in potency

Krishna – Black colored fruits

Suvrutta – spherical fruits

Shakanga, Vantari, Dharmapattana,  
Yavaneshta, Shirovrutta, Kolaka,  
Vellaja, Vallija – grows in climber plant.

### **Classical Categorization**

#### **Charaka-**

- Deepaneeya – Group of herbs that increase digestion strength.
- Shoolanut, Shoola Prashamana – Group of herbs useful in pain, abdominal colic,
- Krimighna – de-worming group of herbs
- Shiro Virechanopaga – Group of herbs useful in expelling Doshas from head and neck.
- Susruta and Vagbhata - Pippalyadi, Trayushana

### **Different varieties**

There are two varieties viz. black and white varieties (processed and un-processed).

#### **Black Pepper:**

Black pepper is produced from the green unripe drupe (unripe fruit) of the pepper plant. The unripe fruits are cooked in water for a few hours, Sun-dried or machine-dried for many days, during which pepper gains black wrinkled skin. Then it is called black peppercorn. Some people dry the unripe fruit without boiling it. Such black peppercorn can be used to extract essential oil or in medicines.

**Green pepper:** It is produced from green unripe fruit, wherein, it is not dried with heat exposure. It is freeze-dried or using Sulphur dioxide.

**White pepper:** White pepper consists of the seed of the pepper fruit. The dark colour skin is removed from it.

**Orange and red pepper:** These are prepared from ripe pepper fruits, preserved in vinegar.

**Distribution-** Cultivated in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Indonesia.

In India, it is cultivated in the hills of south- western India, Assam, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Kerala.

### **Black pepper – Medicinal Properties**

- Rasa (Taste) – Katu (Pungent)
- Guna (qualities) – Laghu (lightness), Teekshna (strong, piercing), Sookshma – enters deep and minute body channels
- Vipaka- Katu – Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion.
- Veerya- Ushna – Hot potency
- Effect on Tridosha – Balances Kapha and Vata

**Part used-** Fruit, dried Unripe Fruits, known As Peppercorns

**Black pepper Dose-** powder – 250 mg – 2 grams in divided doses per day.

### **Black Pepper health benefits:**

- Na Ati Ushna – It is not very hot
- Avrushya – It is anaphrodisiac
- Ruchikaraka, Ruchya, Rochana – improves taste, relieves anorexia
- Because of its Chedana (cutting) and Shoshana (drying effects), it increases digestion strength and balances Kapha and Vata Dosha
- Pittakrut – causes increase in Pitta.
- Kaphahara – decreases sputum production.
- Vayu Nivarayati – Useful in Vata related disorders and bloating.

- Kruminut, Jantu Santaana Nashanam – Useful in intestinal worm infestation.
- Shwasahara – useful in treatment of asthma and chronic respiratory disorders.
- Hrudrogahara – useful in cardiac disorders
- It is used in treating recurrent fever – Vishama Jwara
- It is one among Pramathi herbs – It has scraping effect over the intestines, inducing cleansing effect.
- It is orally used in women with amenorrhoea to induce periods.
- Black pepper extract relieves fat deposition by blocking fat cell formation. Hence, it is very useful in obesity management.
- **Wet black pepper** is sweet in taste, Sweet Vipaka, Guru – heavy to digest  
Shleshmapraseki – increases Kapha Dosha.  
Apittala – does not increase Pitta Dosha.
- **White variety** is not very hot in potency.  
Na Ati Rooksha – not very dry. Other than these two qualities, it is quite similar to black variety. It is also Chakshushya – good for eyes.

#### **On external application:**

- Black pepper is used externally in the form of paste and cream since the time of Charaka Samhita (**Reference:** Charaka Sutrasthana 3/12).
- The pepper fruit powder, made into paste with water and applied to improve blood circulation.
- The pepper oil is used in liniments for heat generating effect. It helps to produce counter-irritant effect in case of blunt injuries and arthritis, thereby diverting the concentration of the patient from the site of pain.

- Oil is also used in treating leucoderma, eczema, and itching skin disorders.
- The black pepper powder is used as an ingredient in herbal tooth powders such as Dashana Samskar Churna for its pain relieving and scraping effects.

#### **Piper nigrum side effects:**

- Because of its hotness, it increases Pitta. Hence, it needs to be used carefully in people with gastritis, burning sensation and sensitive stomach. Pitta dominant people may face black pepper allergy in the form of vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal cramps, watery eyes etc.
- Because of its Avrushya – anaphrodisiac effect, it needs to be used in less quantities or its long term usage is best avoided in men with infertility problems.
- It can be taken in moderate quantities during pregnancy, lactation and in children.

#### **Ayurvedic medicines with Black pepper as ingredient:**

- **Trikatu Churna** – used in treating obesity, cold, cough, indigestion and skin disorders.
- **Chandraprabha Vati** – Ayurvedic tablet used in treating liver disorders, urinary tract infections, semen defects, gynaecological infectious disorders.
- **Marichadi Vati** – used in respiratory disorders.
- **Tribhuvana Kirti Rasa** – used in treating fever.

**Black Pepper for Asthma – A reader's experience:**

My sister is suffering from Asthma from 40 years. On advice of one of my Bengali friends, I suggested her to take two black peppers in morning empty stomach with hot water / milk for three month. Then leave it for 15/30 days and again start.

My sister got wonderful result. She was on inhaler for 15/20 times in a day which has now come down to one/two. That's because they are in Kolkatta, a humid place. Even in rainy season she didn't feel the trouble. Gap in between is very important.

## **POMEGRANATE FRUIT BENEFITS – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

There are only a very few fruits as nutritious as pomegranate. The pomegranate is used for its health benefits since thousands of years. Apart from pomegranate fruit, other parts of the plant such as bark, root bark are also used in treatment. The pomegranate fruit is the widely used part of the plant.

Pomegranate is called Anar fruit in Hindi.

Kannada name - Dalimbe

Telugu name - Danimma Kaya

Malayalam name - Matalam

Tamil name - Matuli

Marathi name - Dalimb

### **Sanskrit synonyms of Pomegranate:**

Phalamla – has slightly sour taste

Kuchaphala – Fruit resembles the shape of breasts

Shukavallabha – attracts birds

Raktabeeja – has red seeds

Raptapushpa – has red coloured flowers

Dantabeeja – seeds are arranged like teeth

### **Medicinal qualities:**

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (light to digest), Snigdha (unctuous, oily)

Rasa (taste) – Madhura (sweet), Amla (sour), Kashaya (astringent)

Vipaka (taste conversion after digestion) – Madhura (sweet) or Amla (sour)

Veerya (potency) – Anushna – neither cold, nor sweet.

## **Fruit benefits -**

Qualities of pomegranate fruits are explained in Ayurveda based on the taste.

Based on pomegranate taste, it is classified into three categories.

### **Sweet pomegranate fruit benefits –**

- The sweet pomegranates are having the rarest *Tridosha balance* effect. There are only a handful of herbs with Tridosha balance effect. (amla fruit is another example)
- The sweet pomegranate fruit is ideal to be taken during fever.
- *Trit hara, Daaha hara* - It relieves excessive thirst and burning sensation.
- It cleanses and clarifies oral cavity, throat, oesophagus stomach and chest.
- *Shukrala* - It is a good natural aphrodisiac and improves sperm count and semen quality.
- *Laghu* - It undergoes digestion very easily, very light on stomach.
- It also has astringent taste, helps to relieve diarrhoea, useful in IBS, ulcerative colitis.
- *Medha balakara* - It boosts intelligence, immunity and body strength.
- *Hridya* – Good for heart

### **Sweet-Sour Pomegranate fruit benefits-**

- Pomegranates, having sweet and sour taste, improve digestion power of stomach.
- *Ruchya* – Helps relieve anorexia, improves taste of food.
- It slightly increases Pitta.

### **Sour pomegranate fruit –**



- Pomegranate fruit having predominant sour taste increases Pitta to a greater extent. But it balances Kapha and Vata.
- Sour pomegranate is an ideal ingredient for diet in Rheumatoid arthritis.

#### **Pomegranate – effect on Tridosha –**

- Sweet pomegranate balances Tridosha – Vata, Pitta and Kapha
- Sour pomegranate balances Vata and Kapha and increases Pitta.

**Pomegranate side effects** – It is known to cause constipation, hence is used as a home remedy for diarrhoea. But people with constipation need to watch out.

#### **Pomegranate benefits – Modern views –**

- Modern science hails pomegranate benefits in many ways. Pomegranate is a proven rich source of anti oxidants. Hence it is very good for heart. It is interesting to know that this finding matches with *Hridya*, protecting and promoting heart health, claim by centuries old Ayurveda that matches with the scientific research.
- Pomegranate fruit is good source of Vitamin C, B5, Polyphenols and Potassium.
- One can find more Pomegranate benefits in Wikipedia.
- 

#### **Ayurvedic products with Pomegranate as an ingredient -**

**Herbal powders:** Dadima Chatusama churna, Dadimashtaka churna, Lavan Bhaskar Churna

- **Alcoholic preparation:** Mritasanjeevani Sura
- **Ghee preparation:** Dadimadi Ghrita
- **Herbal powder** – Yavanyadi choorna

**Ayurvedic medicine, along with pomegranate juice is traditionally advised –**

Narayana Churna

## **CAMPHOR BENEFITS, DOSE, RESEARCH, SIDE EFFECTS**

Camphor is a rare herb, which being coolant, balances Kapha Dosha and reduces fat and cholesterol levels. Camphor used for medicinal use is slightly different than the camphor used in Pooja / Spiritual practices. In the market, you get the edible camphor usually in powder form. Though modern science categorizes it as unsafe for oral consumption, it is useful in certain diseases, in a very low specified dose.

**Botanical Name** - Cinnamomum Camphora Nees & Eberm

Family - Lauraceae

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi & Bengali Name - Karpur

English Name - Camphor tree, Camphor laurel

Kannada Name - Pache karpooora

Telugu Name - Karpooram Chettu

Tamil Name - Karpooram, Pachai Karpooram

Marathi & Gujarati Name - Karpur

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Ghanasara,

Chandrapradha – the shining resembles to that of moonlight

Sheetabhra, Sheetala Raja – coolant to touch

Hima, Himavaluka – appears similar to ice particles

Surabhi – emits fragrance

Sphatika – as white as alum

### **Different Varieties-**

Dhanvantari Nighantu and Sodhala Nighantu mentioned Pakva (artificially prepared from turpentine), Chinaka and Apakva (natural) are varieties of Karpura.

Bhava Prakasha and Raja Nighantu also mentioned similar varieties.

According to Kaiyadeva, there are three varieties – Ishavasa, Hima sanjnaka & Potashraya.

Later, he quoted that Karpura is two types based on the processing i.e Pakva (prepared) and Apaka (natural).

He further explained that Chinaka variety is artificial camphor.

In Raja Nighantu about 14 types of Karpura on the basis of Rasa, Guna and Veerya

Usually, the camphor found on the tree pits and branches is called Apakva (natural) Karpura. The camphor prepared by using distillation procedure is the Pakva (artificial) variety of Karpura. The former variety will be heavier than the later and sinks in the water.

There is a variety called Bhimseni Karpura – which is correlated to *Dryobalanopas camhora* Colebr (DIPTEROCARPACEAE)

Chunekarji explained four varieties of camphor viz.

(i) Bhimseni or Baras Karpura (D. Camphora)

(ii) Cini or Japani Karpura (D. camphora)

(iii) Patri or Nagi Karpura- *Blumea balsamifera*; *B.Lacera* *B. desiflora* etc.

(iv) Krutima Karpura- Synthetic variety camphor.

(v) Camphor is also synthetically prepared by using turpentine. This is however used for offerings to god. It is not meant for medicinal use.

**Distribution-** Native of China, Japan and Taiwan.

**Camphor – Medicinal Properties**

Rasa (taste) – Tikta (bitter), Katu (pungent), Madhura (sweet)

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (light to digest), Rooksha (Dryness)

Vipaka-Katu – undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion

Veerya – Sheeta – coolant in nature

Effect on Tridosha – Balances Kapha and Pitta Dosha.

**Part used** – Nirryasa (extract)

**Dosage**- 125-375 mg, in divided dose per day.

### **Camphor uses:**

Camphor is one of the rare herbs which, being coolant, is useful to balance Kapha Dosha.

### **Camphor for heart, fat and cholesterol –**

- Chedana, Lekhana – has scraping property, useful in balancing Kapha, in respiratory disorders and in cholesterol / clot deposition in blood vessels
  - Medohara – reduces fat and cholesterol levels
- Camphor acts as a blood thinning agent. It is also used in low blood pressure.

### **Camphor for oral disorders:**

- Mukhashoshahara – Relieves mouth dryness
- Mukha vairasyahara – relieves bad breath problem. This is why camphor has been used as an ingredient in betel leaf combination – Pan – Tambul
- Kanta Doshahara – clears throat
- It relieves toothache
- Vishahara, Vishapaha – Anti toxic
- Chakshushya – improves vision, good for eyes, useful in eye disorders
- Madakaraka – over-dosage may cause intoxication.
- Yogavahi – acts as a catalyst

- Dahahara – being a coolant, it relieves burning sensation
- Vrushya – acts as aphrodisiac in lower doses. However, higher doses decrease sexual performance
- Medhya – improves intelligence
- Kruminashana – relieves intestinal worm infestation
- Cheenaka variety of Karpoora is Ati Pittala – increases Pitta Dosha.
- Its vapours, when inhaled lead to relief from chest congestion due to excessive sputum. It is also used in cough treatment.

#### **External application:**

- Camphor oil is used externally to treat arthritis pain and rheumatism.
- A teaspoon of Camphor oil is mixed with 100 ml of olive oil / sesame oil. This is applied externally to improve blood circulation.
- Camphor is FDA approved for external application in a concentration of 3 – 11 %

#### **In preparing liniments:**

Herbal oils are mixed with camphor, menthol, thymol, Eucalyptus oil etc, to prepare pain relieving liniment. This liniment gives a coolant / counter-irritant effect to the liniment. It also makes the liniment to evaporate from the applied body part.

#### **Camphor Side effects:**

- For external application, in any product, the camphor concentration should not be more than 11 %.
- Artificial camphor, prepared from turpentine, is not suitable for oral consumption. Do not get confused it with the edible camphor.

- Camphor is used in treating low blood pressure. Hence, it is not suitable for people with high blood pressure.
- It is best to avoid its usage in epilepsy and Parkinson's disease patients.
- Its oral usage should only be done under strict medical supervision.
- It is not recommended for children, pregnant and lactating mothers. However, it can be safely used for external application.
- Camphor oil should not be directly given for asthmatic patients to inhale. It may trigger spasms.

**Camphor poisoning** – over-dosage may lead to seizures, confusion, restlessness, nausea, vomiting etc.

**Ayurvedic medicines with camphor as ingredient:**

- **Vayu Gulika** – used in treating cough, cold, fever etc. It is used mainly in respiratory and gastric conditions.
- **Kombanchadi Gulika** – used in treatment of fever, cough and cold
- **Gandhaka Malahara** – An ointment used in eczema and itching skin disorders
- **Karpoorasava** – It is used in the treatment of vomiting and diarrhoea.
- **Manasmitra Vatakam** – used in Ayurvedic treatment of psychiatric conditions, to improve intelligence, speech problems, etc

## **CARDAMOM USES, RESEARCH, HOME REMEDIES, SIDE EFFECTS**

Cardamom is a very good Indian spice with less of hotness and more of sweetness. Being an excellent anti oxidant, it is used in treating blood pressure, asthma, indigestion, dysuria etc. It also is an ingredient of Chyawanprash.

Botanical Name - Elettaria Cardamomum Maton

Family - Scitamineae

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi Name - Choti Ilaichi

English name - Lesser Cardamom

Kannada Name - Elakki

Telugu Name - Chinna Elakulu, Yelakkapalu

Malayalam Name - Elam

Tamil Name - Yelakka

Marathi Name - Velachi, Veldode,

Bengali Name - Chot Elachi, Chot Elach

Gujarati Name- Elachi, Chot Elach

Arabian Name - Kakul

Farsi Name - Heelabak, Ilaichi Khurd

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Chandra, Chandrabala - Coolant, similar to moon

Dravidi - cultivated extensively in South India

Kapotavarna - having colour of a pigeon.

Korangi, Tuttha, Triputa, Truti, Bahula, Korangi, Upakunchika, Tutha.

### **Classical Categorization**



## **Charaka-**

Shvasahara - group of herbs useful in asthma, dyspnoea

Angamarda prasamana - group of herbs useful in relieving body ache

Katuka skandha - pungent tasting group of herbs

Shiro Virechanopaga - group of herbs useful in Nasya treatment

**Sushruta** - Eladi

**Vaghata** - Eladi, Trijataka, Chaturjataka

## **Different Varieties**

Sukshma Ela – Lesser cardamom – smaller variety – *Elettaria cardamomum*

Brihat Ela – Greater cardamom – Bigger variety – *Amomum subulatum*

Indian cardamoms are divided into

- Malbari Ilaichi and
- Mysoori Elaichi

**Distribution** - Cultivated in different parts of India (Mainly in Western Ghats and south India).

## **Cardamom medicinal properties**

Rasa (taste) – Katu (pungent), Madhura (sweet),

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (lightness), Rooksha (dryness)

Vipaka- Katu – Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion.

Veerya – Sheeta – cold potency

Effect on Tridosha – Balances Kapha and Vata Dosha.

**Part Used** - Seeds

**Dosage** - Powder 0.5 -1 g

### **Cardamom Uses:**

- Mutrakrichhara – Relieves dysuria, urinary retention, acts as diuretic
- Arshahara – useful in piles, haemorrhoids
- Shwasahara – useful in treatment of asthma and chronic respiratory disorders
- Kasahara – useful in cough and cold
- Kaphahara – balances Kapha, useful in productive cough, asthma
- Kshayahara – useful in chronic respiratory disorders, tuberculosis
- Hrudya – acts as cardiac tonic, congenial for heart
- Rochana – improves taste, relieves anorexia
- Deepana – improves digestion strength
- Vatahara – useful in treating disorders of Vata Dosha imbalance, such as neuralgia, paralysis, constipation, bloating, etc
- Pitta arthihara – relieves pain and burning sensation due to Pitta increase
- Pumstvaghna – excessive usage may harm fertility
- It helps to relieve burning sensation and gastritis
- It is useful to relieve vomiting sensation, irritable bowel syndrome, gas build up in stomach

### **Cardamom for bad breath problem:**

Bad breath problem can occur due to indigestion. Due to pleasant smell and digestive properties of cardamom, keeping a small piece of cardamom in mouth and chewing it regularly helps in improving digestion and relieving bad breath.

### **Cardamom side effects:**

Excessive use of cardamom is not good for fertility, as per Ayurvedic text, Raja

Nighantu.

It can be safely used in limited quantities during pregnancy, lactation and in children.

#### **Ayurvedic medicines with cardamom ingredient:**

- **Elakanadi Kashayam** – widely used in the treatment of chronic respiratory conditions and asthma
- **Eladi Ghrita** - Herbal ghee for the treatment of Abdominal bloating, weakness, anaemia, diabetes, etc
- **Eladi Thailam** – Very famous Ayurvedic oil used in treating allergic dermatitis, urticaria, scabies etc.
- **Chaturjata Churna** – A combination of cardamom, cinnamon, Cinnamon leaves and Mesua ferrea – useful in anorexia, skin disorders, etc

#### **Cardamom home remedy:**

Cardamom can be used as home remedy to relieve burning sensation, repeated oral ulcers, gastritis and anorexia.

#### **How to take?**

- A small piece of it can be added to your regular tea.
- Its powder in a dose of 250 – 500 mg can be taken along with ghee or honey.
- For bad breath problem, or in cases of diarrhoea, cardamom is chewed or simply kept inside mouth and the juice is swallowed slowly.
- It is also added to fruit juices like lemon juice, to enhance digestive effect and to improve flavour.

## **CELERY – AJMODA BENEFITS, DOSAGE, SIDE EFFECTS**

Celery is known as Ajmoda in Sanskrit. It is a famous Indian spice, used to improve digestion strength. Its leaves, petiole etc are used as vegetable.

Botanical name - *Apium graveolens* / *Carum roxburghianum* / *Trachyspermum roxburghianum*.

**Family** - Umbelliferae (Apiaceae)

English name - Celery, Ajowan

Hindi name - Ajamoda

Marathi name - Ajamoda

Gujarati name - Ajamoda

Telugu name - Ajumoda vayu

Kannada name - Ajamoda oma

Arabian and Farsi - Karafsehindi

### **Sanskrit synonyms:**

Bastamoda, Ajamoda – smell resembles goat

Kharashva, Lochakarkata, Kharahva, Vallimoda, Hastimayuraka, Mayoora, Deepyaka.

### **Classical categorization:**

#### **Charaka samhita:**

Shoolaprasamana – herbs that relieve abdominal pain

Deepaneeya – herbs that improve digestion strength

Sushruta and Vagbhata – Pippalyadi group of herbs

### **Celery medicinal qualities:**

Guna (qualities) –Laghu (light to digest), Rooksha (dry), Teekshna (piercing,

enters deep tissues)

Rasa (taste) – Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter)

Vipaka (taste conversion after digestion) – Katu (pungent)

Veerya (potency) – Ushna (hot)

Effect on Tridosha – Kapha Vatahara – balances Kapha and Vata

### **Celery benefits and uses:**

Ajmoda is –

Basti Rogarujapaha – cleanses urinary bladder, relieves bladder pain

Deepani – improves digestion strength

Vidahini – may cause burning sensation

Hrudya – cardiac tonic, good for heart

Vrushya – natural aphrodisiac

Balakari– improves strength

Useful in

Netramaya – eye disorders

Krumi – worm infestation

Chardi – vomiting

Hikka - hiccough

Bastiruja – urinary bladder pain

Adhmana – bloating, gaseous distension of abdomen

Aruchi – Anorexia, lack of interest in food

**Part used:** Fruits

**Dose:** Fruit powder – 1- 3 grams

### **Celery side effects:**

If used in correct dose, as per doctor's guidance, it does not have side effects.

It is not recommended in pregnancy in large doses, as it may cause uterus contractions.

**Important Ayurvedic products:**

Vettumaran Gulika – used in fever, vomiting and abdominal colic pain

Kankayan Vati – useful in haemorrhoids, intestinal worm infestation, bloating etc.

Mahayograj Guggul – useful in joint disorders, gout, emaciation, bloating etc

## **CLOVE AND CLOVE OIL BENEFITS, USAGE, DOSE – COMPLETE AYURVEDA**

### **DETAILS**

Clove is an important Ayurvedic spice, used both for culinary and therapeutic purposes. Its botanical name is *Syzygium aromaticum*. It belongs to Myrtaceae family. Interesting fact about clove is, though it is hot to taste, it is cooling and soothing to stomach.

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi name - Laung, Lavang

Telugu name - lavangamu, Karavallu

Gujarathi name - lavanga

Kannada name - lavanga

Tamil name - Kirambu

Malayalam name - Grampoo

### **Sanskrit synonyms:**

Devakusuma – flower of Deities

Bhringanga, Shekhara – having beautiful flower

Shri Prasuna – having beautiful flower

Chandana Pushpaka – flower having fragrance like sandalwood

Varija – usually found in islands

**Distribution:** In India, it is available in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

It is abundantly found in Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Tanzania and Singapore.

### **Medicinal qualities of Clove:**

Rasa (taste) - Tikta (bitter), Katu (pungent)

Guna (qualities) - Laghu (light to digest), Snigdha (unctuous, oily)

Vipaka - Katu – It undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion

Veerya (potency) - Sheeta (cold)

Effect on Tridosha – Kapha Pittahara – balances Kapha and Pitta

### **Medicinal uses of clove:**

Trushnapaha – relieves excessive thirst

Vaktra kleda daurgandhya nashana – relieves bad breath and excessive sliminess of oral cavity

If it is kept in the oral cavity for a few minutes, it brings in clarity, relieves tastelessness and bad breath.

Netrahitam – good for eyes

Deepana, Paachana – improves digestion strength

Ruchya – improves taste

Pittasranashana – useful in bleeding disorders

Useful in,

Trushna – Excessive thirst

Chardi – vomiting

Adhmana – bloating, gaseous distension of abdomen

Shula – abdominal colic pain

Kasa – cough, cold

Shwasa – Asthma, COPD, wheezing, breathing difficulty

Hikka – hiccups

Kshaya – chronic respiratory disorders



**Clove dose:**

Powder - 1 – 2 grams per day

Clove oil dose      1 – 2 drops

**Clove oil benefits:**

Clove oil increases digestion power.

It balances Vata and Kapha, useful in aches and pains, useful to relieve toothache.

It is also useful in relieving morning sickness of pregnant women.

**Research:** Researchers from the Miguel Hernández University have found out that clove is the best antioxidant spice, as it contains high levels of phenolic compounds. Clove has the highest capacity to give off hydrogen, reduced lipid peroxidation and reduces Iron efficiently.

**Side effects:** There are no known side effects of clove. As a food ingredient, it can be used during pregnancy, lactation period and in childhood.

**Ayurvedic medicines with Laung as ingredient:**

Lavangadi Vati – used in cough, cold, allergies

Himasagara Tailam- used in frozen shoulder, locked jaw etc.

Madana Kameswari Lehyam – aphrodisiac

Halin drops – nasal decongestant

Bala Taila – cold, cough, vomiting, bloating etc.

## **CORIANDER SEED AND LEAVES HEALTH BENEFITS – COMPLETE AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Coriander seeds and leaves are part of Indian culinary since ages. It is used for therapeutic purposes as well. It is also famous by the name Cilantro seeds. Some people genuinely dislike coriander. Interestingly there is a genetic influence on this hatred.

**Botanical name:** Coriandrum sativum Linn.

### **NOMENCLATURE**

**Kingdom** – Plantae

**Division** – Spermatophyta

**Subdivision** – Angiospermae

**Class** – Dicotyledonae

**Subclass** – Archichlamydeae

**Order** – Umbelliflorae

**Family** – Umbelliferae

**Genus** – Coriandrum

**Species** – Sativum

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi name - Dhaniya

Telugu name - Dhaniyalu

Bengali name - Dhane

Gujarati name - Dhana

Tamil name - Kottamalli

Kannada name - Kotthambari

Malayalam name - Malli/Kothambala/Kothambalari

Arabic name - Kubjar, Kujwar

Farsi name - kashneer

**Sanskrit synonyms:**

Dhanyaka – the seeds resemble grains (dhanya)

Chatra – the inflorescence resembles umbrella

Kustumburu – helps to relieve diseases.

Vitunnaka – helps to relieve agony, pain.

Veshanagra, Kunati, dhenaka

Hrudiyagandha – has pleasant smell

**Classical categorization:**

**Charaka Sahmita:**

Trushnaprashamana – herbs that relieve excessive thirst

Sheetaprashamana – herbs that relieve excessive cold

**Sushruta and Vagbhata** – Guduchyadi group of herbs.

**IN NIGHANTUS**

Soushrutha Nighantu – Vidarighandadi gana

Dhanvantari Nighantu – Shatapushpadi varga

Raja Nighantu – Pippalyadi varga

Kaiyyadeva Nighantu – Aoushadi varga

Bhavaprakasha Nighantu– Hareetakyadi vargas

Shaleegrama Nighantu – Hareetakyadi varga

Nighantu Adarsha – Jeerakadi varga

Priya Nighntu – shatapushpadi varga

**Coriander health benefits:**

Coriander is

Avrushya – does not have aphrodisiac property

Mutrala – diuretic, increases urine volume

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Jwaraghna –useful in fever

Rochana – improves taste, appetizer

Grahi – absorbent, bowel binding, useful in IBS, diarrhoea

Daugandhya nashana – helps to relieve bad odour (bad breath)

Hrudya – cardiac tonic, good for heart

Trushna – Excessive thirst

Daha - Burning sensation

Vami – vomiting

Shwasa – asthma, respiratory disorders involving difficulty in breathing

Kasa – cold, cough

Arsha – haemorrhoids

Krumi – worm infestation

The wet / fresh variety is similar to the dry. It is useful in treating especially Pitta aggravation.

**Part used:** fruits, whole plant, leaves

**Dose** - Fruit powder – 3 – 6 grams

Cold infusion – 10– 30 ml per day or as directed by Ayurvedic doctor.

**Ayurvedic medicines with coriander ingredient:**

Chandraprabha Vati – useful in urinary tract diseases

Brahmi Vati – Used as brain tonic and memory booster

Kalyanagulam – used in liver and skin conditions

Kankayan Vati – used in haemorrhoids treatment.

**Modern research:** Many animal studies have shown coriander seeds benefits in controlling blood sugar and cholesterol levels. It is also a very good anti oxidant and resists build up of free radicals in the body.

**Ayurvedic medicines with coriander as mentioned in Charaka Samhita –**

Saindhavadi churna – used in treating Gulma - abdominal tumour, distension

Chitrakadi grutha – Shotha - oedema, swelling, inflammatory conditions. –

Chikitsa Sthana /Swayathuchikitsa

Dadimadi gritha – Gulma, Pleeharoga, Pandu - Anemia, initial stages of liver disorders – Chi/Pandurogachikitsa

Agruvadyataila – Jwara - fever – Chi/Jwarachikitsa

Trayushanadi grutham – Gulma – Chi/Gulmachikitsa

Hingu sovarchaladi grutha – Gulma – Chi/Gulmachikitsa

Pippalyadi Gruhtam – Gulma – Chi/Gulmachikitsa

Hinguvadi gutika – Adhmana (bloating), Shoola (colic pain), Gulma, Pandu – Chi/Gulmachikitsa

Shatyadi churna – Gulma – Chi/Gulmachikitsa

**Ayurvedic medicines with coriander as mentioned in Sushruta Samhita –**

Hinguvadigudika – Adhmana, Shoola, Gulma, Pandu - Anemia, initial stages of liver disorders – Chi/Vatavyadi

### **Ayurvedic medicines with coriander as mentioned in Ashtanga Hrudaya –**

Hinguvadi churna – Admana, Shula, Gulma, Pandu – Chi/Gulmachikitsa

Dadimashtaka Churna – Atisara – Chi/Atisarachikitsa

Pootikaranja Churna – Arsha – Chi/Arshachikitsa

Yavanyadi Churna – Rajyakshma – Chi/Rajyakshmachikitsa

Kushmanda Rasayana – Kasa, Swasa, Kshaya – Chi/Kasachikitsa

### **Ayurvedic medicines with coriander as mentioned in Bhaishajya Ratnavali –**

Dhanyakadi Hima – Daha – Raktapitta chikitsa

Dhanyagokshura Gritam – Mootravata – Mootravata chikitsa

Dhanyanagaradi kwatha – Jwaratisara – Jwaratisara chikitsa

Dhanya shunti – Jwaratisara – Jwaratisara Chikitsa

### **Ayurvedic medicines with coriander as mentioned in Sharangdhara Samhita –**

Dhanyaka panchaka kwatha – Amatisara – Amatisaraprakarana

Guduchyadikwatha – Jwara, Raktavata – Sarvajwaraprakarana

Abhayarishta – Arshas

### **Medicinal usage of coriander in different disorders –**

#### **Fever**

- The cold infusion of Dhanyaka mixed with sugar and taken in morning alleviates even severe burning sensation immediately.(Vrinda Madhava 1-101)
- Decoction of Dhanyaka and Patola acts as appetizer , expectorant, carminative of Pitta and Vata, antipyretic, digestive and purgative.(V.M 1-130)

#### **Diarrhoea**

- Decoction of Dhanyaka, Balaka, ginger and bael alleviates ama shoola, constipation. This is an appetizer also. (V.M 3-21)

### **Indigestion**

Water processed with coriander and ginger alleviates indigestion caused by Ama and it is diuretic also. (V.M 6-21)

### **Piles**

The physician should prescribe water processed with Kantakari or ginger and Dhanyaka that acts as carminative of wind and stool. (Charaka Samhita. Chi 2-14)

### **Gulma**

One should take water boiled with Dhanyaka. (Ashtanga Hrudaya Chi 14-60)

### **How to take coriander seed for diabetes:**

A teaspoon of coriander seed can be soaked in a cup of water, kept overnight.

Next day morning, that water can be drunk, before food.

Other than this, one can consume up to 2 – 3 grams of powder, by using it in the dishes or as it is, swallowing the powder with water.

## **CORIANDER DRINK – AN EASY TO MAKE NATURAL COOLANT AND NATURAL CLEANSER DRINK**

Coriander drink is one of the best and easy-to-make drink for Pitta.

It is especially beneficial for those, who suffer from excessive body heat, during summer, or during fever or in some people, who have Pitta body constitution (who have tendency of complaining of excess heat all the time irrespective of weather and for those, who complain of insatiable thirst all the time.

### **How to make this natural coolant drink -**

- Take one part of crushed coriander seeds. (Eg: 10 grams)
- Add six parts of water (Eg:60 ml)
- Keep it covered over one night.
- Next morning, filter it, and mix with 5 grams of sugar and drink it in empty stomach.

### **Benefits –**

- It also cleanses all the body and tissue channels and energizes the body.
- It is actually a classical drink, explained in the ancient Ayurvedic texts.
- It is called as Dhanyaka hima

### **Reference is as follows –**

***Praataha saasharkaro peyo himo dhaanyaka sambhavaha |***

***antardaaham mahaa thrishnam jayet sroto vishodhanam ||***

*- Sharangdhara samhita madhayama khanda – 2nd chapter, 7-8 shloka.*

**Translation –** Dhanyaka hima should be drunk in the morning with a little quantity of sugar to get relief from internal burning sensation and excessive thirst. It also cleanses and detoxes all the body channels.



**Dosage:** 40-50 ml to be taken in morning in empty stomach along with half a spoon of sugar.

**Can this recipe be used as a general cleansing tea? Can we use this tea during ritu sandhi or seasonal change time and how many days this tea be taken?**

**Also is there any diet to follow when this tea is consumed?**

This is especially good for people with Pitta imbalance or people with Pitta body type. They can use this drink for a long period of time.

It may not be ideal for People with Kapha imbalance / body type to continue this for very long. (But they can take it when they have fever).

This tea can be used during Rutusandhi between summer and post-summer period or just before winter, Wherein Pitta is quite dominant.

Can it also be used for menopausal hot flashes?

Yes, it is beneficial in reducing hot flashes.

**I have heard that coriander is very helpful in diabetes. Please tell me that how can I use coriander to get relief from diabetes? Also please tell me can I use this soup without sugar??**

You can prepare this coriander drink without adding sugar and consume.

Other than this, you can consume up to 2 – 3 grams of powder, by using it in your dishes or as it is, swallowing the powder with water.

## **CUMIN SEED BENEFITS, USAGE, SIDE EFFECTS – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Cumin seeds are known as Jeeraka in Sanskrit. The word is derived from Jeerna – digestion. Hence Jeeraka means that which digests. Cumin seed is very good in treating digestive track disorders.

Botanical name – Cuminum cyminum Linn

Family – Umbelliferae

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi name – Safed Jeera, Jeera

Kannada name – Jeerige

Bangali name – Jeera

Marathi name – Jire

Gujarathi name – Jeeru

Tamil name – Cheerakam

Telugu name – Jeelakari

Malayalam name – Jorekam

Arabbain name – kammun, Avyaja

Farsi name – Jeera e safed

**Sanskrit Synonyms:** Jeeraka, Ajaji, Kana, Jarana

### **Classical categorization:**

**Charaka Samhita** – Shoolaprashamana – herbs that relieve abdominal pain

**Sushruta and Vagbhata** – Pippalyadi group of herbs

**Distribution:** It is widely cultivated across India.

### **Cumin seeds medicinal qualities:**

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (light to digest), Rooksha (dry)

Rasa (taste) – Katu (pungent)

Vipaka – Katu – Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion

Veerya – Ushna Hot in potency

Effect on Tridosha –

Kaphavatahara – balances Kapha and Vata, increases Pitta.

### **Benefits of Cumin seeds -**

Ruchya – improves taste, useful in anorexia

Deepana, Agnivardhana – improves digestion strength

Grahi, Sangrahi – absorbent, bowel binding, useful in IBS, diarrhoea

Medhya – Brain tonic, improves intelligence

Garbhashaya Vishuddhikrut – cleanses and detoxifies uterus. Hence it is widely used in post partum care of the mother.

Jvaraghna – Useful in fever

Pachana – carminative

Vrushya - aphrodisiac

Balya – improves strength and immunity

Chakshushya - useful in improving eye sight

### **Useful in the treatment of,**

Gulma – Abdominal tumour, bloating

Adhmana – bloating, gaseous distension of abdomen

Atisara – diarrhoea, dysentery

Grahani - Malabsorption syndrome, Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Krumi - worm infestation (in wounds and in intestines)

Chardi – vomiting

Kshaya – tuberculosis, chronic respiratory diseases wasting of muscles

Kushta - skin diseases

Visha – toxic conditions

Jvara – fever

**Dose** – 3 -6 grams

**Ayurvedic medicines:**

Hingwastak Churna – useful in indigestion

Dhatri Rasayan – useful in indigestion, cold, cough, asthma etc.

Jeerakarishtam – useful in post natal care of the mother

Yogaraj Guggul – useful in various joint disorders

## **DILL SEED BENEFITS, HOW TO USE, SIDE EFFECTS, AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Dill seed is an ancient Indian spice. Its seeds, seed oil and whole plant are used in Indian culinary. It is mainly used in digestive disorders. It is also called as Indian Dill.

Botanical name: *Anethum sowa* / *Peucedanum graveolens*

Family: Umbelliferae

Hindi name - Soyo

English name - Dill, Dil, Dill plant, Indian Dill

Kannada name - Its seeds are called Shataapu and the plant is called Sabbasige soppu

Telugu name - Sadapa Vittulu

Tamil name - Satakuppi

Bengali name - Saluka

Marathi name - Shepu

Gujarati name - Suva

Arabian name - Shibith

### **Sanskrit synonyms:**

Shatahva, Shatapushpa – having numerous flowers

Chatra – inflorescence has umbrella shape

### **Classical categorization:**

Charaka -

Asthapanopaga – herbs that are used in decoction enema therapy

Anuvasananopaga – herbs that are used in oil enema therapy

**Dill medicinal qualities:**

Rasa (taste) – Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter)

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (light to digest), Teekshna (piercing, enters deep tissues)

Vipaka – Katu (Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion)

Veerya – Ushna - hot potency

**Effect on Tridosha** - Balances Vata ad Kapha and increases Pitta

**Dill health benefits:**

Deepani – improves digestion strength

It is indicated in

Jvara – fever

Vrana – non- healing wounds

Shoola – abdominal colic pain

Akshi Roga - eye disorders

Akshivrana – ulcers in the eye

Bastikarma – enema Panchakarma therapy

**Dill leaves**

Vrushya - aphrodisiac

Rudhira Gulmajit – useful in uterine fibroids,

Vataghna - Balances Vata, useful in neurological disorders such as paralysis, hemiplegia, neuropathy etc

Stanya – acts as galactogogue

Pittakrut – increases Pitta

Ruchidayaka – improves taste of food.

A dish prepared out of dill plant is given to lactating mother to improve breast milk secretion.

### **Shatapushpa in enema therapy:**

In almost all the enema therapy (Basti karma), Shatapushpa kalka (paste of Dill seed) is used as a necessary ingredient. It aids in digestion and transferring of phyto-chemicals of the enema into the system of the patient. Enema therapy is usually done to achieve Vata balance and Shatapushpa mitigates Vata.

### **Ayurvedic medicines with Shatapushpa:**

Narayan oil – useful pain relieving massage oil

Gorochanadi Gulika – used in cough, cold, asthma, bronchitis

Maharasnadi kashaya – Useful to relieve inflammation, rheumatoid arthritis etc

Maha Laxadi oil – useful in sciatica, spondylosis

### **Dill seed side effects:**

- Over-dosage may cause Pitta increase, burning sensation, worsening of gastritis.
- It is not indicated in conditions with Pitta dominance, like gastritis.
- It is best to avoid its use during menstrual periods.

## **JAGGERY HEALTH BENEFITS, USAGE, SIDE EFFECTS – FULL AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Jaggery is extensively used in many Indian cuisines and in various Ayurvedic medicines. It is a good substitute for sugar. Not only that, it comes with a bunch of its own unique health benefits. Jaggery forms the backbone of Asavas and Arishtas – fermented liquid Ayurvedic medicines.

### **What is jaggery? How to prepare it?**

It is a type of unrefined sugar, prepared from sugarcane or date juice. The juice is concentrated by heating and molasses is not removed while concentrating it. The end product is brownish yellow coloured solid jaggery blocks. It is also available in semisolid form.

Jaggery is called as Guda, Gud, Gula, Gulam in Ayurveda. Ayurveda explains two types of jaggery.

Dhauta – washed / semi-refined

Adhauta – unrefined, unwashed

### **Qualities of jaggery and health benefits:**

(Reference: Ashtanga Hrudayam Sutrasthana 5/47-48)

- Guda (jaggery, molasses), washed well (made white and purified)
- Natishleshma kara – does not increase Kapha to a large extent
- Srushta Mutra Shakrut – increases volume of urine and faeces
- If it is not prepared properly, it causes intestinal worms, increases chances of Kapha disorder in marrow, blood, fat tissue and muscles.
- Old jaggery is good for heart, and should be consumed. So, jaggery should be at least one year old for its usage.
- Freshly prepared jaggery increases Kapha and causes indigestion. 47-48.

**Unrefined or unwashed jaggery is,**



Sa kshara– slightly alkaline

Natisheeta – not very coolant

Snigdha – oily, unctuous

Mutrashodhaka – cleanses bladder and urine

Raktashodhaka – cleanses and purifies blood

Vataghna - Balances Vata, useful in neurological disorders such as paralysis, hemiplegia, neuropathy etc

Na ati pittajit – decreases Pitta slightly

Medakara – increases body fat

Kurmikara – causes intestinal worm infestation

Balya – improves strength and immunity

Vrushya - aphrodisiac

### **Dhauta guda or washed jaggery is**

Madhura – sweet

Vatapittaghna – balances Vata and Pitta

Asruk prasadana – cleanses and detoxifies blood

It has a more Pitta balancing action compared to Adhauta (unwashed)

### **Purana Guda – One year old jaggery:**

Svadutara – much more sweeter than the fresh

Snigdha – oily, unctuous

Laghu – lighter to digest, than fresh

Agnideepana – promotes digestion strength

Vitshodhaka – cleanses intestines and faeces

Mutrashodhaka – cleanses urinary bladder and urine

Amashayashodhaka – cleanses stomach

Ruchya – improves taste, useful in anorexia

Hrudya – good for heart, cardiac tonic

Pittaghna – balances Pitta

Vataghna - Balances Vata, useful in neurological disorders such as paralysis, hemiplegia, neuropathy

Tridoshaghna – Generally good for all the three Doshas

Jwarahara – Good for fever (in small quantities only)

Santapa shantiprada – relieves excess body heat

Shramahara – relieves tiredness

Panduhara – useful in anaemia

Pramehantaka – useful in urinary tract diseases

prabhUtakrimimajjAsRGmedomAMsakaro guDaH || 238 ||

kSudro guDazcaturbhAgatribhAgArdhAvazeSitaH |

raso gururyathApUrvaM dhautaH svalpamalo guDaH || 239 ||

tato matsyaNDikAkhaNDazarkarA vimalAH param |

yathA yathaiSAM vaimalyaM bhavecchaityaM tathA tathA || 240 ||

vRSyA kSINakSatahitA sasnehA guDazarkarA |

kaSAyamadhurA zItA satiktA yAsazarkarA || 241 ||

rUkSA vamyatisAraghni cchedani madhuzarkarA |

tRSNAsRkpittadAheSu prazastAH sarvazarkarAH || 242 || – Charaka Samhita

Sutrasthana 27

**Treacle / jaggery (Guda)** causes increased parasitic infection.

Majjakara – It increases the quantity of marrow

Asruk kara – improves blood

Medo Mamsakara – increases fat and muscles.

Before its formation as treacle (guda) the sugar cane juice undergoes four stages. They are,

- Ardhavasheshita (when only  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the juice remains in the process of boiling),
- Tribhaga avasheshita (when  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd remains),
- Chaturbhag Avasheshita (when  $\frac{1}{4}$ th remains)
- Kshudra Guda or Phanita (Inspissated juice black in colour)

The juice undergoing transformation through all these four stages is progressively heaviest.

That is to say the Phanita (inspissated juice) is the heaviest.

**Dhauta** is that variety of treacle which is cleaned and contains increase in parasite etc. Matsyandika (crude sugar when the juice is inspissated so as to take the shape of eggs of fish), Khanda (sugar candy) and Sarkara (sugar) are all progressively better refined and cooler in relation to Dhauta Guda.

That is to say, sugar represents the best refined stage of juice. It is also the coldest of all varieties.

### **Use of jaggery in Ayurvedic medicines:**

#### **Jaggery in Asava and Arishta:**

Asava and Arishta are the fermented Ayurvedic products. They contain natural self generated alcohol, ranging from 5 – 12 %.

Dasamoolarishtam and Ashokarishta – are two good examples of Arishta and Kumaryasava is an example for Asava.

In these Asava and Arishta preparation, jaggery is used as a source of sugar. With the help of natural yeast (present in some herbs, used in the medicines), sugar in the jaggery is converted into alcohol. During the process of this conversion, the water soluble and alcohol soluble active principles get dissolved into the liquid medium, and thus the medicine gets prepared in about 1 – 2 months of time.

In these Asava and Arishta preparations, jaggery was made into a paste with lime powder, applied over a long strip of cloth. This was used to seal the cap of vessels. This was useful to prevent entry of air inside the Arishta vessel, helping in anaerobic fermentation.

### **Syrups:**

Jaggery is used as a sugar base in some syrup. Example: Raktansoo syrup

### **Herbal jams – Lehyam:**

Jaggery is used as the sugar base to prepare some herbal jams, like Kalyanaka Guda and Shatavari Gulam.

### **Tablets:**

Jaggery is used as base for many tablets. Apart from acting as a good binding agent, it also adds immense medicinal value to the tablet. Example: Pranada Gutika and Vyoshadi Vatakam.

### **Kashayam**

In some herbal water decoctions, the decoction is traditionally advised to be taken along with jaggery. Example: Pathyaksha Dhatryadi kashayam

### **Guda Varti**

Guda varti is ancient equivalent to modern rectal suppositories. They are administered through rectal route to relieve constipation and for other therapeutic effects. For Varti, usually jaggery is used as the base. Jaggery starts

melting in little above room temperature. Rectal temperature is quite sufficient to melt the jaggery. So, while it melts, it releases the other herbs in the Varti into the rectal area, thereby, it acts as a carrier for other herbal powders.

### **Jaggery home remedies**

If you visit any Indian village in the afternoon, especially in summer, soon after you enter in, you will be given a small piece of jaggery and cold water to drink. This is to cool you down and to energize you instantly. Try it after coming home in the afternoon.

Various sweet drinks are prepared with jaggery, called as Guda Panaka, used extensively in Ayurveda to restore energy and for aphrodisiac effect.

**Guda sharkara** – This is the next step in processing of jaggery, where we get coarse granules. This is used in treating injured patients, people with emaciation and for aphrodisiac purposes.

### **Use by Sushruta:**

Sushruta used to use jaggery in “dahakarma’ – heating process because jaggery can hold heat for a longer period of time.

Reference: *Dahakarmani upayukta: | Sutrasthana 12/4*

### **Use in leech therapy –**

In leech therapy, after the leech is applied and vitiated blood is let out, if still some more vitiated blood is remaining in the affected area, then a paste of jaggery, honey and turmeric is applied to the spot. This causes further letting out of impure blood. (Reference: Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutrasthana 26/46)

### **Precautions and side effects:**

- Long term use, in high dose may cause weight gain

- Not recommended in diabetes.
- Jaggery use, continuously for a long period of time may cause intestinal worm infestation.
- Jaggery is contra indicated in patients with ulcerative colitis.
- Taking radish and jaggery along with fish is contra indicated in Ayurveda.

**Unique use of jaggery in intestinal worms:**

Jaggery – if used for long time may cause intestinal worms. But in some Ayurvedic medicines, used in treating intestinal worm infestation, like Manibhadra Guda, jaggery is used as ingredient. This will help in attracting the worms into the intestines and to kill them with the other herbs in the medicine.

## **KALONJI – NIGELLA SATIVA USES, SIDE EFFECTS, RESEARCH**

Kalonji – Nigella sativa – Small fennel is a promising spice against cancer and chemotherapy side effects. It is useful to lower cholesterol, useful in asthma, diarrhoea, nephro-toxicity (toxins in Kidney) and Hepato toxicity (toxic liver). It is a good anti inflammatory, analgesic and relieves pain, fever and inflammation.

Botanical Name - Nigella Sativa Linn

Family - Apiaceae / Ranunculaceae

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi name - Kalounji, Kalonji

Tamil name - Karun Jeeragam

Malayalam name - Karun Jeeragam

Telugu name - Jeelakarra

English name - Small fennel, Black onion seeds, onion seeds, Kalonji, Simple Nigella.

Confusing names such as Black caraway, Black cumin, which is actually Bunium bulbocastanum is also used to indicate this.

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Kalajaji, Kalika, Karavi, Pruthvi, Pruthvika, Upakunchika, Sushavi, Bashpika, Kunji, Upakunjika

### **Classical categorization:**

- Kaiyadeva Nighantu – Oshadi Varga, Jeerakatraya
- Dhanvantari Nighantu – Shatapushpadi Varga

### **Varieties:**

There are two herbs used in the name of Black cumin.

- *Carum bulbocastanum* / *Bunium bulbocastanum* – Black cumin, Black caraway
- *Nigella sativa* – small fennel / Simple nigella / Kalonji

**Distribution** – Found in central Europe, Spain, and Portugal. In India, found in Jammu and Kashmir and Nilgiris.

### **Kalonji medicinal Properties**

Guna (qualities)– Rooksha (dryness), Laghu (lightness)

Rasa (taste) – Katu (Pungent), Tikta (Bitter)

Vipaka- Katu – Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion

Veerya- Ushna – Hot potency

**Effect on Tridosha** – Pacifies Kapha and Vata Dosha. Increases Pitta.

**Part used** – Seed, seed oil

**Dosage** – Powder 1-3 gm

### **Kalonji Benefits:**

Rochana – improves taste, appetizer

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Daurgandhyanashana – relieves bad breath, bad odour

Pachana – digestive

Pravartati Artavam – Induces menstruation, useful in amenorrhea

Sangrahi – absorbent, bowel binding, useful in IBS, diarrhoea

Medhya – Brain tonic, improves intelligence

Jwaraghna – useful in fever

Vrushya – aphrodisiac

Chakshushya – useful in improving eye sight

Adhmanahara – relieves bloating

Gulmahara – useful against abdominal tumour



Chardihara – relieves vomiting

Atisarahara – useful in diarrhoea, dysentery

Vatahara – Balances Vata, useful in neurological disorders such as paralysis, hemiplegia, neuropathy etc

Jantughni – useful against intestinal worm infestation

In folklore remedies, Small fennel is used in treating asthma, diarrhoea and high cholesterol levels.

It is useful against nephrotoxicity (toxins in Kidney) and Hepato toxicity (toxic liver).

It is a good anti inflammatory, analgesic, relieves pain, fever and inflammation.

It is useful against headache, tooth ache, conjunctivitis.

Widely used in Unani system of medicine as well.

**Onion seed oil / Kalonji oil** decreases blood pressure and increases respiration, useful against cholesterol. It is also a good anti oxidant.

#### **Use of Kalonji after delivery:**

Bhava Prakasha has used the term Garbhashaya Vishuddhi Krut to explain use of black onion seeds. It indicates cleansing of uterus.

In South Indian custom, after delivery, a water decoction made with black cummin or Kalonji is administered to the mother from day 2 to day 10, in a dose of 15 ml in the morning, empty stomach. It is done to fight post delivery infection and to strengthen mother's internal system.

#### **External application:**

- Its paste is applied over male genitals to treat erectile dysfunction.
- In toothache, its seed is given for the patient to chew for 3 – 5 minutes.

**Kalonji side effects:**

People with Pitta body type, who cannot tolerate hotness and spiciness, may find it difficult to use this spice.

It may cause or worsen gastric burning sensation in people with sensitive stomach or gastritis.

Because it can induce menstruation, it is not ideal for patients with heavy periods and short menstrual cycles.

It is best to avoid this during pregnancy. It can be taken in limited quantities in children and lactating mothers.

Because it can lower blood pressure and blood sugar levels, people already taking medication for high BP and diabetes need to take precaution.

**How to use?**

1 – 3 grams of seed powder is mixed along with honey and administered.

**How long to use?**

It can be used in a dose of 1 – 2 grams daily. For therapeutic purpose, it is usually administered for a period of 2 – 3 months.

## **FISH BENEFITS, SIDE EFFECTS – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Fish is one of the very healthy non vegetarian foods. But it should not be had continuously and there are many unhealthy food combinations involving fish. Hence, precautions are needed.

### **Fish qualities and benefits:**

gurUShNA madhurA balyA bRRiMhaNAH pavanApahAH | |81| |

matsyAH snigdhaAshcha vRRiShyAshcha bahudoShAH prakIrtitAH | Charaka Samhita 27

Fish in general is,

Guru - heavy

Ushna – hot

Madhura - sweet

Balya – improves strength and immunity

Brumhana – improves nourishment

Pavanapaha – Balances Vata Dosha

Snigdha – unctuous, oily

Vrushya– aphrodisiac

Bahudosha– causes Dosha vitiation, hence can be injurious to health

Fish is good for consumption during winter. But it should be avoided in autumn.

Fish increases Kapha dosha. Hence, on the morning of Vamana (Panchakarma procedure to expel out Kapha from body), Kapha Dosha is excited in the patient by administering drink / thin gruel prepared from fish, black gram, Sesame etc. added with little quantity of fats.

Fish oil, being rich in Vitamin E, Omega 3 fatty acid, is very good for improving memory and concentration. Hence, those taking Saraswatarishta, Brahmi ghrita etc brain tonics, can have fish oil, for enhanced effects.

**For external application-** Veshavara – a special type of non vegetarian soup prepared with fish is applied externally to relieve tremors (as in parkinson's disease), pain, stiffness, etc., which are Vata dosha symptoms.

**Rohita fish – red variety of fish benefits:**

Rohta fish lives on moss and grass and does not sleep. Therefore, it promotes the power of digestion. It is light for digestion and it promotes strength considerably. Among all types of fishes, this type is the best.

**Fish in rheumatoid arthritis:**

Few research articles show that fish oil, rich in omega 3 fatty acids eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) can reduce stiffness, pain and inflammation.

Fish, being rich in purins, is contra indicated in people having Gout. It is also not good for people with abdominal tumour and dysuria (difficulty to pass urine).

**Fish during pregnancy:** Well-cooked fish can be consumed during pregnancy. Being rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, Vitamin D and zinc, it helps to have good skin health, and indirectly helps to avoid stretch marks and excess of acne in the to-be mother.

**Incompatibility, side effects of fish:**

- Continuous usage of fish is mentioned as a cause for skin disorders.
- Better to avoid fish if you have any skin disorders, especially urticaria (itching rash), psoriasis and eczema.
- Fish should not be taken along with black gram, honey, milk and germinated grains.
- Heavy intake of fresh grains, curd and fish is mentioned as a cause for vitiligo.
- Radish is incompatible with fish, hence should not be used together.

- Herbal smoking soon after fish intake is contra indicated.
- **Fish is incompatible with milk.** Both fish and milk have sweet taste, but due to the contradiction in their potency (fish is hot and milk is cold) they vitiate the blood and obstruct the channels of circulation. It leads to skin disorders.
- Fish should not be taken together with honey, sesame seeds, sugar candy, milk, black gram (Masha), radish, lotus stalk or germinated grains. By doing so, one gets afflicted with deafness, blindness, trembling, loss of intelligence loss of voice and nasal voice.
- Once you consume fish, while it is undergoing digestion, do not consume again another fish, which is processed with black pepper. It will lead to indigestion.
- Kakamachi (Black night shade) along with jaggery, Long pepper fruit, prepared with fish fat and Kakamachi (Black nightshade – Solanum nigrum), mixed with honey causes death.  
Pippali (long pepper) processed with the oil in which fish is fried should be rejected.

#### **Fish in Ayurvedic medicine:**

- Bile of fish is used as ingredient in Ayurvedic medicines – Suchikabaran ras and Varishoshan Ras.
- **Swarn Bhasma** (Calx of Gold) is administered along with bile of fish to relieve burning sensation.

## **FENNEL SEED HEALTH BENEFITS, DOSE, HOW TO USE – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Fennel Seed is an ancient Indian spice. Usually spices are hot in nature and are not soothing to stomach. But fennel seed is an exception. It is sweet and coolant in nature. It is the spice of choice to chew after food. It is given at the end of dinner in almost all Indian restaurants.

**Botanical name** - Foeniculum vulgare

Family - Umbelliferae

Punjabi, Hindi name - Sounf

Tamil name - Soumbu

Bengali name - Mauri

Marathi name - Badi Shep

Gujarathi name - Variyali

Telugu name - Sopu

Kannada name - Badisopu

Arabbian name - Rajiyanaj

Farsi name - Rajiyan

**Sanskrit synonyms:** Mishri, Madhurika, Madhura

**Classical categorization:**

Charaka – Madhuraskandha – Sweet tasting group of herbs

**Medicinal qualities:**

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (light to digest), Snigdha (unctuous, oily)

Rasa (taste) – Madhura (sweet), Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter)

Vipaka - Madhura Undergoes sweet taste conversion after digestion.

Veerya – Sheeta – cold potency

Effect on Tridosha - Balances Vata and Kapha.

**Fennel seed benefits:**

Durnama Kshayajit– useful in chronic respiratory conditions leading to emaciation(as in tuberculosis)

Kshataksheenahita – useful in people with injuries

Balya – improves strength and immunity

Pittasradoshajit – useful in bleeding disorders of Pitta origin

Agnikrut – improves digestion strength

Hrudya – good for heart, cardiac tonic

Shukrapaha, Avrushya – It is not an aphrodisiac

Yonishoolanut – useful in relieving pain arising from female reproductive system

Useful in,

Krumi – worm infestation

Baddhavit – constipation

Anila – Vata disorders

Daha - Burning sensation

Aruchi – Anorexia, lack of interest in food

Chardi – vomiting

Kasa - cold, cough

**Part used:** Fruits, fruit oil and root

**Ayurvedic medicines with fennel –**

Abhayarishta – used in the treatment of constipation and piles

Brahmi Vati – Used in the treatment to improve intelligence and memory

Panchatikta Guggulu ghrta – used in abscess, sinuses etc.

**Fennel side effects:**

Two of the Ayurvedic text books mention it as Avrushya. Hence it is not ideal for people undergoing aphrodisiac therapy. It may decrease sexual interest or performance.

It is safe to use in children, pregnant and lactating mothers.



## **GARLIC BENEFITS, RESEARCH, USAGE, SIDE EFFECTS**

Garlic is an anti aging spice. It is hot, cleansing, cardiac tonic, digestive, good for eyes, improves hair strength and quality, useful in cough, asthma etc. But it needs some precautions while administering.

Botanical Name - Allium Sativum Linn

Family - Liliaceae

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi name - Lahasum

English Name - Garlic

Kannada Name - Bellulli

Telugu Name - Vellulli

Bengali Name - Rasuna

Marathi Name - Lasuna

Tamil name – Puntu

### **Sanskrit Synonyms**

Mlechagandha, Ugra Gandha – Having strong pungent odour

Yavaneshta, Lashuna, Mahoushadha – Great medicine having immense health benefits

Rasona – Rasa + Una – having all the six tastes, minus one (sour taste) –

Garlic has all the five tastes, except sour.

Arishta, Mlecchakanda, Mahakanda,

### **Different Varieties-**

Kashyapa mentioned two varieties –

Girija – Garlic grown in mountains and

Kshetraja – cultivated in lands.

Nighantus mentioned two types

Lashuna – Allium sativum and

Maha Kanda/ Grunjana – Allium ascalonium Linn.

**Distribution-** Cultivated Throughout India. Mainly in Ludhiana, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andra Pradesh, U.P and Gujarat.

### **Medicinal properties-**

- Raw garlic is one of the very ancient spices used in Ayurveda. Even Sushruta has appreciated the benefits of raw garlic. Sweet, salt, sour, pungent, bitter and astringent are the six tastes according to Ayurveda beliefs. Garlic is one of those rare herbs, which has five tastes except sour.
- Rasa (taste) – Madhura (sweet), Lavana (salt), Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter), Kashaya (astringent)
- Guna (qualities) – Snigdha (oily), Guru (heavy), Teekshna (strong, piercing), Sara (mobile)
- Vipaka- Katu – Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion.
- Veerya – Ushna – Hot potency
- Effect on Tridosha – Balances Vata and Kapha. Increases Pitta Dosha.

**Part Used** - Bulb, oil

**Dosage** - Paste 1-6 g in single or divided dose per day.

**Garlic oil** 1-2 ml in single or multiple dose per day

## **Garlic benefits:**

krimi kuShTha kilAsaghno vAtaghno gulmanAshanaH |

snigdhashcha uShNashcha vRRiShyashcha lashunaH kaTuko

guruH | |176| |*Charaka Sutrasthana 27*

Jantujit, Krumighna– useful against intestinal worm infestation

Kushtaghna – useful in skin diseases

Kilasaghna – useful in spreading/ contagious type of skin disease

Vataghna - Balances Vata, useful in neurological disorders such as paralysis,

hemiplegia, neuropathy, excess gas, bloating etc

Gulmahara – useful against abdominal tumours

Vrushya – aphrodisiac, improves vigour

Medhakrut – Improves intelligence

Svarakrut – improves voice tone and quality

Varnakrut - improves skin colour and complexion

Akshikrut, Netrya, Chakshushya - useful in improving eye sight

Bhagna Asthi Sandhanakara – causes quick healing of fractured bones

Bruhmana – nourishing. Though lahsun being pungent, because of its nutritive values, it is also nourishing.

Pachana – Digestive, relieves Ama Dosha

Pittakrut – Increases Pitta Dosha

Asrakrut – Causes or worsens blood vitiated disorders

Keshakrut – improves hair quality and quantity

Hikkahara – relieves hiccups

Kasahara – useful in cough and cold

Jwarahara – useful in fever

Shwasahara - useful in asthma, COPD and other respiratory diseases

Kushtahara – useful in skin diseases

Mehahara – useful in urinary tract disorders and diabetes

Amahara– Relieves ama, a product of indigestion and altered metabolism.

Peenasahara – useful in running nose, sinusitis

Shwitrahara – useful in treating leucoderma, vitiligo

Arshahara – useful in piles, haemorrhoids

Shoolahara – relieves abdominal colic pain

Shophahara – relieves swelling, oedema, anti inflammatory

Rasayana – anti aging, causes cell and tissue rejuvenation

Balya – improves strength and immunity

Jeernajvarahara – relieves chronic fever

Kukshi Shoolahara – relieves abdominal colic pain

Vibandhahara – Relieves constipation

Aruchihara – useful in relieving anorexia

### **Lahsun for relieving Avarana – blocking:**

Excluding Rakta (blood tissue) and Pitta Dosha, for all types of Avarana (blocking of channels, covering of channels), Garlic is very useful. Because of its pungent and piercing qualities, it helps to clear open the body channels.

Because of its hotness, it is not useful in Pitta and Rakta conditions.

**Garlic in arthritis:** Garlic is used in treatment of fractures, and to strengthen bones. Garlic is known to assist in regeneration of bone mass. Hence raw garlic is useful in rheumatoid arthritis and osteo arthritis.

**Garlic root** is pungent, leaves are pungent, and stalk is astringent.

### **Garlic and diabetics:**

It is good to have non vegetarian food, sour food, drinks and alcohol with garlic.

### **Garlic with milk –**

To counter the spiciness and hotness of garlic, it is boiled with milk and the milk is consumed. This is especially beneficial for people with Pitta body types. This also has many other benefits.

**External application:** Applying garlic paste improves blood circulation, relieves pain and inflammation.

Hence, its paste is applied over joints to relieve pain and stiffness in rheumatoid arthritis, osteo arthritis and sciatica.

It is also useful against insect bites and itching skin disorders.

### **Effect of garlic on heart:**

Hrudya – acts as cardiac tonic, congenial for heart.

It stimulates heart, improves blood circulation, and reduces cholesterol deposition inside the blood vessels.

### **Effect against cancer:**

American Institute For Cancer research enlists garlic as a potential spice useful in cancer prevention. Its key ingredients quercetin, allixin and a group of organo-sulfur compounds –allicin, alliin and allyl sulfides have shown effect against growth of tumours in prostate, bladder, colon and stomach tissue.

### **Garlic side effects:**

- Limit the amount of garlic intake during summers.
- Not suitable for people with Pitta body types.
- It is better to avoid hot Sun exposure, exercise, anger, drinking water, milk with jaggery, soon after eating garlic.

- It is safe for children, pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Garlic may cause or worsen bad breath problem.
- For women suffering from heavy menstrual bleeding, it is advisable to stop using garlic from 5 days before onset of periods till it stops.

### **Garlic a Tamasika food with anti aging properties:**

Garlic has Rasayana properties – It means, if you take it for long period of time, it has anti aging effects on your health. But garlic is a Tamasik food. Tamas means darkness. It means that it is not suitable for those seeking celibacy and spiritual success.

However, if you have any disease, the concept of Tamasik food does not apply to you.

The benefits of garlic outweigh its Tamasik side effects. Unless you are a very serious spiritual seeker, you may continue enjoying immense health benefits of garlic.

### **How to consume garlic?**

- For those who can tolerate its offensive smell and taste, they can remove the skin of garlic pearls and consume it readily, after food in the morning.
- People with Pitta imbalance can fry garlic in ghee or boil 1 – 2 garlic pearls in milk and then consume it.
- For regular use, best method is to use it as part of ingredients to prepare food items.

Its extracts are also available in the market in the form of capsule.

### **Ayurvedic medicines with Garlic as ingredient:**

- **Lashunadi Vati** – used in diarrhoea, dyspepsia and such other stomach and intestine related diseases.
- **Rasonadi Kashayam** – used in Ayurvedic treatment of bloating, vomiting, nausea, cough and more
- **Lashunadi Ghrita** – Herbal ghee used in abdominal disorders, neurological conditions, etc
- **Vettumaran Gulika** – used in Ayurvedic treatment of fever, vomiting, abdominal colic pain
- 

### **How to use garlic for cold?**

Q: Kindly advice suitably about the use of garlic in case of cold. Is it proper to swallow two three cloves with water or it can also be baked in ghee.

Answer: During cold, it is best to swallow 2 garlic pearls or make a paste of garlic pearl, add a pinch of each of turmeric powder and black pepper powder and have it with water. This will be more effective in cold, than frying it in ghee.

### **Maha Kanda/ Grunjana – Allium ascalonium Linn.**

- It has similar properties of Garlic.
- Madhura – sweet in taste  
Katu – pungent
- Stalk is astringent, leaves are bitter

## **GINGER BENEFITS, RESEARCH, HOME REMEDIES, SIDE EFFECTS**

Dry and fresh gingers are quite similar in action except that the dry one is preferred to fresh during summers, as per Ayurveda. Ginger is useful in indigestion, asthma, nausea and more.

Ginger is being cultivated in Malnad region of Karnataka since times immemorial. The world famous tourist spot “Shringeri” formed by Adi Shankaracharya, gains its name from the term “**Shringavera Giri**”( the mountains in which Shringavera – ginger is cultivated). Later, the name got evolved in to Shringeri.

**Botanical name** - Zingiber officinale

**Family** - Scitamineae

### **Wet ginger names in different languages:**

Hindi name - Adarakh (fresh)

Kannada name – Hasi Shunti

Telugu name – Alla, Allamu

Bangali name – Ada

Marathi name – Aale

Gujarati name – Adu

Tamil name – Shukka, Inji

Malayalam name – Inchi

Simhalese name – Amu Inguru

Farsi name – Anjeebeelee tara

Arabian name – Janjabeelee Ratab

### **Dry ginger names in different languages:**



Hindi name – Sont, Saunth, Sunth,

Kannada name – Ona shunti

Bangali name – Shunt, Sunt, Shunti

Tamil name – Shukku, Chukku

Malayalam name – Chukka Farsi name – Janabeel

Arabian name – Janjabeele Aavis

### **Sanskrit Synonyms of wet ginger:**

Ardra, Moolaja, Ardra Shaka,

Gulma moola – Knotty rhizomes

Anupaja – grows in moist places

### **Sanskrit Synonyms of dry ginger:**

Shunti, Mahaushadha, Vishva, Vishva Bhesaja, Nagara, Vishvaushadha,

Shrungavera, Rahuchatra,

Ushana - Hot in nature.

Katugranthi, Katubhadra – has pungent taste

### **Classical categorization**

#### **Charaka-**

Truptighna – Group of herbs useful to relieve pseudo-satiation,

Arshoghna – Group of herbs useful in treating piles,

Deepaneeya – Group of herbs useful in improving digestion strength

Shoola Prashamana – Group of herbs useful in relieving abdominal pain

Trishna Nigrahana – Group of herbs useful in relieving thirst

**Sushruta** - Pippalyadi, Trikatu

**Vagbata** - Pippaladi

## **Different varieties**

As per Amarakosha,

Fresh ginger is termed as Ardraka, Shringavera

Dry ginger is termed as Nagara, Vishwabheshaja

**Distribution-** Cultivated almost throughout India.

## **Zingiber officinale medicinal properties**

Rasa (taste) – Katu (pungent)

Guna (qualities) – Guru (heavy), Rooksha (dryness), Teekshna (strong, piercing)

Vipaka- Madhura – Undergoes sweet taste conversion after digestion.

Veerya – Ushna – Hot potency

Effect on Tridosha – Balances Kapha Dosha

**Part Used** - Rhizome

## **Dosage**

Fresh Juice 5-10 ml;

Powder 1-2 g;

Syrup 2-5 ml in a single or divided dose per day.

## **Fresh ginger benefits – Ardraka – Vishva Bheshaja:**

Usually all spices with pungent taste are un-aphrodisiac and increase Vata

Dosha except Pippali – Long pepper fruit and Ardraka – Ginger Rhizome

## **Green ginger / fresh ginger is,**

Rochaka – appetizer,

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Vrushya – aphrodisiac

Ginger juice extract is useful in Vata and Kapha disorders

Vibandha – constipation

Katu – pungent taste

Ushna – Hot in potency

Guru – heavy

Rooksha – dry

Madhura Vipaka – undergoes sweet taste conversion after digestion

Hrudya – acts as cardiac tonic, congenial for heart

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Ruchida – improves taste, useful in relieving anorexia

Shophahara - good anti inflammatory herb, relieves pain and swelling

Kaphahara – balances Kapha, useful in productive cough, asthma

Kantamayaapaha – Useful in throat disorders

Svarya – improves voice

Vibandhahara – Relieves constipation

Anahahara – relieves gas, fullness of abdomen, bloating

Shoolajit – relieves abdominal colic pain

Bhedini – relieves constipation

Jihva Vishodhana – cleanses and clears tongue, relieves white coating

Kaphavatahara – Balances Kapha and Vata

Shwasahara – useful in treatment of asthma and chronic respiratory disorders.

Kasahara – useful in cough and cold

Vamihara – relieves vomiting

Hikkahara – relieves hiccups

### **Dry ginger benefits:**

Dry ginger is unctuous, promoter of digestion, aphrodisiac, hot in potency, balances Vata and Kapha, sweet in Vipaka, cardio- tonic and palatable.

Madhura Vipaka – Undergoes sweet taste conversion after digestion.

Vrushya – aphrodisiac, improves vigour

Rochana – improves taste, relieves anorexia

Hrudya – acts as cardiac tonic, congenial for heart

Sasneha – has some amount of unctuousness, oiliness

Laghu – light to digest

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Shophahara – relieves swelling, oedema, anti inflammatory

Vatodara – useful in ascites due to Vata Dosha imbalance, bloating

Shwasahara – useful in treatment of asthma and chronic respiratory disorders.

Panduhara – useful in anaemia, early stage of liver disorders

Shleepada – useful in Elephantiasis

Grahi – absorbent

Vibandhanut – Breaks down stool particles into small pieces by its piercing qualities

Amavataghni – useful in rheumatoid arthritis

Ginger is very effective to relieve dizziness, menstrual pain, arthritis pain, motion sickness and weight loss.

### **How to use ginger for headache:**

Dry ginger is rubbed over a hard surface by adding a little water. The thin paste is applied over the forehead and person is asked to sleep. The paste is removed after 15 minutes by washing off.

### **Ginger side effects:**

- In case of skin disorders, anaemia, dysuria, bleeding disorders, non healing wounds, fever, burning sensation, during summer and in spring, dry ginger is preferred to fresh ginger.
- It is safe to use ginger in low amounts during pregnancy and lactation and in children.
- It may cause worsening of gastritis in people having sensitive stomach.

### **Ginger home remedies:**

- Fresh ginger juice, lemon juice and honey – take a teaspoon of each of these and mix well. The dose of this remedy is one teaspoon. It means the remedy will be useful for three persons. Do not overdose, as it may cause stomach irritation. This is one of my favourite remedies to get rid of excess sleepiness, indigestion, vomiting, nausea and headache. It is also a good remedy to relieve hangover.
- 2 – 3 drops of ginger juice extract is instilled into nose to create irritation and to expel out sputum, to relieve sinusitis. But some may find it intolerable. Hence precaution is necessary.
- Ginger powder is added to sesame oil or any pain relieving oil and is applied as paste to relieve joint stiffness and to improve blood circulation.

### **Ayurvedic medicines with ginger:**

- **Trikatu Churna** – Famous combination of ginger, black pepper and long pepper, used in obesity and indigestion treatment.
- **Ardraka ghrita** – indicated in gastritis, indigestion and anorexia.
- **Saubhagya Shunti** – **used** in the treatment of complications that arise during post natal care of the mother

- **Guladrakam** - used in the treatment of chronic respiratory conditions like bronchitis, asthma and running nose.
- **Shothaghna lepa** - used as paste, applied externally to relieve inflammation and swelling, as in case of blunt injuries and arthritis.
- Ginger juice extract is used in purification process of opium (Ahiphena Shodhana).

**Question: I came to know through a TV Program that the skin of Ginger contains toxic chemicals. Is it True? Is it necessary to remove the skin of Dried Ginger before use as it is said to be toxic?**

Answer:

As long as ginger peel is hygienic, it is edible. It is not a strict rule that the ginger skin should be peeled before use. It is not toxic.

## **HEALTH BENEFITS OF GRAPES AND RAISINS – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Grape is the one of the must-have fruits for everyone. Ayurveda says “*Drakshaa Phalottamaa*” – of all the fruits grape is the best. When we go to the fruit market, we cannot get the sweet grapes always. We may get more-sweet-little-sour variety or more-sour-little sweet variety. Each of those varieties has their own effect on Tridosha and our health as a whole. Let us explore the Ayurvedic health benefits of grapes varieties -dry and fresh, unripe, semi ripe, full ripened etc.

### **Grapes benefits:**

#### **Unripe grapes:**

Unripe grapes are hot and pungent in nature, can cause Pitta imbalance, leading to skin and blood vitiation.

#### **Semi ripened grapes:**

Semi ripened grapes are more sour than sweet. It improves appetite, improves taste.

#### **More sweet less sour ripened grapes:**

Ripened grapes relieve thirst, useful in bleeding disorders, calms Pitta, it is soothing.

#### **Dry Grapes or Raisin benefits:**

- Helps in easy bowel movement
- Natural coolant
- Very good for eyes
- In most of the Ayurvedic preparations, where grapes are mentioned as ingredient, dry grapes are used.
- Dry grapes / raisins are useful in the treatment of excessive thirst, fever, respiratory problems, vomiting, gout, liver disorders, excessive burning sensation, dryness, emaciation.

- Raisin calms the mind. Hence, it is a good idea to have some grapes when you feel tired, burnt out or confused.
- Raisins are also used in the treatment of intestinal disorders.
- Raisin is especially used in treating the hang over due to excessive alcohol intake and to reduce the effect of alcohol on the body. Hence it is advisable for regular alcoholics to have dry grapes often.
- **For students, to avoid tiredness**, it is advised to soak 5 raisins over night. Next day morning, throw away the water and eat the soaked raisin.

(Source: Divine Park)

tRRiShNAdAha jvarashvAsa raktapitta kShatakShayAn |

vAtapittamudAvartaM svarabhedaM madAtyayam || 125 ||

tiktAsyatAmAsyashoShaM kAsaM cAshu vyapohati |

mRRidvIkA bRRiMhaNI vRRiShyA madhurA snigdhashItaIA || 126 || – Charaka

Samhita Sutrasthana 27

Raisin provides immediate cure for,

Trishna – excessive thirst

Daha – Burning sensation

Jwara - fever

Shwasa – asthma, respiratory disorders involving difficulty in breathing

Raktapitta – bleeding disorders like nasal bleeding and menorrhagia

Kshata – chest injury

Kshaya – tuberculosis, chronic respiratory diseases wasting of muscles

Vata Pitta disorders

Udavarta – bloating

Swarabheda – hoarse voice

Madatyaya – alcoholism



Tiktasyata – bitter taste in tongue

Asya Shosha – mouth dryness

Kasa – cold, cough

Raisins are

Bruhmani – improves nourishment

Vrushya – aphrodisiac

Madhura – sweet

Snigdha – unctuous, oily

Sheetala – coolant

### **Home remedy**

For gastritis, acidity, oral thrush, mouth blisters – Soak five almonds and raisins in water at night. Next morning, eat the raisin and almonds on empty stomach.

Make sure that raisins are sweet in taste.

### **Incompatibility:**

Grapes with milk are best avoided, because Ayurveda advises to avoid sour fruits processing with milk.

### **Ayurvedic medicines with raisin as ingredient:**

- **Draksharishta** - useful in cold, cough, asthma, colon cleansing
- **Drakshasava** – useful in intestinal worms, injuries, wounds
- **Drakshadi Kashayam** – useful in hangover treatment, tiredness, dizziness
- **Manasamitra vatakam** – used in treating depression, loss of memory, psychiatric conditions

- **Drakshadi Vati** – tablet, used in anorexia, heart burn, dizziness, indigestion

## **HEALTH BENEFITS OF LEMON – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Lemon is used extensively in Ayurveda. It is used in food, in medicine and also in purification procedure of metallic Ayurvedic ingredients. For medicinal purpose, it is used predominantly in digestive disorders. Botanical name of lemon is *Citrus medica*, it belongs to Rutaceae family.

**Synonyms:** Jambira, Nimbuka, Dantashata

**Classical categorization:**

**Charaka –**

Phalavarga (group of fruits),

Amlavarga (group of sour substances)

**Sushruta and Vagbhata –** Phalavarga (group of fruits)

**Medicinal properties:**

Rasa (Taste) – Amla (sour)

Guna (qualities)– Laghu (light to digest), Teekshna (piercing)

Vipaka – taste conversion after digestion – Amla – Sour

Veerya (Ushna)– Hot potency

**Lemon benefits:**

**Vakrashodhi** – Lemon juice, when used to rinse or when consumed, leads to cleansing of oral cavity. Hence lemon juice is a good remedy for bad breath or tongue coating problems.

**Rochana** – Lemon increases digestion power.

**Dantaharshana** – Being sour in taste, it may cause tingling sensation in teeth.

**Trushna Nivarana** – It relieves thirst. Hence, lemon juice is one of the most preferred drinks to quench thirst.

**Shula Nivarana** – It relieves abdominal colic pain. This is the reason why lemon juice is the first home remedy for gastritis pain and colicky pain due to indigestion. For the same reason it is used as an ingredient in innumerable Ayurvedic medicines, used in digestive disorders, such as Lashunadi Vati.

**Kasa Nivarana** – Lemon is extremely useful to relieve coughing. It soothes the mucus of the throat.

**Kaphotklesha, Chardi Nivarana** – It helps to relieve excessive accumulation of Kapha in stomach, leading to vomiting. Hence, lemon juice is drunk whenever one feels nausea, excessive salivation, vomiting etc.

In such cases, in some people, either the vomiting feeling is relieved or the person vomits and expels out all the excessive, vitiated Kapha out of the body, due to lemon. It has cleansing action over the stomach, when there is excess of Kapha (heaviness, excessive gastric secretions and indigestion.)

**Trushnahara** – Relieves excessive thirst.

**Amadoshahara** – It relieves Ama, a product of indigestion and malabsorption.

**Asya vairasya hara** – Relieves bad breath

**Hrutpeeda** – relieves pain in chest region, due to gastritis.

**Vahnimandyahara** – it promotes digestion. Hence, it is an ingredient in many Ayurvedic medicines for indigestion, such as Hingvadi Churna.

**Krumihara** – It relieves intestinal worms.

The smaller variety of lemon also carries similar health benefits.

**Vataghna** – Balances Vata

**Dipana, Pachana** – Digestive, improves digestive enzymes

**Laghu** (light to digest)

Useful in abdominal colic caused to imbalance of Vata, Pitta and kapha.

**Visha hara** – It is a natural detoxifying herb. This is the reason why it is used in the purification procedure of many mineral ingredients, such as Iron pyrite.

It helps to relieve constipation and gastro-enteritis.

### **Effect of Lemon on Tridosha –**

Unripe lemon is sour in taste. It decreases Vata and kapha but increases Pitta.

Ripe lemon decreases Pitta and Kapha.

### **Lemon benefits for face and skin –**

It is attributed with qualities like,

- Varnya – improves complexion and skin texture
- Pushtiprada – it nourishes the skin. (Reference: Raja Nighantu)
- Being sour, it enters into deep pores and brings about cleansing action.

### **Lemon use in weight loss –**

Hot water lemon therapy is a famous home remedy for weight loss. Drinking a glass of hot water, mixed along with 1 – 2 spoons of lemon juice extract, early in the morning, on empty stomach, decreases fat deposition. Obesity is related with Kapha dosha, and lemon decreases Kapha. Hence it helps.

### **Lemon juice benefits: –**

tRRiShNAdAha jvarashvAsa raktapitta kShatakShayAn |

vAtapittamudAvartaM svarabhedaM madAtyayam | | 125 | |

tiktAsyatAmAsyashoShaM kAsaM cAshu vyapohati |

mRRidvIkA bRRiMhaNI vRRiShyA madhurA snigdhashItaLA | | 126 | |

rochano dlpanastIkShNaH sugandhirmukhashodhanaH |

jambIraH kaphavAtaghnaH krimighno bhaktapAchanaH | | 167 | | – Charaka

Sutrasthana 27

Jambira (Citrus medica Linn) is

Rochana – appetizer

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Teekshna – Piercing

Sugandhi – good smelling

Mukha Shodhana – mouth cleanser

Krimighna – anti- infective

Pachana – It helps in digestion of food

It balances Kapha as well as Vata.

**Lemon for vascular health** – Regular use of lemon in diet helps to decrease cholesterol deposition in the blood vessels. Hence it lowers the risk of heart diseases.

**Lemon for cancer** – There are unconfirmed reports of use of lemon as a medicine in cancer therapy. But much research is required in this regard.

## **LEMON JUICE FOR COLD? YES AND NO. LEARN HOW AND WHY**

As per Ayurveda, lemon is hot in nature. So, does lemon juice for cold and cough work? When someone asked this question, my initial response was, yes why not! But there are some aspects to be considered.

### **Relationship between cough, cold and Kapha Dosha -**

Most of the respiratory conditions including cough and cold are mainly due to Kapha, which has cold as its one of the qualities. So, during cough and cold, if you consume, anything that has cooling nature, Kapha increases and worsens the condition.

When we make lemon juice with cold water, though lemon is hot in nature, the water is naturally cold. Hence, if the quantity of water is large, then overall hotness of the lemon will be pacified.

Along with water, if you are adding sugar to the juice, it further makes the product very cold, further dampening the hotness of lemon.

Even if you use boiled and cooled water, it will still have cold principles in it.

If you use hot water, to make the lemon juice, it will take away Vitamin C from lemon. Vitamin C has therapeutic efficacy to cure cold. Hence it is not the best option.

If you prepare juice with **more of lemon juice extract and very less water**, then it will be helpful in cough because, lesser amount of water will not contribute to coldness of the product. An example proportion: two spoons of lemon juice extract to quarter to half a cup of water.

But **if you add spices** in the lemon juice, like a pinch of ginger and pepper, that would add more hotness and bring in extra qualities to fight cough and cold.

**Bottom lines:**

Lemon juice is not one of the best remedies for cold and cough.

But lemon juice can be had during cold, (may not be as the chosen remedy, but as just as any other food), if

- You add more of lemon and less of water or
- Add a bit of spices to the **juice**.



## **MORINGA BENEFITS, MEDICINAL USAGE, COMPLETE AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Moringa or drumstick tree is used as part of diet in India since ages. Its use in treatment is seen in Ayurveda from the times of Sushruta. Many of its parts like drumstick leaves, fruit, oil etc have immense health benefits targeted towards many systems like digestive, heart and circulatory system.

**Botanical name** - Moringa oleifera

Family - Moringaceae

Hindi Name - Sahijan, Munaga

Tamil Name - Munagai

English name - Drumstick plant, Moringa, Horse radish tree

Kannada name - Nugge mara, Nugge kayi

### **Sanskrit Synonyms:**

Shobhanjana – Very auspicious tree

Shigru – has strong and piercing qualities

Teekshnagandha – Strong and pungent odour

Aksheeva – relieves intoxication

Mochaka – helps to cure diseases

### **Classical categorization:**

#### **Charaka Samhita –**

- Krimighna – Group of herbs that are used to treat worm infestation.
- Svedopaga – Ayurvedic plants that are used in Svedana (preparatory procedure for Panchakarma)
- Shirovirechanopaga – group of herbs that are used in Nasya Panchakarma treatment

- Katuka Skandha – group of herbs that have pungent taste.
- Charaka has mentioned this as one of the herbs used in powder massage, useful in pruritis, acne and urticaria.(Reference: Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 3rd chapter)
- Charaka has also mentioned it as a plant source for oil – Sthavara Sneha Yoni

### **Sushruta and Vagbhata –**

Varunadi Group of herbs (Hence it is an ingredient of a famous Ayurvedic medicine – Varanadi kashayam)

### **Medicinal Qualities of drumstick tree:**

Rasa(taste) – Katu (Pungent), Tikta (bitter)

Guna(qualities) – Laghu (light to digest), Rooksha (dryness), Teekshna (strong, piercing)

Vipaka – katu (Moringa undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion.)

Veerya – Ushna – hot potency

Effect on Tridosha – Balances Kapha and Vata

**Parts used:** Drumstick's root bark, stem bark, leaves, fruits and seeds are used for therapeutic purposes. They have their own unique medicinal qualities.

### **Health benefits of Moringa:**

There are three varieties of Moringa explained in Ayurvedic text books.

1. Shyama – black variety
2. Shveta – white variety and
3. Rakta – red variety. It is also called as Madhu shigru.

Black variety of drumstick tree is the most common. Its qualities are –

Katu – pungent,

Teekshna – piercing, sharp, strong

Ushna – hot in potency

Madhura – slightly sweetish

Laghu – light to digest

Deepana – improves digestion

Rochana – Improves taste

Rooksha – dry

Kshara – Has alkaline properties

Tikta – Bitter

Vidaahakrit – causes burning sensation

Sangrahi – Useful to check diarrhoea

Shukrala - improves male and female reproductive system, improves semena and sperm quality and quantity

Hrudya – Good for heart. Cardiac tonic

Pittarakta prakopana: Increases Pitta and vitiates blood. Hence, drumstick should not be consumed during bleeding disorders, during menstruation and by people with pimples and Pitta related skin diseases.

Chakshushya – Improves vision, good for eyes.

Kaphavataghna – Decreases imbalanced Kapha and Vata

Vidradhi – Useful in abscess. It helps in quick wound healing of abscess, upon oral intake and external application as paste.

Shvayathu – It is a good anti inflammatory herb.

Krimi – useful in worm infestation in stomach and in wounds

Meda – helpful to decrease fat and obesity.

Apachi – Useful in relieving carbuncles.

Visha – Anti toxic, has detoxifying action.

Pleeha – Useful in spleen related diseases

Gulma – Useful in abdominal bloating and tumours

Ganda Vrana – Useful in lymphadenitis

### **White variety drumstick uses:**

It is quite similar to the black variety.

Dahakrut – causes burning sensation

pleehaanaam vidradhim hanti – useful against splenic abscess

Vranaghna – speeds up wound healing

pittarakrut – Increases Pitta and vitiates blood.

### **The red variety, called as Madhushigru**

Deepana – Increases digestion power.

Sara – promotes proper bowel movements.

### **Drumstick leaves and bark--**

The juice extract of drumstick leaves and bark are very useful in relieving pain.

They act as natural analgesic. They are used both for oral intake and also for external application as paste.

In Indian household, the leaves are used to prepare Chutney or sambar.

### **Drumstick seeds uses—**

Chakshushya – good for eyes

Vishanashana – anti toxic

Avrushya – do not have aphrodisiac qualities

Nasyena Shiro Artinut – When used for Nasya (in the form of powder or oil), it

helps to relieve headache.

Moringa seeds are called as Shweta Maricha.

### **Moringa for headache:**

As explained above, moringa leaves paste applied externally or used as vegetable helps to relieve headache.

Its seed powder, in the form of nasya treatment cures headache.

**Moringa for diabetes** Many studies have been conducted to prove the anti diabetic and anti oxidant effect of Moringa.

**Moringa flowers** are useful against intestinal worms. It balances Pitta and kapha.

**Oil prepared with Moringa** is useful to relieve headache, pungent, useful in skin diseases and diabetes.

**Moringa leaves for balanitis:** Leaves are ground to make a paste. It is applied over the inflamed area.

### **Moringa in Ayurvedic medicines:**

- Because of its analgesic effects, Moringa is used as an ingredient in many Ayurvedic pain relief oils such as Murivenna, Kottamchukkadi Thailam.
- Because of its anti inflammatory effects, it is an ingredient of Shothaghna Lepa – a paste application used to relieve swelling, pain and redness.
- Because of its wound healing benefits, and usefulness in abscess etc, it is an ingredient in Aragwadhadi kashayam

### **Side Effects:**

- As explained above, it causes increase in burning sensation and is pungent. Hence, people with gastritis or sensitive stomach should use this vegetable carefully.
- It is not ideal to be taken during periods, since it increases Pitta and vitiates blood.
- It is also not ideal to be taken during bleeding disorders.

**Drumstick during pregnancy and lactation:**

Drumstick fruit is rich in protein, vitamins, minerals and anti oxidants. Hence it can be used during pregnancy. But Drumstick leaves, root bark and flowers are not indicated during pregnancy.

It is not ideal to take this soon after delivery. However, a couple of weeks after delivery, this can be used.

## **ONION USES, RESEARCH, SIDE EFFECTS**

Onion is anti aging, rejuvenating, aphrodisiac and improves intelligence. It improves skin complexion, useful in skin disorders. Its juice extract is useful against hair fall.

**Botanical Name** - Allium cepa Linn

Family - Liliaceae

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi name – Piyaz, Pyaz

Kannada name – Nirulli, Irulli

Bengali name – Pyanj

Malayalam name – Chuvannaulli

Telugu Name – Nirulli

Tamil name – Vengayam

Punjabi name – Ganda

Marathi name – Konda

Gujarati name – Dungali, Dungari, Kando

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Yavanesta, Durgandha, Mukha Dooshaka – Causes bad breath.

Palandu

### **Onion medicinal Properties**

Rasa (taste) – Madhura (sweet), Katu (Pungent)

Guna (qualities) – Guru (Heaviness), Snigdha (Unctuous, oily), Teekshna (strong, piercing)

Vipaka- Madhura – Undergoes sweet taste conversion after digestion.

Virya- Anushna– Not very hot in potency

### **Effect on Tridosha -**

Because of its oiliness, sweetness and hotness, it balances Vata, has neutral effect on Pitta and slightly increases Kapha Dosha.

**Part Used** - Bulb, Seeds

**Dosage** - Onion Juice 10-20 ml

Onion seed powder 1-3 g.

### **Allium cepa medicinal uses:**

zleSmalo mArutaghnazca palANDurna ca pittanut |

AhArayogI balyazca gururvRSyo'tha rocanaH || 175 || - Charaka Samhita  
Sutrasthana 27

It aggravates Kapha and alleviates Vata, but it does not alleviate Pitta. It is useful as a food.

It is heavy and aphrodisiac. It promotes strength and appetite.

**Red onion** qualities are quite similar to garlic.

Balakara – improves strength and immunity

Veeryakara – improves quality and quantity of sperm and semen

Agnivardhana – improves digestions strength

Sthira Dhatukara – improves body strength and stability

Medhada – improves intelligence

Psuhtida – nourishing

It is widely used in treating neurological pains, sciatica and osteo arthritis.

**The white variety of onion is –**

Swadu – sweet in taste

Guru – slightly heavy to digest

Picchila – sticky



shonitapitta Shasta – useful in bleeding disorders such as nasal bleeding, bleeding piles, etc.

**Onion seed benefits:**

Vrushya – aphrodisiac, improves vigour

Dantakeetajit – useful in dental caries

Pramehajit – Useful in urinary tract disorders, diabetes

**Onion juice benefits:**

Snigdhangatva – makes body lustrous

Gaurata – imparts heaviness

Kantimata – improves skin complexion

Vahnerdeepiti – improves digestion strength

Charma shuddhi – Detoxifies skin

Vrushatva – acts as aphrodisiac

Deerghamayū – anti aging

Balakara – improves strength and immunity

Varnakara – Improves skin tone and complexion

Ojaskara – improves immunity

Swarakara – improves voice tone and quality

Saumanyasya – Brings calmness to mind

Badhira – useful in hearing problems

**Onion juice for hair**

Applying onion juice – 10 minutes before hair wash, is known to improve hair shine and hair growth. It also reduces hair fall.

### **How to consume onion?**

Regular intake of onion in diet in the form of Onion chutney, onion pakoda, Pyaz Ki Kachori, Liver and onions (English food) or simple one or two slices of onion would deliver all the health benefits enlisted above.

### **Onion a Tamas food -**

Onion has Rasayana properties. It means if you take it for long period of time, it has anti aging effects on your health. But it is also a Tamasik food. Tamas means darkness. It means that it is not suitable for those seeking celibacy and spiritual success.

However, if you have any disease, the concept of Tamasik food does not apply to you.

The benefits of onion outweigh its Tamasik side effects. Unless you are a very serious spiritual seeker, you may continue enjoying its immense health benefits.

### **Ayurvedic medicine with onion ingredient:**

**Murivenna Oil** - a renowned oil for non healing wounds, fractures and sprains.

#### **External application:**

In cases of neurological pains, local inflammation, onion paste is heated, tied in a cloth and the poultice is applied over the affected area.

#### **Onion side effects:**

Bad breath, burning sensation and excess hotness are some of its side effects.

It is not preferred by spiritual speakers and Jain community.

It is safe to use during pregnancy, lactation and in children.



## **SANDALWOOD BENEFITS, HOW TO USE, SIDE EFFECTS, RESEARCH**

Sandalwood is a coolant, very useful in gastritis, burning sensation in hands and feet. It is also a good ingredient to include in your juice mixes, in small amounts, of course.

Botanical Name- Santalum album Linn

Family – Santalaceae

### **Names in different languages:**

Hindi Name - Safed chandan

English Name – Sandalwood

Kannada Name - Sri Gandha

Telugu Name - Tella Chandanam

Bengali Name - Chandan

Tamil Name - Chandanam, Sandanam

Gujarati Name - Sukhada

Malayalam Name - Candanam

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Gandhasara, Malayaja, Srikhanda, Maharha, Shveta Chandana, Bhadrashri, Malayaja, Gosheersha, Tilaparnaka Shreekhanda, Chandradyuti.

Chandana- “chandati ahladayatiti, – Pleasant to see

Gandhasara – gandha saro asya – Aroma is situated in heart wood.

chandradyuti-“chandrajyosnavadahaladakam – cooling and pleasant to see, like Moon.

Bhadrashri- bhadra shri shobha asya – Pleasant, auspicious

Shri khanda – shriya utani khandanyasya – Which is beautiful, good .

Gandharajam- gandha dravyanam raja shreshtam – Best among all the

aromatic substances

Sarpavasam- Sarpa nivasyatraha – serpents are found often near the tree.

Tilaparnakam-tilasyeva parnanyasya – Leaves are similar those of sesame plant

Malayaja – Malaye pradeshe jata – grows in Malaya region

Shishiram –“sheetam sparshe veerye cha – It is a coolant

### **Classical Categorization**

#### **Charaka-**

Daha Prasamana – Group of herbs that relieves burning sensation

Angamada Prassamana – Group of herbs that relieves body ache

Trishna Nigrahana – Group of herbs that relieves excessive thirst

Varnya – Skin complexion enhancing group of herbs

Vishaghna – Anti toxic group of herbs

Kandughna – Itching-relieving group of herbs.

**Sushruta**—Salasaradi, Sarivadi, Patoladi, Priyangvadi, Guducyadi

**Vagbhata**- Asanadi, Patoladi, Sarivadi, Priyangvadi, Guducyadi

**Distribution**- found in dry- scrub forests, Vindhya mountains, mainly in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu

#### **Varieties:**

There are mainly two varieties.

- White Sandalwood – Shweta Chandana – Santalum album
- Red Sandalwood – Rakta Chandana – Pterocarpus santalinus –

Dhanvantari Nighantu – Five – Chandana, Rakta Chandana (red), Kuchandana (Patranga), Kaleeyaka and Barbarika

Kaiyadeva Nighantu – three – Rakta (red), Peeta (yellow), Pandu (white)

Sodala Nighantu – 8 types – Gosheersha, Shreepriya, Sambhrana, Kakubha, Barbarika, Rakta chandana, Patanga, Harichandana.

### **Sandalwood medicinal Properties**

Rasa (taste) – Tikta (bitter) Madhura (sweet)

Guna (qualities)– Laghu (light), Rooksha (dryness)

Vipaka- Katu – Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion.

Veerya – Sheeta – Cold potency

Effect on Tridosha – Balances Kapha and Pitta Dosha.

**Part used** – Heart wood (Kanda Sara), Sandalwood oil

### **Dosage –**

Powder 3-4 grams in divided dose per day,

decoction 50-100 ml – in divided dose.

Oil – 5 – 10 drops, in divided dose per day.

### **Sandalwood benefits:**

- )Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 25)– Sandalwood (Chandana) is best in reliving bad odor, burning sensation and best to apply as paste.
- Rakta Prasadana – Detoxifies blood, useful in bleeding disorders
- Vrushya – acts as aphrodisiac
- Dahahara, Antardaha hara – relieves internal burning sensation, seen in Pitta imbalance conditions such as gastritis, sore throat, laryngitis, sun stroke etc.
- Pittasrahara – useful in bleeding disorders such as nasal bleeding, menorrhagia etc.
- Vishahara – anti toxic
- Trushnahara – relieves thirst

- Krumighna – Relieves worm infestation, useful in infected wounds
- Shishira – coolant
- Ahladana – brings about pleasant effect, nourishes sense organs
- Klamahara, Shramahara – Relieves tiredness, fatigue
- Shoshahara – relieves emaciation, dehydration
- Varnya – Improves skin tone and complexion
- It acts as diuretic, used in treating bladder inflammation, cystitis, urethritis vaginitis.
- It is used in eye disorders involving excessive secretion, redness and burning
- It is useful in menorrhagia and excessive white discharge (leucorrhoea).
- It is useful to control anger (by balancing Pitta). Hence useful in psychiatric disorders such as Mania, Schizophrenia etc. Hence used as ingredient in Manasamitra Vatakam.
- Chandan is used in acute dermatitis, gonorrhoea, palpitations.

### **Use of sandalwood in controlling sexual urge, celibacy:**

Sandalwood is used in Hindu Pooja rituals since thousands of years. Reason for this is quite intriguing. Sandalwood in small doses acts as aphrodisiac, due to its tiny sweet taste and coolant properties. But it is also very useful in controlling sexual urge and maintaining celibacy – Brahmacharya. This is the same reason; Sandalwood is used as main ingredient in Chandanasava – a fermented Ayurvedic medicine with Sandalwood as main ingredient, which is used in treating Spermatorrhoea (Called as Shukra Meha in Ayurveda).

Spermatorrhoea is – flow of semen along with urine. Read more about

### **Chandanasav**

For this exact same reason, Tulsi – Holy Basil is also used in Hindu spiritual practices

And for this same reason, having 250 – 500 mg of Chandana powder at night is a good remedy for premature ejaculation. Premature ejaculation occurs where speed of excitement crosses the speed formal proceedings. Sandalwood helps to control mind better.

#### **Usage of Sandalwood in different seasonal regimens:**

**During spring,** Juices, fermented drinks and Beverages of grape juice, sharambu (extract of sandalwood) is advised.

One should smear his body with saffron, camphor, sandalwood and Aguru ( Aquilaria Agallocha). They reduce itching and body odour. This was the ancient perfume.

**In summer,** during night, after smearing body with sandalwood paste, one should sleep in open airy roof, which is cooled by moon rays.

#### **Sandalwood paste external application:**

A paste made of it, applied externally relieves burning sensation, improves skin complexion, cleanses wounds and stops secretions.

Its paste is applied over forehead to relieve migraine, headache.

In herpes its paste helps to relieve pain and burning.

Its powder rubbed into hands, helps to relieve sweaty palms. (Also gives a special fragrance to your palms).

It helps to check excessive sweating and bad odour. For this same reason, sandalwood oil is extensively used in room fresheners, perfumes, incense sticks etc.

#### **Sandalwood essential oil:**



Sandalwood oil contains similar properties. It is coolant and diuretic. 1-3 drops is added to cranberry juice to enhance benefits.

The oil can be pressed from the wood or extracted with alcohol or water. It acts as antiseptic and disinfectant. It is also used in bronchitis.

#### **Sandalwood side effects:**

Because it is a coolant, people with asthma need a little care while taking it or it can be mixed with equal quantities of pepper powder to balance out the coolant effect.

It is safe to use in children and lactating mothers. For pregnancy use, it needs to be taken under medical supervision.

#### **How to take?**

250 – 500 mg of sandalwood can be consumed along with water, in the morning or afternoon.

To prepare its decoction (Kashayam), a tablespoon of sandalwood powder is mixed into two cups of water, boiled and reduced to half a cup. This in a dose of 20 ml, twice a day can be consumed.

#### **Ayurvedic medicines with Sandalwood as ingredient:**

**Chandanadi Kashayam** – used in the treatment of fever, cough, thirst etc.

**Marma Gulika** – used in cardiac and liver disorders

Sandalwood along with other herbs such as Vacha, Agar, Jatamansi, Camphor etc is used for fumigation of fermentation vessel, in the preparation of Arishta and Asava – Alcoholic Ayurvedic medicines.

## **AMLA BENEFITS, DOSE, USAGE, SIDE EFFECTS – COMPLETE AYURVEDA**

### **DETAILS**

Amla or Amalaki can be said as the most used Ayurvedic ingredient. It is a food as well as medicine. The little fruit is stuffed with innumerable health benefits. The word Amla refers to sour, which is its predominant taste. Its botanical name is *Emblica officinalis* or *Phyllanthus emblica*.

Hindi name - Amla

English name - Indian Gooseberry

Telugu name - Usiri Kaya, Usheeri Kayi,

Kannada name - Nelli

Tamil name - Nellikai

Malayalam - Nelli

Farsi name - Amlaj

### **Sanskrit Synonyms:**

Amalaki – having sour taste

Dhatri – takes care of the patient like a mother.

Shriphala – fruit is auspicious

Amrutaphala – As good as nectar.

Vayastha, Vayasya – anti aging

Tishyaphala, Sheetaphala – has coolant property

### **Classical categorization:**

#### **Charaka Samhita**

Jvaraghna – Group of herbs that are useful in fever

Kasaghna – Group of herbs that are useful in cough and cold

Virechanopaga – Group of herbs that are useful to induce purgation.

Kushtaghna – Group of herbs that are useful in skin diseases

Vayasthapana – Anti aging group of herbs

**Sushruta Samhita:** Amalakyadi, Parushakadi and Triphala group of herbs.

**Vagbhata:** Parushakadi group of herbs.

As per Charaka, it is one of those ingredients that can be taken on daily basis.

(Pathya). (Reference: Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 5/12)

vidyādāmalake sarvān rasāṃllavaṇavarjitān | |147| |

rūkṣaṃ svādu kaṣāyāmlaṃ kaphapittaharaṃ param | – Charaka Sutrasthana 27

Amla (*Emblica officinalis* Gaertn.) contains all tastes except salt.

Rooksha – dry

Swadu – sweet

Kashaya – astringent

#### **Ancient interesting facts about Amla:**

- In Vedic period, it was added into bathing water. Charaka has mentioned Amalaki as the best among anti aging herbs.
- Amalaki has sour as the main taste. Usually sour taste increases Pitta but Amla balances Pitta.
- Though amla is little sweetish, it is used as an ingredient in many Ayurvedic anti diabetic medicines like Mehari Choorna, Nishamalaki Choorna etc.
- Amla is the main ingredient of Chyawanprash.

#### **Amla medicinal qualities:**

Rasa (taste) – Amalaki contains all the five tastes (sour, sweet, bitter, astringent and pungent) except salt taste. Sour is dominant taste.

Vipaka (taste conversion after digestion): Madhura (sweet)

Veerya (potency): Sheeta (cold)

**Effect on Tridosha** - balances all the three Doshas, especially Kapha and Pitta.

**Distribution:** It is available naturally or cultivated throughout Tropical parts of India.

**Amla – medicinal qualities:**

Vayasthapana – Of all the anti aging herbs, Amla is the best.

Chakshushya – good for eyes, improves vision power

Sarvadoshaghna – Balances Vata, Pitta and kapha

It balances Vata due to its sour taste

It balances Pitta dosha due to its sweetness and coldness

It balances Kapha dosha due to dryness and astringent properties.

It is quite similar to Haritaki in qualities.

Raktapittaghna – useful in bleeding disorders.

Pramehaghna – Useful in diabetes and urinary tract disorders.

Vrushya – aphrodisiac

Kanthyā – useful in throat diseases, improves voice, good for throat.

Hrudya – good for heart.

Daahahara – relieves burning sensation.

Jvarahara – useful in fever.

Rasayana – anti aging, rejuvenative.

Amalaki churna is used in preparing a type of salt called Vida Lavana

**The Amla seed kernel** is sweet and astringent. It is useful in the treatment of

- Vrushya – natural aphrodisiac
- Pradara – uterine bleeding disorders such as menorrhagia, metrorrhagia etc
- Chardi – vomiting
- Balances Vata and Pitta

- Kasahara – relieves cold and cough

But seed kernel should be avoided during excessive diarrhea, abdominal colic, purpural disorders and in pure Vata conditions.

**Amla side effects:**

There are no side effects. It is safe for children and during pregnancy and lactation.

But because it is slightly coolant, some people with cold, cough may observe that the symptoms are worsening, if they are eating Amla fruit or taking Amla powder alone.

**Amla juice benefits –**

The juice extract of amla fruit is used for grinding with other herbs in preparation of Amlapittantak Lauh, a medicine used in gastritis.

**Amla juice for oral consumption:**

The best way to consume amla is to eat it afresh. If you are not comfortable with that, you can also crush its pulp to extract juice and drink it. Dose for such extracted juice is 10- 20 ml per day.

**Q: Can we drink amla juice early morning on empty stomach? If yes should I drink with warm or normal water? How many Amla should be used to extract its juice?**

A: you can drink amla juice in the morning. You can mix equal amounts of water before drinking. It can be consumed on empty stomach. But after taking this, avoid coffee / tea / milk for at least 45 minutes.

The number of amla to be used depends on the size. Ideally 5 – 10 ml in the morning is good.

If you are considering readily available Amla juice, then follow the guidelines on the label to dilute it and for dosage. If they contain added preservative, it is best to limit it to few weeks time.

### **Is frozen amla as good as fresh amla?**

Any fruit, which is fresh, is always better. However, due to seasonality of the Amla fruit, it is not available throughout the year. Hence, for the sake of convenience, it can be frozen and used as and when required. I would say, it is not as good as fresh amla, but still good enough to use.

### **Is Amla incompatible with milk?**

Yes, all sour foods and herbs, including amalaki, are incompatible with milk, because Amla curdles it.

Solution? You need to give at least 30 minutes gap between Amla and milk. For example, if you are prescribed Amla capsule, along with Turmeric capsule with milk, then take Amla capsule before food, have food, and then take turmeric capsule with milk. This will ensure that the milk and Amla are separated.

## **HOW TO EAT AMLA FRUIT AND AMLA POWDER BASED ON YOUR BODY TYPE AND NEEDS?**

Amla – Indian gooseberry is a best herb for rejuvenation in Ayurveda. It is a major ingredient in Chyawanprash. Here are many suggestions on how to eat Amla, based on your body type, Dosha imbalance and health conditions.

### **How to Eat Amla fruit? –**

If fresh Amla fruit is available, then you can eat it as such, or make salads, chutney, and pickle with it to enjoy fresh Amla fruit in different ways. If fresh amla is not available, then amla powder can be consumed.

### **How to consume Amla Powder?**

If you wish to take Amla, then consuming Chyawanprash is a good way. But for some reason, if you do not like Chyawanprash, you can make Amla recipe along with different liquids, based on your body type, body needs, disease conditions and Dosha imbalance.

### **Amla powder for Vata balance –**

If you have Vata imbalance, like joint diseases, gas trouble, then Amla can be taken along with Sesame oil (gingili oil). The quantity can be – one teaspoon of amla with two teaspoons of sesame oil. If you do not like the taste of sesame oil, you can make a paste of amla powder and sesame oil and swallow it with hot water, before food.

**Amla powder for Pitta balance –** If you have Pitta imbalance, like digestion problems or skin related issues like acne, you can have a teaspoon of Amla

along with a teaspoon of ghee (clarified butter), followed by a cup of hot water, before food.

Another way to take Amla powder for Pitta is to take a teaspoon of it, along with jaggery, before food.

**Amla powder for Kapha balance** – For Kapha balance, for diseases like obesity, respiratory diseases etc, you may have a teaspoon of Amla churna along with a teaspoon of honey.

If none of these are available, you can simply add amla powder into water and drink it as such.

So in one way or the other, make sure to include some Amla in your diet.

**Q:** Do amla candy and Amla ka murrabba has same benefits as amla powder? Can I take them empty stomach in the morning with luke warm honey-lemon water? Or what is the best time to take it?

**A:** I assume that Amla candy is Amla + sugar. Murabba is also made with amla fruits dipped in sugar syrup. So, I think they both should be similar. They both pacify Pitta. Morning or afternoon, one hour before food is the best time to take it. You can take it with honey-lemon water.

**Q: Is Amla chutney recipe a great way to consume Amla?**

Yes it is. You can make Chutney with Amla pulp paste by adding a few spices and reap its benefits.

**Q: What are the health benefits of amla juice?**

Amla juice is made with fresh fruits with sweetening agents. It helps to balance Pitta and useful to relieve burning sensation. Other than this, it contains all the



inherent benefits of Amalaki.

**Q: Is eating Amla during pregnancy good?**

A: As per Ayurveda, Amla can be consumed during pregnancy. But make sure that the powder or fruit that you collect from market is of good quality.

## **TULSI – OCIMUM SANCTUM – BENEFITS, RESEARCH, SIDE EFFECTS**

Tulsi, Holy Basil – The plant with an auspicious name has medicinal usage extending from reducing ill effects of radiotherapy of cancer to maintaining Brahmacharya – Celibacy.

**Botanical Name-** Ocimum Sanctum Linn.

**Family** –LAMIACEAE, Labiatae – Tulasi Kula

### **Vernacular Names**

Kannada name - Sri Tulasi

Hindi name - Tulsi

English name - Indian Basil/ Holy Basil/ Sacred Basil

Telugu and Marathi - Tulasi

Malayalam name - Tulasi

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Tulasi, Tulsi – There is no other herb equivalent to this.

Gouri, Nagamata, Bhutaghni, Bhutapriya, Bhuteshta, Bhutapati, Apetarakshasi,

Gramya – found in every household

Surasa – having good taste, having juice extract

Sulaghni, Subhaga, Sulabha – auspicious

Surabhi, Svadu Gandha – having good scent

Sumanjari, Bahumanjari – having beautiful inflorescence

Pavani, Devadundubhi, Visnuvallabha, Haripriya – beloved by Lord Vishnu, God.

### **Different varieties**

Bhavaprakasha and Raja Nighantu have reference of two varieties –

Shukla Tulsi – white variety – *Ocimum americanum* Linn. and

Krishna Tulsi – Black variety – *Ocimum sanctum* Linn.

Other types of are also used in the name of Holy Basil – *Ocimum basilicum* and *Ocimum gratissimum*

### **Holy Basil Medicinal Properties:**

Rasa (taste) – Katu (pungent), Tikta (bitter)

Guna (qualities) – Laghu (lightness), Rooksha (dryness),

Teekshna – piercing

Vipaka – Katu – Undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion

Veerya – Ushna – Hot potency

### **Effect on Tridosha -**

Vatahara, Kaphahara – balances Vata and Kapha Dosha

Pittavardhini – increases Pitta dosha

**Part used:** Leaf, Root, Seed

### **Dosage**

Fresh Juice 10-20 ml

Root decoction 50-100 ml

Seed powder 3-6 g.

### **Medicinal uses:**

- Kapha Vinashini – balances Kapha dosha, useful to relieve excess sputum production
- Krumidosha, Krumihara – Anti microbial. Tulsi plant is one of the best anti viral herbs of Ayurveda.

- Ruchikrut – improves taste, relieves anorexia
- Agnivardhini, Vahni Deepani – improves digestion strength
- Tuvara – astringent
- Tikta – bitter
- Hrudya – acts as cardiac tonic, congenial for heart, useful to relieve cholesterol deposition in blood vessels.
- Dahavardhini – increases burning sensation
- Shwasahara – useful in treatment of asthma and chronic respiratory disorders.
- Kasahara – useful in cough and cold
- Hidhmahara – useful in repeated hiccups
- Vamihara – relieves vomiting
- Parshvaruk – relieves pain in flanks
- Kushta – useful in skin diseases with pain and itchiness
- Visha – anti toxic
- Kruchra –relieves difficulty in urination
- Ashma – useful in kidney and bladder stones
- Druk – useful in infectious eye disorders
- Bhutahara – useful in psychiatric disorders

As per Bhavaprakasha, both white and black varieties have similar qualities.

**Indian Basil for urticaria, itching:** For itching rashes, tulasi leaves are made into paste and applied over the skin.

**For sinusitis and headache:**

Basil's fresh leaves are crushed to extract juice. Two drops of this juice is put

into both the nostrils on empty stomach. This helps to relieve sinusitis related headache.

**Tulasi plant for bad breath problem:**

Daurgandhyahara – chewing one or two holy basil leaves daily helps to relieve bad breath issue. This is not only due to its good smell, but it also improves digestion. Low digestion is a strong cause for bad breath.

**Tulsi Tea –**

An easy way to use Tulsi daily is as follows –

Take Tulasi leaves, wash it, dry under sunshade, and powder it.

Mix 1 part of Tulsi leaf powder to 10 parts of tea powder.

Use this tea powder to make tea and enjoy. But it is best to avoid adding milk to this Tulsi tea.

## **TURMERIC – CURCUMA LONGA – BENEFITS, USAGE, DOSE, SIDE EFFECTS**

Turmeric is one of the very useful and famous Ayurvedic herbs. It is used in many forms and through many routes of administration, such as – nasal, oral, over the skin etc.

**Botanical name** - Curcuma longa Linn. (Curcuma domestica val)

Family- Scitamineae (Zingiberaceae) – Ardraka Kula

### **Vernacular Names**

Hindi Name - Haldi, Hardi

Telugu Name - Pasupu, Pasupu Kommulu

English Name - Turmeric

Tamil Name - Manjal

Kannada Name - Arishina

Punjabi Name - Hardal

Bengali name - Halud

Gujarati name - Haladar

Marathi name - Halad

Arabian name - Kumkum

Farsi name – Zardchob

### **Sanskrit Synonyms-**

Haridra – *Harim Varna Drati Shodhayati cha* – which improves skin complexion and cleanses skin.

Kanchani – has colour of gold

Nisha – which is as beautiful as star full night

Yoshitpriya – liked by women

Varavarnini – which imparts great colour to the skin.

Hattavilasini – increases the value of the market / shop that sell turmeric,

Krimighni – relieves worm and microbial infection

Peeta, Gauri – has yellow colour,

### **Classical Categorization**

#### **Charaka –**

Lekhaneeya Gana – group of herbs having scraping property

Kushtaghna – group of herbs that relieve skin diseases

Kandughna – group of herbs that relieve itching sensation

Krimighna – group of herbs that relieve worm / microbial infection

Shiro-virechana – group of herbs that are useful to remove Dosha (toxins) from head.

#### **Sushruta-**

Haridradi, Mustadi, Slesmashamana (group of herbs that balance Kapha)

**Vagbhata-** Haridradi, Mustadi

### **Different Varieties**

Haridra is only one but we come across the description of two Haridrads in the texts viz., Haridra (turmeric – *Curcuma longa*) and Daru haridra (tree turmeric).

In many Ayurvedic medicines, Turmeric and tree turmeric are used together.

Sodhala has opined that both these are antidotes for many poisons.

Bhavamisra described Haridra (turmeric – *Curcuma longa*), Amragandhi

Haridra (*Curcuma amada*) Karpura Haridra, Vana haridra (*Curcuma aromatica*) and Daru Haridra (turmeric – *Curcuma longa*).

**Distribution-** Cultivated throughout India.

## **Medicinal Properties of turmeric –**

Rasa (taste) – Tikta (bitter), Katu (pungent)

Guna (qualities) – Rooksha (dryness), Laghu (lightness)

Vipaka- Katu – undergoes pungent taste conversion after digestion.

Veerya- Ushna – Hot potency

**Effect on Tridosha** – because of its hotness, it balances Vata and Kapha.

Because of its dryness, pungent and bitter taste, it balances Kapha. Due to bitterness, it balances Pitta. Hence it balances all the three Doshas.

**Part used-** Rhizome

**Dosage-** fresh juice 10-20 ml, powder 1-3 grams

## **Therapeutic uses of turmeric as per Ayurveda**

- Haridra Pramehaharaanam – Of all the herbs useful in diabetes, turmeric is the most beneficial. It is very beneficial in all urinary tract infections.
- Vishanut – useful in toxic conditions
- Mehanut – useful in diabetes and urinary tract infections
- Kanduhara – relieves itching sensation due to allergy
- Ksuhtahara – used in wide variety of skin diseases
- Vranahara – useful for quick wound healing
- Dehavarna vidhayini – improves skin complexion
- Vishodhini – natural detoxifier
- Krumihara – relieves intestinal worms and infected wounds
- Pinasa nashini – useful in running nose, Upper respiratory tract infection
- Aruchinashini – useful in anorexia
- Useful antidote for insect bites on external application. It has anti toxic effect even on oral administration.



- Panduhara – useful in anaemia, initial stages of liver disorders
- Apachihara – useful in wounds, sinuses
- Twakdoshajit – detoxifies blood and skin
- Vishothajit – natural anti inflammatory
- Vatasranut – useful in gout.
- Its external application relieves inflammation, swelling, pain, improves skin complexion, cleanses and heals wounds.
- Its fumes are inhaled to relieve hiccups, asthma and poisonous conditions.
- Pitta Rechaka – It expels increased Pitta out of the body by means of purgation.
- Turmeric relieves constipation.
- It is used for external application in facial hair removal.

**Turmeric for cancer prevention** – A recent study published in the *Asian Pacific Journal of Cancer Prevention* found that a dose-dependent administration of curcumin effectively activated degeneration of liver cancer cells.

### **How to consume turmeric daily?**

Turmeric can be one of the spices that you use in your daily diet. Or whatever you are eating, just add a pinch of turmeric powder over it and enjoy its benefits.

Pitta dominant people may sometimes experience increased body heat with turmeric use. They can add a pinch of turmeric to a cup of milk and have it. Coldness of milk will balance out the excess hotness.

### **Turmeric side effects –**

Excess use of turmeric, especially during summer can cause increase in hotness.

### **Ayurvedic medicines with turmeric as ingredient –**

**Haridra Khanda** – It is very useful in allergic rhinitis and allergic skin conditions. It is also used to improve skin complexion.

**Khadiradi Vati** – It is used in the treatment of bad breath, mouth ulcers.

**Nisa Kathakadi Kashayam** – used in diabetes management

**Nishamalaki Churna** – Used in treating pre-diabetes.

**Question:** Turmeric if used in curries and if taken raw will be of same effect?

i.e does cooking reduces the healing effect of turmeric?

Answer: Turmeric is used in many Ayurvedic medicines, wherein it is fried in ghee, boiled with water to make Kashayam etc. Hence, I do not think there will be reduction in qualities, if it is cooked in mild – moderate heat.

### **Turmeric in Vedas:**

- Turmeric was used for long period, upto one year, to improve memory and concentration.
- Turmeric can be used as part of food and also can be applied all over the body.
- Because it colours the cloth (Ranjana) – it is called as Rajani.
- It is useful in allergic skin disorders.

## **SUGAR CANE JUICE BENEFITS**

Sugar cane juice is probably the most popular and widely consumed juice in India. An interesting fact is that it is in use since thousands of years. In Ayurveda, sugar cane juice, and its other derivatives such as jaggery is used in many formulations including *lehyams* (herbal jams), *Asava*, *Arishta* etc. Let us know what its benefits are.

### **Sugarcane juice benefits:**

Sugar cane juice is nourishing and diuretic.

Sugarcane is cold in nature. It is one of the best natural coolant drink.

Sugar cane slightly increases Kapha Dosha and calms Pitta Dosha.

It has a low glycemic index, which keeps the body's metabolism healthy and helps maintain a healthy body weight. Roughly one teaspoon of raw sugar contains only eleven calories.

Sugarcane is rich in Phosphorus, calcium, iron, magnesium and potassium.

Sugarcane is an alkalizing substance, and therefore is beneficial in fighting cancer. Studies have shown that it is proven to be effective in fighting prostate and breast cancer cells. Further, it is exceptionally beneficial for rehydration as it not only cools the body but also energizes the body with a high quantity of useful carbohydrates and protein. The nutrients found in sugarcane are beneficial to inner organ functioning, including the kidneys, heart and brain.

### **For whom Sugar cane juice suits best?**

Sugar cane juice is ideal for those,

- who often suffer from burning sensation all over the body
- who suffer from burning sensation when urinating

- who are tired due to excess sun exposure, during summer.
- Who have Pitta body type and Vata body type.

### **Sugarcane benefits as per Charaka -**

vRSyaH zItaH saraH snigdho bRMhaNo madhuro rasaH |

zleSmalo bhakSitasyekSoryAntrikastu vidahyate | |237| |

zaityAt prasAdAnmAdhuryAt pauNDrakAdvaMzako varaH | 238 | – Charaka

Samhita Sutrasthana 27

When taken by chewing, sugarcane juice is

Vrushya – aphrodisiac

Sheeta – cold

Sara – laxative, promotes movement of liquids in channels

Snigdha – unctuous, oily

Brumhana – improves nourishment

Madhura – sweet

Shleshmala – increases Kapha

But the machine pressed juice causes burning sensation (indigestion).

Paundraka type of sugarcane (near to white colour) is superior to Vamshaka.

**Sugar cane juice is not ideal for those having Kapha body type.**

### **When to take Sugar cane juice?**

The best time to take sugar cane juice is the afternoon, when Pitta Dosha is predominant. It is better to avoid it during night.

### **Ayurvedic medicines with sugarcane as ingredient:**

Maharajaprasarini thailam – used in pain due to neuro – muscular origin, as in spondylosis.

Parushakadi Lehyam – used against gastritis

Nalikerasavam – used as aphrodisiac

### **SEA SALT BENEFITS, USAGE, DOSE, SIDE EFFECTS – AYURVEDA DETAILS**

Sea salt is produced from sea water. The seawater is canalized and Sun-dried. The technique of producing Sea salt varies in different nations, depending on climate.

#### **Difference between sea salt and table salt:**

Sea salt is from the sea, it contains natural minerals in trace amounts. The quantities of these minerals depend on the sea. Table salt is mined out from the underground salt deposits. It is processed and refined to remove excess minerals. Then, it is added with iodine, to support thyroid gland. Table salt is also known as common salt.

Sea salt is called as Samudra lavana in Sanskrit.

**Chemical composition** – Sodi muras – NaCl

**Sea salt composition:** Apart from sodium chloride, it also contains magnesium, potassium, calcium and sulphate.

**Classification:** Sea salt is one among Pancha lavana. (Group of five salts) and Lavana Shastaka – group of six salts.

#### **Qualities of Samudra lavana:**

Rasa –Taste – Saline, slightly sweet taste,

Vipaka – Post digestive change in taste – Sweet

Veerya – Potency – Slightly hot. (Na Ati ushna)

Guna – Qualities – Unctuous (oily) , light to digest

Effect on Tridosha – Balances Kapha and Vata

**Functions -**

Avidahi – It does not cause burning sensation in stomach.

Bhedana – it has cutting piercing action.

Ishat Snigdha – Slightly unctuous, oily

Shulaghna – Useful in relieving abdominal colic

Na Ati Pitta– All the salts, by nature increase Pitta dosha. But sea salt does not increase Pitta to a large extent, due to its slight sweet taste.

Laghu – light to digest

Hrudya – cardiac tonic, good for heart

Deepana – improves digestion strength

Ruchikrut – improves taste of foods.

Excessive intake may cause wrinkles, blood disorders.

**Effect on Doshas** – Slightly increases Pitta, relieves abdomen pain of Kapha-Vata origin.

**Ayurvedic medicines containing sea salt as an ingredient:**

- **Chitrakadi vati** – Useful to improve digestion, in Ama – impaired digestion and metabolism.
- **Kalyana Kshara** – Used in haemorrhoids, constipation, bloating etc.
- **Saubhagya Vati** – Useful in cough, cold, bronchitis, asthma, anorexia, depression etc
- **Kalyana Gulam** – Useful in skin diseases, jaundice, fatty liver changes, ascites etc.

- **Mahashankh Vati** - Useful in the treatment of haemorrhoids, malabsorption syndrome, dyspepsia

**Side effects:** It is best to avoid more than 1.5 g of salt per day, wherever, sodium restricted diet is recommended, as in high blood pressure.

As per Ayurveda, excess use of any salt leads to imbalance of Pitta, blood vitiation and skin disorders.

## **SAINDHAVA LAVANA – ROCK SALT BENEFITS, AYURVEDA USAGE, SIDE EFFECTS**

Saindhava lavana or rock salt is considered best among all salts. It is advised for daily use as per Ayurveda. Its qualities, usage and health benefits are quite different from regular salt. Let us find out more.

**Sanskrit Synonyms:** Saindhava, Sheetashiva (because it is coolant in nature), Sindhuja (because it is found in Sindh region of Punjab), Naadeya (because it is found in the banks of rivers), Manimantha

### **Vernacular names:**

English name – Himalayan salt, Himalayan rock salt, Himalayan pink salt

Hindi name – Sendha namak, Sendha lon

Marathi name – Shende Lon

Gujarati name – Sindhalun

Bangali name – Saindhava Lavan

Tamil name – Intuppu

### **Introduction:**

It is available from mines of Punjab. It is of two varieties –

1. Shweta Saindhava – (white in colour)
2. Rakta Saindhava – (Red in colour)

Anyone of these can be regularly used in the name of Rock salt.

### **Chemical composition –**

Sodium chloride is the major ingredient making up to 98 %. It contains many useful minerals and elements like, Lithium, Magnesium, Phosphorus, Potassium, Chromium, Manganese, Iron, Zinc, Strontium, etc.

### **Qualities of Saindhava lavana:**

**Taste** – Salt, slightly sweet taste,

**Potency** – Cold



**Qualities** – Light, Unctuous,

**Effect on Tridosha** – We have learnt that salt taste usually increases Pitta, but Saindhava Lavana, being cold in potency helps to balance Pitta.

Because of its Salt taste, it balances Vata.

It helps to relieve chest congestion due to sputum accumulation, since it relieves Kapha.

Hence it is one of the rare Ayurvedic substances that balance all the three Doshas.

**Rock salt uses -**

As per Charaka, it is one of those ingredients that can be taken on daily basis.

(Pathya). (Reference: Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 5/12)

Rochana – improves taste, appetizer

Dipana – improves digestion strength

Vrushya – acts as aphrodisiac

Chakshushya – good for eyes, helps to relieve infection

Aviidahi – (unlike regular salts), Saindhava Lavana does not cause burning sensation.

Hrudya – good for heart

Hikkanashana – useful in hiccups

**Sendha namak: Use in respiratory disorders** - Kapha Vilayana, Kapha Chedana

– It helps to dissolve / disintegrate Kapha. This property is the reason, it is included in Lavana Bhaskar Churna, which is used in respiratory disorders (also in digestive disorders), because it helps to dissolve or disintegrate and expel sputum.

**Use in joint disorders of stiffness:** It is used in many medicines that are used to relieve joint stiffness – such as Dhanwantaram Tailam, Brihat Saindhavadi Taila and Saptavinshati Guggulu.

Usually, in cases of Rheumatoid arthritis, where there is stiffness of joints, Rock salt is used as an ingredient in oils for external application and tablets for oral intake.

### **How to use rock salt for fomentation?**

This is useful in cases of joint disorders, or wherever Kapha is more, as in sinusitis.

In case of joint disorders with stiffness, apply the oil prescribed by your doctor. Leave it for 10 – 15 minutes. Then, take a cup of Sendha namak inside a cloth. Make it into pack. Heat it on a pan, check for heat tolerance on your skin. Once it is tolerable, gently apply this rock salt pack over the affected joint. You can reheat and re-apply on the joints. You can do this for 4 – 5 minutes.

Even while doing Nasya therapy, after doing massage with suitable oil (as advised by doctor), you can give hot fomentation with the same technique, before using Anu taila as nasal drops. It helps to liquefy sputum and to relieve sinusitis, migraine etc.

### **Use of rock salt in Basti –**

Basti is a Panchakarma – enema procedure. While formulating the basti liquid, rock salt is added to prepare an emulsion. It helps to dissolve and expel Doshas from intestines.

**Use of Saindhava in obesity and high cholesterol** – Since it has the dissolving and disintegrating effect, it is widely used in anti-obesity products like Lavana taila and anti-cholesterol products.

**Use in gastritis and bloating** – Rock salt is widely used as ingredient in many stomach care products like Hingwastak Churna, because it improves digestion without causing stomach irritation, without worsening gastritis.

Vibandhaghna – relieves constipation, bloating.

**Culinary uses:** Rock salt is famously used in making many tasty dishes including Pani Puri, Masala Puri, Ice creams etc. Many households use rock salt as the main salt, in place of common salt.

**Rock salt side effects** – It is not indicated in people with high blood pressure, oedema and water retention.

In very high doses, it may increase blood pressure.

## **Introduction to Ayurvedic medicine**

## **EASY INTRODUCTION TO AYURVEDIC MEDICINE, TYPES, MYTHS AND FAQ**

This introduction to Ayurvedic medicine will help you understand how it has evolved in due course of time, where the research in this field is heading towards, myths that don't go away from the science of Ayurveda etc. It is the excerpts from the discussion that I conducted with a group of commerce students, recently.

### **Origin of Ayurveda –**

There is a mythological story regarding the origin of Ayurveda.

The sages of ancient times during Vedic period were using single herbs. During time of Charaka and Sushruta, at about 2000 -1000 BC, slowly they began trying multiple herbal combinations in different modes (dosage forms). These dosage forms are – paste, powder, water decoction, juice extract etc.

Later they further developed herbal jams, syrups, tablets etc.

They were able to develop this science, with meditation, experience and practice.

**Ayurveda text books** – With their knowledge and expertise, they wrote many text books, among which, Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Ashtanga Hridayam are important. Down the timeline, many others also wrote different text books.

### **Types of Ayurvedic treatment –**

#### **Panchakarma therapy –**

This is the detoxification therapy to eliminate waste products and toxins from the body. It is the first line of treatment in majority of cases.

**Oral Ayurvedic medicine** – Used as second line of treatment or as follow up to panchakarma therapy.

### **Types of Ayurvedic medicines in the market –**

**Traditional Ayurvedic medicine -**

Here, Ayurvedic Pharmacy takes up a medicinal formula from an Ayurveda text book and manufactures the medicine as per the formula.

Eg. Dasamoolarishtam, Chyawanaprasha, Trikatu Churna, Triphala etc.

### **Proprietary Ayurvedic medicine –**

Here, the manufacturer formulates his own combination of Ayurvedic herbs, blends it into his desired form, like syrup, herbal jam, tablet, capsule etc.

He tests the product in his laboratory for safety, conducts clinical trial to know efficacy, then manufactures the same after getting a licence and sells it.

### **Example:**

cervilon capsule – for neck pain,

Shatavari Kalpa granules – to improve breast milk production etc.

### **How Ayurveda is studied today?**

The course is called **BAMS** and studied for 5.5 years, in which 1 year is dedicated for internship.

The students study traditional text books like Charaka samhita, Sushruta samhita, and more. Along with that, they also study modern anatomy, physiology, pathology, patient examination methods etc.

### **How Ayurveda is different from Allopathy?**

- Ayurveda uses natural remedies for healing.
- There are comparatively lesser and milder side effects in Ayurvedic treatment.
- Ayurveda concentrates on root cause of the disease rather than symptomatic management.

### **Are Ayurvedic medicines slow to act?**

No. Even allopathic medicines take 6 – 9 months to treat tuberculosis. Cancer treatment takes months together of time. Does that mean Allopathy is slow?

Ayurveda and Allopathy – both hold their credibility in respective areas.

### **Are Ayurvedic medicines free of side effects?**

Absolutely not! Ayurvedic medicines do have side effects. For example, ginger is good for cough fever etc. But in many, it causes stomach irritation and is not suitable for a patient with sensitive stomach. Hence it is a side effect of ginger.

### **Ayurvedic medicines treat cancer?**

- Research is going on in many fields and some medicines are emerging. Treatment in early stages of cancer has been successful.
- Ayurveda holds edge in prevention of cancer with use of herbs like Giloy, Turmeric, Brahma Rasayana, Cow urine etc.
- Ayurveda also has good treatment for stress management. Stress is a proven precursor of cancer.
- Ayurvedic treatment helps to rejuvenate and energize patient who is debilitated by chemo and radiation therapies.

## **5 FACTORS THAT MAKE AYURVEDIC MEDICINES UNIQUE**

Most of the ayurvedic medicines contain 3 or more ingredients. Rarely do we find medicines prepared out of single herb or two. In fact, many of them contain 10 – 20 medicinal herbs. Around 10-15% of the formulations possess more than 40 herbs.

### **Uniqueness of Ayurvedic medicines:**

#### **1. Digestive / carminative ingredients:**

Ayurveda believes that most of the diseases are caused due to *mandagni* (indigestion). So, most of the Ayurvedic medicines contain at least one herb possessing digestive and carminative properties. Thus, depending upon the formulations,

Maricha (black pepper),

Shunti (ginger),

Pippali (long pepper),

Hingu (asafoetida),

Jeeraka (cumin seeds) etc are added in permutation and combinations.

#### **2. Catalyst , bio-enhancer – Yogavahi -**

Ayurveda usually prescribes a Yogavahi herb (which carries the active ingredient to the required site of action- target cells). Few of the drugs are well known for this action.

**Trikatu Churna** – Combination of pepper, long pepper and ginger. It acts as bio availability enhancer, when used in combination with other medicinal herbs.

They increase the availability of medicinal phyto-chemicals at the site of therapeutic action.

Madhu (honey),

Ghrita – Cow ghee



Yashtimadhu (Indian liquorice), are included in many formulations for the same reason.

### **3. Wide variety of herbs –**

Many herbal ingredients are bitter or astringent in taste, some have offensive smell, like Acorus, Paederia foetida. On the other hand, many possess sweetness like sugar candy, jaggery, honey, ghee or else the aromatic substance like cardamom, bark of cinnamon, cumin seeds, leaves of cinnamon etc. In few of the formulations, natural colouring agents are also added like Turmeric, Manjista, Daruharidra etc.

Along with the above said benefits, they contribute therapeutic actions too. Hence, while adding these additives enough care is taken so as to contribute synergetic benefit or else to avoid antagonistic action of the pre existing ingredients.

### **4. Different dosage forms based on need of the patient:**

Form of medicine too makes the formulation unique. Each kind of pharmaceutical form like

Lehya (herbal jam),

Asava (liquids),

Choorna (herbal powder mix),

Tablet, juice extracts,

Kashaya (herbal decoction) etc are advocated with particular intentions.

Usually the form of the medicine is selected based upon the stage of the illness.

For example, when digestion strength is good, but patients need nutrition, Avaleha (herbal jams) like Chyawanprash, Agastya Rasayana etc are selected.

When the patient's digestion strength is low, then spicy herbal powders like Hingvashtak Churna or Vaishvanar Churna are administered.

**5. The time of intake of medicine** also brings significant change in the action of the drug. The medicine which should be prescribed after meals, if prescribed in empty stomach may cause gastric irritation. Likewise 11 different specific time duration have been told for the intake of the medicine, depending upon the disease, stage of the illness and type of formulation.

Thus each Ayurvedic medicine is unique in its quality, action and uses depending upon the disease and the individual's body constitution. While prescribing herbal and herbo-mineral preparations, these factors should to be given much emphasize and priority in routine practice.

Article by: Dr MS Krishnamurthy and Dr Hebbar

## **7 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE TAKING AYURVEDIC MEDICINE**

If your Ayurvedic doctor has prescribed you any Ayurvedic medicine, it is better if you know the following facts.

These are based on Ayurvedic textual reference blended with my own experience in Ayurvedic clinical practice.

1. If not specified by the doctor, kashayam should be taken before food.
2. If not specified by the doctor, Asavas and Arishtas should be taken after food.
3. If not specified by the doctor, Guggulu tablets should be taken after food.
4. Chyawanprash should be taken in the morning, before / after food, with half a glass of milk or else it may cause loose stools and stomach irritation.
5. Jar containing Churnam, opened once, should be consumed (or discarded) within 6 months.
6. Jar containing Ayurvedic Gulikas (or tablets) should be consumed (or discarded) within a year.
7. Kashaya bottle should be shaken well, before it is consumed. Most of the Kashayas are sold in concentrated form. So you need to dilute the Kashaya with equal quantity of water, just before taking it.

## **7 TIPS ABOUT HOW TO CHOOSE AND USE HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS EFFECTIVELY**

These are 7 quick tips about herbal supplement usage, which is valid for anybody who is already taking or planning to take herbal supplements.

1. Before using any herbal supplement, it is always recommended to consult an Ayurvedic specialist or herbalist.
2. Do not take any irrelevant supplements such as thyroid support supplement, when you have a healthy thyroid.
3. There are a few Ayurvedic herbal supplements like Chyawanprash, which can be taken by almost everyone, but still, it is good to consult an expert before opting for any supplement.
4. Get to know the herbal ingredients of the supplements. It is always better to have knowledge of the supplements you take.
5. Do not take any Ayurvedic medicine or herbal supplement, without a proper label, describing true list of contents and method of usage.
6. Please disclose the use of supplements to your physician. A good physician will always welcome the use of appropriate herbal supplement.
7. There is a misconception that the herbal supplements purchased from other than the native country are not reliable. But if the quality control measures, latest herbal technologies are employed to ensure the safety and efficacy of the herbal medicines, then such an herbal product from any part of the world can be trusted.

## **ANUPAN – IMPORTANCE OF ADJUVANTS AND AFTER DRINKS IN FOOD AND MEDICINE**

When you visit an Ayurveda doctor, he might suggest you to take Ayurvedic medicines along with specific liquids. It may be milk, buttermilk, sugarcane juice or plain water. This drink, advised along with the medicine is called as Anupan.

**Definition of Anupana** – It is the liquid that is advised along with the medicine or after the intake of the medicine. Concept of Anupana is not limited to medicines. Even specific foods have been advised for consumption along with specific liquids.

### **Benefits of food adjuvants –**

In Ayurveda, there are specific adjuvants mentioned for specific foods. They help in

- Easy breaking down of hard food particles
- Easy digestion and assimilation
- Enhancing the qualities of food
- Enhancing the bio-availability of food nutrients in blood vessels and body tissues
- Help avoid / mask side effects of food items
- Similar to a drop of oil spreads rapidly in water, with the help of Anupana, medicine / food spreads rapidly in the body.

### **Example of food adjuvants –**

- Cold water is advised while eating food articles prepared with barley and wheat.

- While consuming curds, wine and honey are used as adjuvant.
- Hot water is the ideal after-drink while consuming (food articles prepared from) liquid part of curds, fat rich buttermilk, ghee, oil, fats, vegetable dishes, green gram dishes and legumes.

#### **The choice of Anupana, made as per the body type –**

- Beer is the ideal after drink for lean person, who wishes to gain weight.
- A teaspoon of honey, mixed with a cup of water is ideal Anupana for obese person.
- Meat soup is good for emaciated, tired people.
- Wine is ideal after meat and for people with poor digestion strength.
- Milk is ideal for people who are debilitated due to chronic diseases and treatment, for people who walk for long distances, who speak for long hours, who indulge in sexual activities regularly, who have done fasting for a long time, who have exposed themselves to sun for a long period and who indulge in tiresome activities. Milk is ideal drink for the aged and children.

#### **Disease specific Anupana –**

In case of diseases, Anupana helps in

- Easy absorption of medicine from gut.
- The treatment of the disease.

**Example:** A dilute water decoction of Giloy is very useful in gout and diabetes.

A dilute neem decoction is a helpful anupana during fever and infection disorders, because of neem's antimicrobial properties.

### **Anupana for specific herbs –**

- **Garlic** – If processed and taken along with milk helps to reduce its pungency.
- **Amla powder** - Amla powder can be taken along with different drinks for specific health benefits. For example, a teaspoon of amla along with a teaspoon of honey and a few drops of ghee is useful in eye disorders.
- **Bhallataka** – A strong pungent and hot herb, for which, milk is usually advised as Anupan.

### **Medicine specific Anupana –**

- **Chyawanprash** is administered along with milk. It helps to balance out the Pitta increasing tendency and hot potency of Chyawanprash.
- **Akika Pishti** – a medicine used in treating , heart diseases, cough, heart burn, etc, is administered along with honey in Pitta disorders, along with Ashwagandha in Vata disorders and along with fresh ginger juice in case of cough and heart ailments.
- **Vettumaran gulika**
  - In fever, it is given along with fresh ginger juice.
  - In Vata imbalance and bloating, it is administered along with cumin seed decoction.
  - In vomiting, it is given along with decoction of kacchura (Curcuma zeodaria).
  - In Anurea or difficulty in urination, urine retention it is given along with tender coconut water.
  - In abdomen pain, it is given along with ajamoda arka (oma water)
  - In abdominal gaseous distension and tumour, it is given along with fresh garlic juice extract.

- **Mahayograj Guggul-**

- For Vata diseases like arthritis it is usually co-prescribed with Rasnadi Kashayam
- For Pitta imbalance diseases, it is administered with decoction of Kakolyadi group of herbs.
- For kapha imbalance disease, it is administered with Aragwadhadi kashayam.
- For treating diabetes; it is used along with kashayam of Daruharidra – *Berberis aristata*.
- For treating anaemia, it is administered along with cow urine.
- For treating obesity, it is administered along with honey.
- For treating skin diseases, it is given along with neem decoction.
- For treating gout, it is given with Giloya – *Tinospora cordifolia*.
- For treating pain and inflammation, it is given with kashayam of long pepper.
- For treating rat bite, it is given with kashayam of Patala – *Stereospermum suaveolens*
- For treating eye diseases, it is given along with Triphala kashayam
- For treating ascites, it is given along with Punarnavadi kashayam.

- **Swarna Bhasma – Gold calx**

- For burning sensation, it is administered along with bile of fish.
- It gives aphrodisiac effect if administered along with Bhringaraja (*Eclipta alba*).
- It improves strength and immunity, if administered along with milk.
- It is good for eyes, if taken along with Punarnava (*Boerhaavia diffusa*)
- It improves memory if taken along with Vacha – Sweet flag (rhizome) – *Acorus calamus*.



- It improves skin complexion if administered along with saffron.
- In poisoning, it is administered along with an herb called Nirvisha.
- In psychiatric conditions, it is given along with ginger, clove and pepper.
- **Narayana Churna**
  - It is administered along with buttermilk for people with ascites.
  - It is administered with Badara kashaya (Decoction of jujube) for treatment of abdominal distension.
  - It is administered with wine for treating bloating and Vata diseases.
  - It is administered with watery portion of curds for treating constipation.
  - It is administered along with pomegranate juice for treating piles.
  - To treat anal itch, it is administered along with kokum juice.
  - To treat indigestion, it is given with warm water.
- **Yogendra Ras**, an Ayurvedic medicine, with herbal and mineral ingredients, in tablet form. It is used in treating neuro-muscular conditions and diabetes. It is traditionally administered along with Triphala Kashayam
- **Navaratna Raj Mrigank Ras**
  - In inflammatory conditions and oedema, Vata diseases like Paralysis, facial palsy, tremors, diabetes, it is administered along with long pepper, honey and rock salt.
  - In Gout, it is administered along with Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*) and jaggery.
  - In bloating, anorexia, abdominal colic, dyspepsia, cough, epilepsy, asthma, malabsorption syndrome, liver diseases, jaundice, fever,

phthisis, emaciation, muscle wasting, it is given along with Guduchi Satva and honey.

- Honey, fresh ginger juice, neem juice, water and milk are the traditional Anupanams for Arogya Vardhini Bati.
- **Vayu Gulika** – used in treating digestive and respiratory disorders. It is administered along with cumin seed decoction.
- **Mukta pishti** – made of pearls, used in ulcerative colitis, mania, psychosis, is administered along with honey, butter or milk.

### **Anupana based on Dosha imbalance -**

Anupana is selected based on the predominance of Doshas in a particular disease. The qualities of Anupana should be opposite to the Predominant Dosha.

- In Vata disorders, Anupana should have oily and hot properties.
- In Pitta disorders, Anupana should have sweet and cold properties.
- In Kapha disorders, Anupana should have dry and hot properties.

### **References: Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 27**

Generally post prandial drinks should have the properties opposite to those of the food taken, to make the food more wholesome to even out excess singular qualities.

- In conditions caused by the aggravation of vata, oily and hot after drinks are useful.
- In Pitta sweet and cold
- Kapha – oily and hot post drinks are useful.
- For Kshaya – emaciation, meat soup is the useful post- prandial drink.

- Milk is the post- prandial drink like ambrosia for those fatigued due to indolence in fast, long walk, long speeches, sex and exposure to wind and sun.
- For nourishing emaciated individuals, wine is the best post- prandial drink.
- For causing emaciation of over corpulent individuals honey water is the useful post- prandial drink.
- Alcohol serves as a useful post-prandial drink for those accustomed to alcoholic drinks as well as meat, and suffering from loss of digestion, insomnia, accompanied with drowsiness, grief, fear and exhaustion.

### **Effects of after-food drinks on the individual and the food:**

Reference: Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 27

Post- prandial drinks in general, bring about refreshment, pleasure, energy, nourishment, satisfaction and steadiness in the food eaten. It helps in breaking down, softening, digesting, proper assimilation and instant diffusion of the food taken.

### **Summing up:-**

anupānaṃ hitaṃ yuktaṃ tarpayatyāśu mānavam |

sukhaṃ pacati cāhāramāyuṣe ca balāya ca || 326 || – Charaka Sutra 27

Thus it is said:

Administration of wholesome post-prandial drink refreshes instantaneously and helps individual in easy digestion, resulting in the promotion of longevity and strength.

### **Contra indications of Anupana (after-drinks )**

- Water should not be taken after food by those suffering from diseases of the head due to the vitiation of Vata.
- Hiccup, dyspnoea, cough as well as tuberculosis.

- It is also prohibited for those who indulge in singing, speech and study with loud sound because it remains in the throat and chest, and removes from there the unctuous substances taken along with food resulting in the further aggravation of the condition.
- In some diseases, taking excess of liquids is not advisable. In such diseases, Anupana should be used in very little quantity or should not be used. Such diseases are –  
E.N.T & ophthalmic problems, hiccups, dyspnoea, cough and chest injury.  
Singers, dancers, students who read for long time should also take very less Anupana.

#### **Difference between medicine and Anupana –**

Medicine is usually given in higher dose (higher strength and concentration) when compared to Anupana. Anupana is administered in larger dose.

Medicine is usually more potent.

Medicine is highly concentrated. Anupana is usually dilute.

Medicine is usually not a part of diet. But Anupana is a part of diet.

## **THANK THE DOCTOR WHO CUTS YOUR MEDICINES DOWN**

When you visit a doctor, you are obviously expecting him to prescribe something for your condition. But many a times the doctor may decide to cut down on your previous medicines rather than prescribing a new one. He may do this for many reasons.

### **First, be glad your doctor did that.**

Pharma companies lure the doctors to prescribe more and more medicines to the patient. In such an environment, if someone suggests to reduce medications, be thankful to such a doctor. It means the following things –

- He really cares for you and your health.
- He is not very money minded.
- He believes in your immune power more than medicine power.
- He knows that medicines are just tools to cure disease. Food, exercise etc natural ways are the best way of healing.

### **Why would a doctor cut down medicines?**

- Because you are recovering faster.
- You already are using a medicine which is required for your current condition.
- The alternative herbal supplement that you're taking is quite sufficient for your current symptom.
- The new disease that you're suffering from is due to a side effect of combination of the previous two medicines. So, if you stop them, your current symptoms will be relieved.

- The current medicine that the doctor would prescribe is a lot safer and yet powerful than the previous two medicines that you were taking, so he might delete the previous two and add just one new.
- The doctor believes that if you exercise for 10 minutes a day, it is more than sufficient for you to lose weight, than taking a weight loss pill.
- The doctor feels that applying calming hair oil would be sufficient to induce sleep than taking sleeping pills.

So, these are a few things that you can understand when your doctor removes some medicines from your list. If you any doubts, ask the doctor openly, why you do not need the medicines. A good doctor will always answer your query with a smile.

But do not be in a perception that only medicine heals your disease. Your body strength and will power also play an important role in healing your disease. Medicines are mere tools.

Q: How many rasayanas/plants can I consume each day without taking the risk of weakening my body/enzymatic antioxidant system/immune system? When I asked MAPI, ten years ago, they said four rasayanas.

I've just read an article in a French magazine about the risk of taking too many antioxidants and I would like you to help me sorting out.

I wonder whether taking 20 + it is not too much. But in the past I was reassured by a doctor in New-York can prescribe 50 pills a day and even more (as much as necessary!!!).

A:

I firmly believe in lesser the medicines / herbals, the better.

One product / medicine might have multiple ingredients – Chyawanprash or Amrit Kalash, Brahma Rasayana etc.

Usually, I advice against too many herbal products, at one time.

The purpose of poly-herbal combination itself is to avoid taking many herbal remedies, so that all the required ingredients are readily available in one nutshell.

Hence, be it for the purpose of Rasayana or any treatment, I would not recommend a combination of more than 10 herbs / medicines. (These can be, for example 10 poly herbal combinations).

## **ARE YOU TOO MUCH OBSESSED TO TAKE SUPPLEMENTS?**

Linda (fictional) aged 42 is a software professional. Her doctor has put her on medication to avoid menopausal complications that she may face in her near future. Meanwhile, she also came across an advertisement of herbal supplement and started taking that as well for her future menopausal care.

She also started taking supplement for thyroid care, for the possible thyroid complication in the future and one more medicine, for possible bone mass degeneration problem that she may face. She was feeling a bit stressed by her office work off late, so she started to pop a pill for that as well. Like this, she has been adding one after the other medication / supplements to her daily list.

**Consider these health tips** – Of course, what your doctor prescribes to you is really very important and you are expected to take the medicines / supplements. The supplement needs to be taken only if,

1. You are totally convinced with the explanation of the healthcare service provider that the product is very necessary for your health purpose.
2. You think that a simple rest, a day off from work, a regular exercise schedule, a good night sleep, change of work, get-togethers and parties with friends, a good- mind refreshing movie would not be sufficient to get rid of the tiredness / headache / stress / sleep disturbance that you might be feeling.
3. You think that necessary changes in diet and lifestyle might not be good enough to get rid of the health problem that you are suffering from.
4. You thoroughly know how to use the supplements.

Please remember – your body has a natural way to combat against small health variations. Just give your body a chance to overcome itself from slight knee pain, sleeplessness that you suffer seldom, loss of short-term



memory, feeling stressed for a small period of time, a little back pain due to hard work.

I am not advising you to stop all the supplements / medication. I only am suggesting to choose the ones that are really necessary and do not get carried away by the advertisements. THINK, before you TAKE.

## **MODERN HERBAL PHARMACOLOGY VS AYURVEDIC PHARMACOLOGY**

There is a big difference between the ways modern science and Ayurveda look at an herb. In the modern world, it is all about the chemicals present in the plant. But in Ayurvedic pharmacology, it is about the herb as a whole.

### **Modern herbal pharmacology –**

When you approach a modern pharmacologist and talk to him about herbs, it is all about phyto-chemicals (chemicals present in the plant). It is all about extraction techniques, purity, strength, half life, etc.

In turmeric, they do not look beyond curcumin.

In black pepper, they do not look beyond Piperine.

In Vasa (*Adhatoda vasica* – useful herb in cough, asthma etc), they do not look beyond Vasicine and Vasicinone.

### **Advantages of modern view on herbs –**

- It helps to quantify each of the active principles of herb.
- They have developed extraction techniques. Hence the phyto chemicals can be duplicated / improvised in the lab and manufactured in bulk. It helps the company to be less dependent on the availability of plant. It helps in bulk manufacturing and maintaining standards.
- A few famous examples of such a process leading to success are –  
**L-Dopa** – a medicine used in treating Parkinson's disease. It is derived from an Ayurvedic herb called Kapikacchu (*Mucuna species*).
- **Menthol** derived from mint leaves – used as rubefacient. It generates heat and redness on application, thereby suppressing the pain sensation. Hence used for external application in headache, blunt injuries, arthritis etc.

- **Methyl salicylate (oil of wintergreen)** - another rubefacient derived from wintergreen plant.
- **Quinine** – Anti malarial, anti-fever medicine derived from Cinchona ledgeriana.
- **Theophylline** – A broncho-dilator ( one among the two chemicals present in famous Asthma drug – Deriphyllin) – derived from Theobroma cacao.
- **Morphine** – A potent pain killer derived from Ayurvedic herb – Poppy.

The list goes on.

So, when a plant chemical is extracted, and then further developed / artificially synthesized, an allopathic medicine can be derived from it. The idea and execution looks perfect. But there are some drawbacks.

### **Disadvantages –**

The modern technology attributes the benefits and side effects of the extracts to the original plant. When they attribute benefits of the extract to the plant it is just fine. But when they attribute the side effects to the plant, it is not done.

Let me explain.

Reserpine is from an herb called as Sarpagandha, used in treating psychosis, high blood pressure etc. Reserpine is having many side effects such as gastric irritation. But that side effect cannot be fully attributed to Sarpagandha, because reserpine is not Sarpagandha. It is just a part of Sarpagandha. Apart from reserpine, the plant also contains isoreserpiline, ajmaline, aricine, corynanthine, deserpidine lankanescine rauwolscine, rescinnamine, reserpine, reserpiline, isoreserpine, serpentinine, and yohimbine.

It contains many other chemicals which are not yet discovered. It is quite impossible to extract all the chemicals from the plant and know the action of each of such chemicals and then define the mode of action of the plant.

In many cases, the plant contains two chemicals which act against each other. For example, In Vasaka plant, Vasicine acts as bronchodilator (it opens up the constricted minute wind pipes in the lungs. Hence useful in asthma) and Vasicinone (another chemical of the same plant) has broncho-constrictor effect. Hence all the characteristics of Vasicine cannot be attributed to the plant Vasa.

This is why, Ayurvedic approach of looking at the herb as a holistic entity has great value.

**Ayurvedic pharmacology** – Ayurveda believes that the plant acts as a whole.

This is the reason we use whole herbs in our formulations. The combination of chemicals in a plant may counter-act, interact, support or depress each other but with the synergy, it brings about the said therapeutic effect in the patient.

The ancient scholars of Ayurveda have used taste, qualities etc parameters to explain the action of a drug, rather than chemicals.

This has the advantage of avoiding misunderstanding the chemicals as the plants. But it also has a few drawbacks.

**Disadvantages –**

Suppose, a plant – xyz has a,b and c – 3 active chemicals. The proportion of these chemicals vary from one xyz plant to the other, based on its growing conditions, habitat, soil conditions, seasonal variations etc. Hence it is quite difficult to standardize Ayurvedic medicine, because the amount of chemicals in it may vary from one plant to the other.

**Conclusion**

The modern way of extracting the active phyto-chemical and developing it to a

successful medicine is good, as long as they come up with safe drugs.

Ayurvedic way of using whole herbs in herbal medicine is good as long as we take effective steps to avoid total destruction of medicinal herbs in nature.

## **Mental and Spiritual Health**

## **MIND – QUALITIES AND FUNCTIONS AS PER AYURVEDA**

Our body has three Doshas – Vata, Pitta and Kapha. Similarly our mind has two Doshas – Rajas and Tamas. Rajas can be understood as attraction. Tamas can be understood as darkness / lethargy. Like, if you have a class to attend or a movie to watch, if Rajas is more in you, you will get up early, go and watch the movie. If you have more of Tamas, you would want to skip the class / movie for sleeping.

**Satva** - It is the supreme quality of mind. If someone is very spiritual, righteous, truthful, he is said to be a 'Satvic' person. So, being spiritual, righteous etc are because of Satva, which is the supreme quality of mind.

### **Mind and knowledge gaining process:**

- Mind connects sense organs with intellect. This helps in passing of knowledge from sense organs to intellect and then to soul. This is how we gain knowledge.
- Mind cannot be perceived by sense organs. Mind can only be perceived by its actions
- Mind's action is determined by the quality of Atma (soul), like desire, hatred, comfort, misery, intelligence and effort.
- Though mind has its own actions, its qualities and actions are driven by the qualities of soul.
- The qualities of soul are decided by Karma, spiritual practice, good and bad deeds etc.

### **Mind functions:**

Chintya – thinking

Vichara – analyzing, elaborating, etc.

Ooha – guessing, perceiving, assuming, etc.

Gaining knowledge – Conduction of information gained from sense organs to intellect.

Sankalpa – determination, dedication

Vyabhicharana – doubt, uncertainty

### **Causes of disease of mind:**

If you under utilize the sense organs (like not seeing at all, not hearing at all) or over utilize the sense organs (like looking at very bright objects, hearing loud music,) or miss-utilize the sense organs (like looking at sharp objects, hearing to weird music etc), then sense organ disorders are caused.

Similarly,

Under-utilization of mind – not thinking, not reading, not engaging in knowledge etc.,

Over-utilization of mind – excessive thinking, guessing, analyzing etc.,

Miss-utilization – thinking about unwanted, weird things etc, cause imbalance of Doshas of Manas (Rajas and Tamas) leading mental disorders.

### **How to maintain good mental health?**

We have learnt that Satva is the supreme quality of mind. More Satva means, the mind will have more power and qualities. This also means well balanced Raja and Tamas.

Hence, all efforts should be made to improve Satva. This can be achieved by adopting spiritual, noble, righteous lifestyle.

Satva can be achieved by following,



- Brahmacharya – abstinence
- Ethical behaviour
- Control over sense organs
- Suppression of undesirable mental qualities (Dharaneeya Vega)  
(reference –Charaka Sutrasthana 7) like,
  - Lobha – greed
  - Shoka – grief
  - Bhaya – fear
  - Krodha – anger
  - Mana – vanity
  - Nairlajja – shamelessness
  - Irshya – jealousy
  - Atiraga – excessive desire
  - Abhidhyaya – ill will, malice
- Avoiding Ari Shad Varga
  - Kama – Lust
  - Krodha – anger
  - Lobha – greed
  - Moha – delusion
  - Mada – ego
  - Matsara – jealousy
- Good amount of sleep, good quantity of healthy foods,
- **Avoiding** laziness and procrastination
- Getting up early in the morning
- Spiritual practices, Yoga, Pranayama, meditation.

These are a few ways of empowering mind and maintaining good mental health.

**Q: According to yoga there were 3 gunas – Satva, Rajas and Tamas... Charaka Samhita lists only 2 mental Doshas: Rajas and Tamas. Why is it so?**

**A:** Charaka explains Satva as the supreme quality of mind and not as a Dosha. If a person has more Satva, he will be more intelligent, spiritual etc. But because of Satva, person cannot get afflicted with disease.

This is not so in case of Rajas and Tamas. If Rajas increases in a person, the person becomes more worldly and greedy.

If Tamas becomes more, he becomes lazy, sleepy and ignorant.

So, Rajas and Tamas are Doshas, similar to Vata, Pitta and Kapha. – When they are in normal state, they help mind to perform healthily. But when they are in excess, they cause diseases. (The same is the case with Vata, Pitta and Kapha Dosha).

## **HOW KNOWLEDGE IS GAINED THROUGH SENSE ORGANS?**

Ayurveda explains the process of gaining knowledge through five main factors. Sense object, sense organs, mind, intellect and soul. The sense objects are related to sense organs.

### **Five sense organs:**

Olfactory system – nose

Gustatory perception system– tongue

Ocular system – eyes

Somato sensory system – skin

Auditory system – ears

### **Object of sense organs (also known as sense objects)**

Smell for Olfactory system – nose

Taste for Gustatory perception system – tongue

Shape, size colour etc – for Ocular system – eyes

Touch for Somato sensory system – skin

Sound for Auditory system – ears

**Intellect** – It is called Buddhi in Sanskrit (Ayurveda). It is of five types – based on each sense organ and object.

The knowledge in sense object flows to the respective sense organ, it in turn flows through mind and intellect to reach Soul.

**Mind** is only one, it associates itself with any one of the sense organs to pass on the knowledge that it acquires from sense organs, to intellect. Role of mind is to just associate with sense organs and pass on the knowledge.

If the mind is concentrated and strong, based on the quality of Atma (soul), the knowledge gaining will be faster and precise.

Mind acts as the driving force for all the sense objects. Means, mind directs the sense organs to lock in with sense objects.

**Intellect** (Buddhi) receives the incoming knowledge (from sense organs).

Intellect processes the knowledge, analyzes, decides, stores or rejects it.

**Atma** – Soul is the ultimate decider of quality and quantity of knowledge gained. The Past Karma, present life experiences etc that is stored in soul affects the quality and amount of knowledge gained.

For example, when eyes are aligned with an object, and mind is aligned between eyes and intellect, the knowledge about that object (shape, words, colour etc) flows from the eyes to intellect and then to soul. The quality and amount of knowledge gained varies from person to person.

If a person is, for example reading with total concentration, he can process the entire information and store it in his intellect. If he is not concentrating or he is unhealthy, has headache, or has an eye problem etc, the amount of knowledge that he gains varies.

Sometimes the sense object and sense organ can be in line. But if mind is not there, between *that* sense organ and intellect, knowledge does not pass through.

This is the reason why, we sometimes will be looking at something but we actually do not see it. We will be hearing to something, but we totally miss it.

**Mind is only one.** It cannot associate with all the sense organs at the same time. Because of this reason, if we forcefully align mind only with one object, the concentration will be more and the amount of knowledge gained will be more. Hence, if you are a student, while you are reading, it is best to get rid of all the distractions, keep the room quiet and look at only those books that matter most to you.

The same reasoning can be given to why multi-tasking is bad. We can do many things at a time, but we cannot completely concentrate on what we actually are doing.

### **How we hear and see movie together at once?**

If mind is one, then we should not see and hear together at a time, right? In a process like, watching TV or a movie, due to your extreme interest in the subject, mind will be sharp and moving between eyes and ears to grasp as much knowledge as possible. It will be moving back and forth in fractions of seconds.

This is the reason we feel tired after watching a movie, because the mind has over-worked.

**The quality and amount of knowledge gained** through sense organs depend on many factors such as –

- Sense object falling in line with sense organ
- Concentration level
- Interest in the subject

**Purity of mind** – If the waves in the pond are calm, we can see the object in the depth of water. If waves are turbulent, objects cannot be appreciated. This is where purity of mind by purity of thoughts and Brahmacharya (Celibacy) comes into play.

**Overall health** – Good health means great concentration.

**Health of sense organs** – Healthy sense organs are very necessary to perceive things accurately.

Past Karma. Bad Karma makes a cloud of ignorance which affects soul, blocks intellect and deviates mind from its functions, hence no knowledge.

## **MESSAGE OF LOVE: LOVE YOURSELF**

Love is probably more important than oxygen, food and water for human existence. Suppose oxygen was not there in this earth, the human body could have evolved over a period of time to find other source for energy. But if love was not there in this world, we would have been history, fighting with hatred and selfishness. The secret of health lies in how much love we spread to people around us.

### **What is love?**

This is like asking what breath is. Love is the most important and essential positive human behavior. Love is the feeling of belonging, feeling of oneness, feeling of care, comfort and so on.

When we are born, and as we grow up gradually, we absorb love from all the people around us. Parents love us, teachers love us, friends love us, and everyone loves us. It is with such a love that we are what we are today.

- Love of parents gives the child confidence.
- Love of children makes the parents proud.
- Love of friends gives a shoulder to rely on.
- Love of spouse gives a meaning to life.

**Swamy Vivekananda** says if you do not love your parents, your family and yourself, you can never love God.

### **Love message: *Love yourself***

Loving yourself means doing what is really good for you. The best way to explain this is by a sentence of Ravana, the Villain of Ramayana. He says -

*Jaanaami Dharmam, na cha me pravruttihi |*

*Jaanaami Adharmam, na cha me nivruttihi ||*

“I know what is right, but I do not follow it. I know what is wrong, but I cannot leave it.”

So loving yourself is contrary to this.

Loving yourself means -

- To leave bad habits.
- To take the path of righteousness.
- To help others.
- To show real kindness and love towards the needy and poor.
- To love and respect parents, spouse and family.

So, before we start loving others, we should start loving ourselves.

We know that getting up early in the morning is good, but we do not.

We know that doing Yoga or gym is good, but we do not.

We know that we can at least spend 10 minutes for walking, but we do not.

We know that we can do well without jealous, anger and hatred, but we do not.

We know that we can easily afford to give a small donation to the beggar, who has nothing. But we do not.

We know we can pray for 10 minutes, but we do not.

Let us reverse all these trends. Let us re-explore the meaning of love. Let us start loving ourselves because beauty lies in loving. To be beautiful means being accepted by yourself and loved by yourself. Appreciate your qualities, your talents, your looks and your intelligence. It makes your attitude positive, helps you to take right decisions, and improves your relationships, your work and your future. This creates a positive energy around you and you love the people around you. You spread love and people will love you.

“Love yourself. Forgive yourself. Be true to yourself. How you treat yourself sets the standard for how others will treat you.” —Steve Marboli



## HOW TO LOVE YOUR WORK AND SUCCEED IN YOUR PROFESSION?

“Love your work”, “Love what you do” are few of the most heard Mantras. It is easy to develop love on your crush, on your family, but how to love work?

Sometimes you may get a job that you do not like. This may be your first job and you still do not know where your heart is at. Sometimes you take up a job, which itself was not your choice. But whatever it is, you have got the job and you got to love it to keep yourself happy and to use your time effectively. Here are a few tips.

There is a difference between, doing what you love and loving what you do.

Doing what you love is a matter of choice.

Loving your work / loving what you do, is a matter of necessity.

### 1. Make the machine your part of the body

During my college days, we were preparing for a musical show and were practicing together. I can play guitar (though not an expert). While composing the music for the show, I was making a lot of mistakes. I was looking into the strings continuously, was having trouble using appropriate fingers. The flute guy who was watching me said – “ No no, that is not the way you handle the guitar. ***Wanna become a guitarist? Then make guitar a part of your body***”.

This is that advice, which I will never forget in my lifetime. I noticed that the flute guy was carrying his flute with him all the time. He was so used to the flute that he knew the length of the flute, the positioning of the holes. He was so creative and effortless while playing the flute.

“His mind was considering flute as a part of his body”.

We never search for our mouth consciously while eating an ice-cream, because the position, size and volume of the mouth are already mapped in our brain.

We need to apply the same principle to machine of our work.

**Students** – Keep the book of your favorite subject underneath the pillow while sleeping. It increases the love for the subject and also improves comfort during sleep.

**Laptop – keep it near you** – I spend most of the day in front of my laptop. This laptop is the machine, which gave me happiness, money and fame. I love it to the extent that I can type without seeing into the keyboard. I can type, while I am framing sentences in my mind, with almost the same speed.

## **2. To do list – strike the things that are done.**

Have a small book for to-do list. Every evening, do a to-do list for the next day. While working, whatever tasks come on your way, just scribble it in the to-do list. As and when the work gets finished, strike off the same in the list.

Have a look at the tasks that you have struck off every evening, before you leave for home. Look into the amount of work that you have completed, the little steps that you have put forward, and the little achievements that you have achieved, they boost your confidence and make you feel content and good about yourself.

## **3. Wear a little tight dress (except for creative artists)**

Wearing a little tight dress makes your mind more disciplined and concentrated. You will not be distracted easily. You can focus better.

## **4. Watch on your diet**

- Have a light diet whenever you want your brain to work out more (i.e. when you have to think deeply or focus strategically or do brainstorming). It helps in keeping the brain active.
- If you already had a heavy lunch, then chew a piece of ginger / drink buttermilk with ginger.
- If possible try to have the brainstorming session after 1-2 hours, after your lunch.
- You can finish off regular or repetitive works, in which you need not use your brain soon after your lunch.

**5. Walk around briskly** - In the office, if you have to move around, then it helps if you are brisk. It makes you breathe faster and injects some enthusiasm into mind. Active body begets active mind.

**6. Early morning jogging** helps to keep you active throughout the day.

**7. Stop complaining** and ridiculing boss or the “system” in the office. It increases negativity. You can always quit the job. But the challenge is to accept it and make the best use of it for your well being and for your company.

**8. Keep the conversation** about cricket / soccer / films / politics etc short. Such talks are needed. They relax you. But they should not replace the work.

**9. Compete with yourself** -

Compare your yesterday's working hours with today's, compare productive hours, jobs done, pages typed, customers that you served, plates that you washed, patients you treated, count and compare on daily/weekly basis, and try to beat your own record.

Set yourself a time-frame for a work and compete to finish it 10 minutes before.

**10. Give a break to yourself-** We cannot be creative all the time, we cannot work hard all the time. So, sandwich easy-to-do work and tough tasks so that there is a balance. At the end of the day, you should not suffer from mental fatigue. After all, the evening family time is equally important.

**11. Remember the end result** – The end result of your work should motivate you.

- *You are building the best possible road that will comfort every traveler,*
- *You are preparing food that every customer in the hotel will love to eat,*
- *You are making those car parts which will ensure maximum safety to your customers.*
- *You are training the students who would become innovators in different fields some day.*

*We spend one third of the day with our work, so it needs to be as joyful as the other two third of the day.*

## **INVEST A DAY IN A MONTH ON YOURSELF**

The greatest secret behind a perfect physical and mental health is self discipline and being truthful to yourself. The practice of self discipline can be done by following the below mentioned rules at least once a month.

If you decide to do it once a month, then let that day be first Sunday.

On this day, please do the following -

1. Have complete sleep of 8 hours.
2. Take bath in the morning and feel fresh.
3. Pray for half an hour to one hour. Please include a devotional song in it. You can do it in the morning or evening, as per your convenience.
4. Visit to temple / church / Mosque/ or God's abode, based on your religion.
5. No internet or facebook or twitter. This is the day to meet the real people and friends. Not the virtual or non existent friends in the internet world.
6. Donate 0.1 % of your monthly income – If your income is 1000 rupees, then 1 rupee should be the amount of donation. Keep this as a secret. (Since donation or austerity measures lack purpose if it is made public.)
7. Have at least one meal / breakfast with your family.
8. No sex, masturbation, alcohol, smoking on that day and no non-vegetarian food.
9. Watch TV for not more than two hours.
10. Absolutely no work on that day. (Of course you can attend the emergency issues)
11. Have a small get together in the evening and let your family members and yourself show your talent – song, dance, jokes, mono act, mimicry... whatever.
12. Walking for at least 10 minutes, preferably in the morning.
13. Read at least five pages from any good self-help book.

## **How does this help you?**

- Gives you time to prioritize work and family appropriately
- Adds on family values, improves bonding.
- Helps create intimacy in relations.
- Calms mind and brings togetherness.
- Makes you feel good about yourself.
- Helps improve confidence, self belief.
- Improves immunity of the body.
- Brings you closer to your self-consciousness.
- If a family altogether takes up this resolution then one can watch and monitor the other.
- If you have any other positive thing that you were always thinking to do, you can add it to the list.
- If you cannot fix it for the first Sunday, it can be any day of your convenience.
- Try it and get connected to yourself.

## **6 EASY TIPS TO STAY POSITIVE, HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL FOREVER**

It is the dream of every individual to be successful and happy forever. But various hurdles in family and profession keep that dream from materializing.

Birbal was the ministerial adviser in the Kingdom of Akbar, the great.

One day, Akbar asked the minister, the way to have pleasure for long. The ministers advised that sorrow is also a part of happiness as the happiness is recognized only if the individual feels sorrow, at least for some moments.

Immediately the King Akbar ordered the minister Birbal to find out the way to be happy, when he is sorrow and to feel sorrow when he is happy. This easy task was managed quite tactfully by Birbal. He took a piece of paper and wrote-

***“This is not permanent”*** and pasted in front of Akbar’s seat.

He requested Akbar to look at this statement every time he is happy or sad. In unhappy moments, the phrase helped Akbar realize that it is only a temporary situation and it would pass. In happier moments, it made Akbar to be cautious not to sit back on the moment for long. It helped Akbar to focus better.

Here are few points which will show the way of positive thinking and hence the happiness.

### **Manage your time perfectly**

Problem with most of us is, we think of entertainment while at work and we think of work while watching a movie. The intuition and concentration at what we are currently doing, and involving ourselves is very important for successful management of time. Let us ditch half-mindedness and half-hearted efforts.

Due to these, in the last moment we will be overloaded and our skills may not be sufficient to complete the task as per expectation.

Ultimately, we will be depressed or unhappy. So, it is very essential to manage the time and do the assignment with utmost care and concentration.

### **Like what you do**

When I was doing 3 years post graduation, being 25 – 26 years old, when my friends were really thriving in engineering field, it was really difficult to cope up. I just considered the post graduation time as the stepping stone and indulged myself with complete dedication, learnt a few computer skills which, I am putting into work now. So, you never know what is in store for you in future. Just indulge yourself 100 % in what you do today.

It is only the passion that drives great work. Even if you are not satisfied with what you are doing today, consider this job as the corner stone for the next big assignment that you may take up in the future. Because this job is a corner stone, it needs to be strong. So indulge yourself 100 % with the current work and hone your skills and improvise.

### **Love and respect everybody**

We live with our family members, colleagues, relatives, friends etc. Our lives need everyone of them to feel complete. This basic understanding makes us to love and respect the vision, attitude, working pattern, mental status, thinking, speech and action of every individual.

### **Appreciate the good deeds**

It is incredibly essential to find out good in everyone's work and to appreciate it. Of course, once in a while we need to point out towards mistakes of others, but enough care should be taken to avoid hurting sentiments. Negativity is to be intimated confidentially and by finding suitable place and time.

### **Smartness in the work and gentleness in the behavior**

Overall personality of the individual is estimated by the neatness, discipline and dedication in the work followed with gentleness in behavior. Even though personality, built, gait, dress, look and presentation also significantly contribute in building the positive image, mere one or two aspects cannot fulfil



the overall need of the society, life or profession. So, it is very essential to be consistent, progressive, dedicated and disciplined in and out of the personal life. One simple negative habit or behavior may pull us down and cost us high reputation.

### **Clarity in thoughts, co-ordination in association, sharing and caring**

Successful and humble people always dedicate the credit of their achievements toward his fellow people. Because they know that winning another's heart is the easy way to win the whole world. The actions are brought into practice only when clear thought is originated and evolved from a pure (clear) mind. It needs combined (togetherness), venture from the subordinates, seniors and fellow people by various skills and dedication. So 'success' cannot be an individual's achievement. If felt so, from the very moment, nobody will be there to assist and associate with you. Success needs sharing of the achievement and caring of the beloved ones.

These are the steps to happiness. I'm sure you like it and share it, as you care each one of your beloved ones. Best regards.

Article by Dr Hebbar and Dr MS Krishnamurthy MD(Ayu), PhD (Ayu)

## **HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE LAZINESS, TIREDNESS AND FATIGUE**

It happens many times that people who say – “I feel tired all the time” are victims of laziness and people who say “I feel lazy” are often suffering from tiredness and fatigue. Knowing the difference between fatigue and laziness is very crucial to find solutions.

### **Tiredness and Fatigue –**

**Tiredness** is called as “Shrama” in Sanskrit. It has its origin in Vata. For example, an overdose of exercise leads to Vata imbalance – tiredness.

**Fatigue** can be described as continued tiredness originating from constant physical and mental stress. Fatigue also arises from Vata. For example, continuous over time work for two months may leave you fatigued. You no longer would be able to continue with the same strength and positive attitude. Often, tiredness is associated with physical aspects; fatigue is related to both mental and physical aspects. Both body and mind are involved in the pathology of fatigue.

Chronic (long standing) diseases or hidden sickness may be a cause for fatigue. For example, diabetes may cause fatigue.

### **Treatment of tiredness and fatigue in Ayurveda -**

- Treatment, herbs and foods that balance Vata Dosha.
- Oil treatments such as Shirodhara, oil massage etc
- Treating the underlying disease that is causing tiredness / fatigue.

- Diet rich with Sugarcane, dry grapes, pomegranate, dates is usually advised.

*Tiredness affects at the end of a long day but laziness occurs fearing a long day ahead.*

### **Laziness -**

- Laziness is the inability to do any work, though you have strength and resources.
- Laziness originates from Kapha. For example, you just have finished lunch and are not feeling like doing anything. Kapha is dominant at that period of time.
- You sleep excessively, and do not wish to get up early in the morning. Excess sleep is a symptom of Kapha and so is laziness.
- Usually to treat laziness, strong and stimulating measures are adopted. Like a cup of strong coffee, Triphala, honey, etc.
- Stimulating the sense organs & brain and improving digestion capacity of stomach is very important to get rid of laziness.

### **Role of brain in fatigue and laziness**

- Fatigue and laziness – both are mutually related.
- Fatigue for a long period of time may inject negative attitude and may couple with laziness to worsen the condition.
- Also, continuous laziness may manifest as fatigue over a period of time.

### **What can you do about laziness and tiredness?**

Follow these basic steps -

- Follow a fixed daily routine. Go to bed and get up at fixed time.
- Decide how much sleep you actually need and fix the hours. Do not sleep less or more than your intended hours.
- Get up early in the morning
- Avoid excess oily, deep-fried food.
- Avoid heavy non-vegetarian food. Meat soup or chicken soup is a good option.
- Include Amla and Dry grapes in diet. They both are rich in anti oxidants and strengthen and stimulate organs and brains.
- Consult your doctor for any hidden illness.
- Though you may have genuine tiredness, keep your mind active by reading inspirational biographies, books, play a game of chess, solve a puzzle or sudoku.

## **HOW TO GET RID OF LAZINESS AND PROCRASTINATION?**

“I feel very lazy, I can’t do anything, I don’t want to do anything, and I procrastinate too much. It is hurting my life big time. But I want to be active like successful people; I want to be free from this tangle. How to get rid of laziness and procrastination?”.

Laziness seems a psychological problem, but the cause may be physical as well. To overcome this problem, it requires a lot of motivation. But simple easy Ayurvedic home remedies are also very effective in this regard.

### **Laziness and procrastination -**

These two are the major mental hurdles between you and success.

Laziness – “I have to do it, but I can’t, or maybe I don’t want to do it”.

Procrastination – “I have to do it, I want to do it, let’s do it tomorrow”

### **Effect of laziness and procrastination:**

- ***Failure in professional life*** - ‘Don’t know when I will be completing the project, But if I wished, I could have completed this in the last week itself.’
- ***Failure in personal life*** – “I should be visiting the dentist today. But let me go next week”
- ***Failure in family life*** - “Kids are angry with me because I failed to take them to the nearby garden yesterday, as I promised ”

These are the feelings, which we want to get rid off.

### **Causes and solutions for laziness and procrastination -**

**Tiredness leading to laziness** - Tiredness can cause laziness. If you are feeling lazy, do a self check whether you are exhausted physically or mentally.

***If you think you are mentally tired,***

- Take up some hobby. Hobby is doing something that interests you. That interest and enthusiasm in the hobby can spread its fragrance to all aspects of your life.
- Spice up your family life with a family tour or a surprise movie.
- Try to mix up different types of work. Organized mixing up of works leads to freshness in mind.
- Sleep also helps to bring back freshness. If you really think you have been deprived of sleep, then fix a night, tell your family not to wake you up and go to sleep for full 10 hours.

***If you think you are physically tired,***

- Take rest, sleep for at least 8 hours during night.
- Just 10 minutes nap, before lunch in the afternoons creates wonders. You feel fresh and can work more efficiently.
- Consult a doctor. You might have some hidden physical problem.
- If you work for long hours continuously, you should consider day-sleep as an option.

**Laziness hides in your body -**

When you feel lazy, most of the times, you can identify the focal point of laziness in your body.

**Laziness in stomach** – Sometimes, laziness can be felt in the stomach. A reason for this is – ‘Ama’ and ‘Kapha imbalance’. Here are the usual symptoms,

- Thick white coating of stomach
- Feeling heaviness in stomach

- Excessive salivation
- Feeling bitter or excess sweetness in the stomach
- No desire to take food
- Vomiting sensation

If your laziness is associated with the above symptoms, do the following -

1. Do not eat till you feel lightness in the stomach. You can even consider fasting for a day.
2. Eat, drink and sleep only when you are hungry, thirsty and very sleepy.
3. Keep a gap of minimum four hours between two eating schedules.
4. Do not take sweet, milk, curds or oily food till abdominal lightness is restored.
5. Drink a cup of ginger decoction / ginger tea with honey, without milk and sugar.
6. **Triphala with honey remedy** - If ginger is too spicy for you, take a tablespoon of Triphala powder. Mix it with honey to make a paste and have it. Drink a glass of warm water. After consuming Triphala powder with honey. This cleanses stomach and intestines. This can be done at night, after food.
7. If you have had heavy, high cholesterol diet, take Triphala powder with hot water or honey with hot water.
8. Watch what you eat at night. Avoid sweets, oily foods, heavy non veg foods and curd at night.

**Laziness in body joints** – If you are feeling lazy along with heaviness in joints, then ginger tea can be of help or seek Ayurvedic help to get rid of this issue.

**Laziness due to depression** – If a bad feeling is hurting your work for long time, get rid of depression with Pranayama, Yoga, hobbies etc.

## **Laziness in the attitude -**

- Lack of motivation, lack of aim can cause laziness.
- At times, lack of direction tempts you to discontinue your work. Imagine the result that you want to achieve precisely, and then it becomes a lot easier.
- Don't let the confusions grow on you. Decide the exact date when you will visit the dentist, when will you finish off that office project, when will you take your children to the garden and when will you go for a family trip. Decide everything right now! Write on piece of paper and stick it in front of your desk so that you see it everyday.
- Read inspirational biographies of successful people, such as Steve Jobs.
- Keep your room and home neat and clean.
- Keep an inspirational photo in front of you. Make it your mobile and computer desktop background.
- Do not sleep without a plan for the next day.
- Do not sleep without knowing when you are going to get up.
- Do not sleep without an alarm clock.
- Do not eat till you are hungry.
- Write down the things that you want to do and read it over and over, at least two times a day.
- Stop excessive sex, masturbation, smoking and alcohol.
- Stop excessive intake of tea and coffee.
- Switch off TV and close that Facebook tab. You might be wasting your time.
- Replace oily food and sweets with fruits and vegetable salads.
- Do not over commit. Say no to things that are not-so-important.



- Start going to gym, yoga, dance class or your favorite sports. Being physically fit helps to be active and kick out laziness.

The antonym of laziness is – “present”. Thinking about what you are going to do ‘at present’, right now, and going ahead with your present plan of work is the best remedy for laziness.

## **IMPROVING LIFESTYLE HABITS IS VERY IMPORTANT TO PREVENT CANCER**

Till recently, we believed that improving lifestyle habits are beneficial against lifestyle disorders like diabetes, obesity, hypertension etc. But now it is a clinical proven fact that improving lifestyle habits also helps to prevent cancer. Not only food carcinogens, but errant lifestyle habits are also equally responsible for cancer. According to a recent research report published in the British Journal Of Cancer, one third of cancers is caused by 4 lifestyle factors – alcohol, tobacco, obesity and diet.

**Tobacco** and cigarette are the major cause for cancer.

**Alcohol** – Excess consumption of alcohol increases the risk of cancer.

In Ayurvedic terms, excess of alcohol disturbs the normal metabolism process to cause increase of toxins and waste byproducts of digestion.

**Diet** - According to Ayurveda, food is not only meant to provide the body with nutrition, but also to cleanse the body, to keep the organs fit and healthy.

According to Ayurveda, diet can be considered 'proper' only if one evacuates bowels every morning.

According to modern science, passing stools about thrice in a week is considered normal, but according to Ayurveda, passing stools everyday is important to maintain proper digestion and appropriate enzyme levels in the body. This stresses the importance of fiber in our diet.

Good amount of fresh fruits and vegetables is so crucial to provide the body with sufficient dietary fiber and anti oxidants which help to prevent cancer.

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables also helps in preventing obesity.

**Obesity** – Being overweight or obese makes you more prone to diabetes, hypertension and cancer. Hence a regular lifestyle filled with good habits and regular exercise is very important.

### **A sample blueprint to prevent cancer by improving lifestyle**

- 1. Get up early, go to bed early.** - Waking up early in the morning helps to keep you active and energetic throughout the day.
- 2. Physical activity** -Jogging, walking, outdoor games, yoga or gym, dance or any other physical activity for at least half an hour per day, will keep you fit and healthy. You should sweat by the end of the half hour.
- 3. Vegetable and fruit salad** – At least on the alternative days. A meal can be skipped to accommodate salads.
- 4. Quitting non-vegetarian food** or limiting non-vegetarian food to only once or twice in a week.
- 5.** Taking responsible steps to quit smoking and limiting the amount of alcohol intake.
- 6.** Attending to natural urges at proper time. For a better understanding, read [here](#) to know about an important Ayurvedic principle.
- 7. Ayurvedic treatments** such as massage, Panchakarma and other cleansing procedures should be done seasonally.
- 8. Use of Ayurvedic spices like** turmeric, nutmeg, pepper, ginger, long pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, Triphala, Amla, etc helps in preventing cancer.

## **OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, MY METABOLISM HAS SLOWED DOWN**

“Sir, I used to be fit, slim and healthy. But due to smoking / due to work and family stress / due to wrong eating habits, over a period of time, my metabolism has slowed down. I am no more a healthy person like I once was.” It is a very depressing confession that I hear once in a while from 30+ aged clients. Apart from discussing ways to improve metabolism, I would like to concentrate more on the thought process of the mind which declares that the body is unhealthy.

**The disadvantage of naming a disease** - There is a saying in Ayurveda –

“Though there are numerous diseases explained, sometimes it is better for a doctor to treat the patient only with his symptoms, rather than trying to name the disease.”

Now, I know that naming a disease is important. It is important to inform the patient that he has diabetes. Because, the word ‘diabetes will restrict the person from taking excess carbohydrates. ‘Hypertension’ would make someone start early morning walking.’ But at few instances, naming a disease is a bad idea.

For example, ‘general weakness’ is a better word than ‘slow metabolism’.

General weakness can be overcome ‘mentally’ by thinking about the measures that you can take to become stronger. ‘Slow metabolism’ might settle in your mind to the depth of a black hole.

‘Temporary state of sadness’ is lot better than ‘depression’. Dude, it is temporary okay? You can overcome it quickly with some effort.

**Think about the measures –**

Rather than being nostalgic about your bygone healthy years, start thinking about what you can do **today** to improvise your health.

- Diabetes? High BP? Buy a pair of jogging shoes today.

- High cholesterol? Buy some garlic pearls and start using it in your diet today.
- Weak digestion strength? Who is stopping you from using ginger, cinnamon, curry leaves?
- Smoking / alcohol habits? Quit the habits by joining an aerobics class today.
- Lethargy, laziness? Wake up early and have cold water bath. For that, go to bed early tonight.
- Aging fast? Chyawanprash, Amla, Triphala, Tulsi, Ashwagandha. There are lot more options in Ayurveda. Consult your Ayurveda doctor today.
- Sleeplessness, Stress – Join yoga classes.
- Body ache? Start having body massage regularly.

In this competitive world, to win and to be successful, we should have a healthy robust body and calm mind. There are certain diseases, which cannot be cured completely by any of the above techniques. At least, make sure that it does not hurt your daily routine and positive attitude.

Steve Jobs was formulating and launching iphones and ipads in the thick of his ill health. All we need is a positive mind which concentrates on solution at hand, rather than worrying about the illness.

### **Simple ways to improve metabolism –**

- Exercise / walking / outdoor games
- Yoga and Pranayama
- Avoid stress and try to be happy.
- Regular use of ginger, cardamom, garlic, lemon, pepper, curry leaves, turmeric etc.
- Regular massage and relaxation.

- Good sleep and strict lifestyle
- Family, friends and hobbies.

## **CLUTTERED MIND – GET RID OF BIG HURDLE BETWEEN YOU AND SUCCESS**

A cluttered mind is very well explained by Lord Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa – “It is like a man sailing in a boat, which is tied to the shore. We sometimes tie ourselves and cry for help. It is all in our mind. Let us unwind it and successfully chase that ever-elusive success.”

### **Setting the aims clearly and correctly**

To go to Mumbai, the first requirement is to know that we need to go to Mumbai, right? Sometimes we do not know what we really want to do. Sometimes we are not very clear about the steps involved.

Let us first set our goals, chalk down the steps involved in achieving it, set up small goals and work on them on daily basis. Feel good about the small achievements and be happy that we are moving in the right direction, towards our goals.

### **Get rid of self imposed superstitions**

This day is the good day. This is the right time. Let us just do it today and right now. Let us not wait even a single minute in procrastination.

### **Let us talk to people**

Do not hesitate, stop shying away from people. You can start with a ‘Hello’ or ‘Good morning’ to your neighbor and colleague. Gradually, start conversing with them. Trust me! It helps. You will get over the fear of getting embarrassed.

Even I was an introvert and too hesitant to talk to people. I just would not feel like picking the phone, dialing the numbers and talk to people. But I have overcome this myself.

### **Let us stop judging others**

Let us not waste our precious time in judging others, let us not 'predict' how bad someone's future would be, let us not blame others, and let us stop complaining. Let us concentrate on ourselves and our future.

### **Super quotes or Super images**

Let us have some inspiring quote or images as our screensaver, wallpaper or on the wall in our bed room or at our workplace. The image should give you goose bumps, should stimulate you to work harder. The image can be of someone whom you admire. If you are not getting anything, just search for 'success', or 'inspiration' in Google image search. You might get something which would push you forward.

### **Being ever ready to do everything**

Let us be in 'ready' state of mind, Ready to do anything right now.

- Going to market to buy vegetables
- Write to your friend
- Ping your buddy on facebook
- Attend to that office file
- Prepare power-point presentation
- Talk to your boss
- Take kids to garden.

Let your mind not say, 'This is not the right time to do it'. Let us not get bogged down to 'ooh I am tired, lets do that tomorrow, not now please..'

### **Making the most of the time when you are super strong**



In a day, you will have a couple of hours when you are so physically and mentally strong that you can crush a mountain. For most of us, it is the morning hours. But it may be evening hours to a few. Just make sure to do the hardest and most important work, in those hours.

It will be like covering longer distance with lesser fuel.

### **A question before finishing any work**

Before finishing any work, let us take a second to introspect. Ask yourself questions – is there anything I am missing? How can it be done better? etc.

### **Enjoy anxiety!**

Are you uneasy just before you talk to your boss, before trying a new food recipe, before entering the stage for performance?

I just love those little uneasy moments. I feel that anxiety before I sit to write any article. That anxiety helps me to push harder, to go for the best, to go for the kill. Enjoy the anxiety, prepare well for the task and enjoy unlimited benefits that you reap after you successfully finish the task.

It is a positive anxiety or looking at the anxiety in us in a positive way.

One of my favourite quotes, – “If you are not anxious while doing something, you are doing it wrong.”

### **A few measures to get rid of cluttered mind**

- **Pranayama** – Helps to keep the mind clear of unwanted thoughts.
- **Prayer** – Brings about positive attitude
- **Getting up early** – According to Ayurveda, waking up early in the morning boosts confidence.
- **Cluttered desk cluttered mind** – Let us keep our surroundings neat. That helps to train the mind.

- **Ayurvedic medical help** – There are a few Ayurvedic herbs like Brahmi, Shankhapuspi, which help to treat a cluttered mind. Consult your Ayurvedic doctor for the same.

## **LAZINESS, LACK OF CONCENTRATION IN GENERATION Y – CAN AYURVEDA HELP?**

*A reader asks, “Dear Doctor, I am as my profile will reveal is at 82. I am active and am able to keep health by not indulging in anything in excess. Life had been smooth and very pleasant. I observe the present day generation especially the age group of 13 to 18 of both the sexes are very lethargic and always indulging in so many gadgets easily available for spending time aimlessly I find they are not very attentive, quick to know the points of any questionnaire etc. Even witty comments are not well understood. This lethargic condition in any generation will be very conducive to destruction. Let me come to the point. Is there any medicinal remedy that could be slowly applied to the children to come over this malady Please enlighten me.”*

Let us analyze.

### **Can Ayurvedic medicines help to get rid of laziness and lethargy?**

Yes, it can. But conditions apply.

If you are giving medicines to an alcoholic to get rid of alcohol addiction, whatever medicine you may give, how powerful they may be, unless the person is not motivated, your medicine will be a waste of money.

In case of young generation, I do not think that there is lack of motivation.

They are active, agile, and eager to learn and positively oriented. But it is in the parents’ hands to guide them to their goals, which needs huge attention. I mean to say that, parents are finding it difficult to hit a balance between exposure to gadgets (by the kids) and success in academics & co-curricular aspects.

I would say, parents, right guidance to the kids, to move forward, along with Ayurvedic medicine is a killer combination to put Gen Y in the right track.

### **One mistake that is happening...**

The basic difference that I find in the learning process is, in (g) olden times, children were concentrating on one particular subject, diving deep into it, learning all the basic aspects correctly and applying them with different examples.

There was time to learn and assimilate information.

Today, because of information overload, kids are learning new things everyday, but there is no time provision for assimilation and application. This is where, parents need to act. Parents need to bring in time gap between one learning process and the next.

- I am concentrating more on internet and gadgets. I am excluding TV from the discussion, as TV has got less to do with learning process. It is more of an entertainment tool.
- I am using the term computer to indicate tablets, smart phones, laptops and so on.

### **What internet does to a young learning mind?**

**Brings in hurriedness** – We tend to read only the headings and a few lines rather the full page, on a computer screen. Hurriedness is partially caused due to high brightness of the screen.

**Takes away concentration** – Multiple tabs can be opened, multiple downloads are happening, multiple videos are getting downloaded. Kid does not know how to prioritize.

**Unnecessary distractions** – A Kid is learning about 'anatomy of brain' on a website, suddenly his friend's message pops up, somebody has 'liked' his photo on Facebook then a whatsapp buzzes.

**Misplaced priority** – Due to natural orientation towards friends, kid would easily pick liking and commenting on his friend’s picture instead of continuing to learn about ‘anatomy of brain’.

**Feeling addicted** – Trials become practice and practice becomes habit. Kid finds internet and social networks more attractive and gradually gets addicted to them. Naturally, he has less inclination towards learning and academics.

**Solutions –**

**Give time slabs –**

Whatever the kid is doing, make sure to give a time slab.

It is better to give one hour for each activity.

- Football with friends – One hour.
- Doing homework – One hour
- Revision, studies – one hour.
- Internet gaming and Facebook – half an hour.

**Give them books to read –**

For kids, paper books are better than eBooks. The kid can concentrate better.

Give them biographies of great innovators. Explain

- How it takes a lifetime of concentrated hard work to do a thing of wonder.
- How it is important not to give up the effort at difficult times
- How it is important to avoid distractions.

You also read the book with him, discuss and share your experience.

**Encourage them to play outdoor games.**

Do not stop them from playing computer/ video games completely. Let them play that as well, limitedly. But explain them the advantages of playing outdoors and importance of physical activities in the long term. Let them also

know the ill effects of spending more time on computer on their health and overall development.

### **Computer etiquettes –**

- When the kid is using the computer, make sure the door is not locked from inside.
- Email and Facebook chat options should be disabled, while using computer for studies.
- While studying on the internet, once a topic is taken, it will be pursued for not less than 20 minutes.
- Keep an eye on your kid when he/ she uses internet, especially social networks. This is not an easy task to be followed with growing up kids. So, maintain a friendly relationship with your kids.
- Make them to understand and follow good behaviours, both online and in real world.

### **Lifestyle changes –**

- Be yourself an example in time management and leading an active life for your kid. The kid will have a live example to follow, 24 X 7.
- Being assertive at times is good, but do not be too strict with the kids.
- Put them to yoga and meditation classes early in their life. Body and mind gets moulded into a right shape.
- Introduce spirituality to the kid. Follow up spirituality with reasoning. Let the kid be assured that spirituality is a way of life, than just a history.
- Let your kid understand the value of money. So, don't buy them everything they ask for. Make them earn it (may be as a reward for their good behaviour or when they help you)

- Let them develop some hobbies.

### **Physical aspects –**

- **Do not over-feed** the kid. Avoid too much of sweets and oily food.
- **Watch his tummy** – As per Ayurveda principles, next meal should only be taken after the previous one is completely digested. So, mind the gap between two feeds.
- Include more of fresh vegetables and fruits. Avoid junk and aerated drinks. They add to the heaviness of stomach and bring in lethargy and laziness.
- **Cow Ghee** – There are many theories about Ghee. But as per Ayurveda and my personal experience, ghee increases memory, concentration and overall health.
- **Ayurvedic products for concentration** –  
There are many products in Ayurveda to improve concentration, but it varies from person to person. Usually, a combination of herbs like Brahmi, Gotu Kola, Shankhapushpi, Amla, etc is used by Ayurvedic doctors.

## WORDS OF WISDOM ABOUT SELF REALIZATION

This is a guest contribution.

What is important is “who and what are we?” Are we the physical body with intellect and emotions (the human body), a bundle of matter and energy? Or are we more than that? “What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his soul?” I learnt that more than fifty years ago.

We come from the same source. In reality, we are eternally One with the universe. Spiritually, we are not the human body which is created for us to learn and to interact with others in human life and which will come to an end in each human life. Should we crave for “making a name to earn rewards and success in this world?”

We are not the illusionary “**ego-self**.” We are non-physical and selfless. What good would human materiality do to us besides bringing us worry and stress, pain and sorrow? And we will continue to complain that life is tough! We have long forgotten our purpose for coming to earth! We have forgotten to focus on “being” rather than on “doing.” We have forgotten our “heritage.”

We have to free our ego-self of the human concept of duality, to “unlearn” that negative energy does not exist and to rid our mind of negativity. The ego-self and the duality concept are intended for us to learn when we play our role in human drama of life.

Love, happiness, peace, and all positive attributes are in our nature, to have whatever we need. This can enable us, even the physically handicapped humans, to live a simple human life with freedom, love, peace and happiness. Is this not better than gaining the whole world?

We are always told to have “faith and trust” in the supernatural power that we acknowledge as Life or as God. Each one of us is part of Life and therefore part of God, special and unique in our own individual ways. There is always a reason



for anything that happens in God's creation. Believe it or not, collectively we are "little gods."

We are presently lacking in consciousness or awareness in understanding God as we are constantly evolving and moving towards enlightenment. Many of us turn to prayers to ask God for this and that, thereby indicating a lack of faith or trust in God, in providing us with our needs. Before we ask, God has already answered. We must differentiate between "needs and wants." Prayers should be for appreciation and thanking God.

## **BEST STRESS RELIEF TIP – JUST BE TRUTHFUL AND AVOID LIES**

I and my wife were planning for a movie. She asked when we can go for the movie. Just to impress her, on the spur of the moment, I said, “today evening.” At that moment, my brain ignored the patient email queries that were to be cleared by the evening. Instead if I had explained her my situation and planned the movie after three days, I would have saved myself from the unnecessary stress and the movie would have been more enjoyable.

Stress is the major cause for all the lifestyle diseases that you can name. Stress leads to ‘fight or flight’ situation. But if we can turn the situation into ‘commanding or manageable’, there will be complete stress relief and a win – win situation. The way to do that is ***being truthful***.

### **Secret behind the smile of spiritual leaders –**

If you speak what you do and do what you speak, there will be no difference between your internal and external environment. You will have nothing to hide.

- It brings courage
- It brings clarity of thinking
- It brings smile on your face
- It makes you stress free

Being truthful is actually the gist of spirituality. No matter what religion you follow, being truthful and being the same person from inside and outside is the highest spiritual state that one can ever reach.

On the contrary, if you are not truthful from inside out, no matter what religion you are following, you are just wasting your time.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says – Being truthful is the greatest spiritual practice for this age.

## **Let us avoid minor lies.**

These minor lies grow to mighty monsters before we realise. Practice becomes habit and habit becomes character. So let us start avoiding minor lies.

We live in a world, where to survive and thrive; we need to seek help of lies. But whenever you are in a situation, where you need to lie, do one of the following.

- **Just be silent, wait for a second.** The person who is asking you the question may forget or move on to the next topic. That way, you can skip telling the truth and avoid a lie.

- **Just smile and** avoid telling a lie.

- **Tell the half truth**

Eg. If somebody asks you, “When will you be going to Bangalore?” If you are sure that the other person will go red if you say tomorrow, just say “It may not be possible today”.

Another example: Instead of saying “I cannot do it this way”, just say “the process will be very difficult, if we do it this way.”

- **Count the number of lies per day.**

I have tried it and somehow it is very easy for the brain to remember the number of lies per day. Let us try to reduce those numbers gradually to nil.

Our small efforts, our little concentration towards avoiding lies, will yield tremendous results.

(I am not suggesting that we should reveal all the hidden lies of past. That may lead to catastrophe. I am just saying let us avoid lies in the present and future.)

There is a saying – “*Na Bhruyat Satyam Apriyam*” – Bitter truths should not be told.

Avoiding lies has following advantages.

### **1. Better memory power**

If we are lying, our brain has to work extra hard to remember what we have lied and it needs to create a story around that lie and it needs to think about all the situations that may arise due to the lie and it needs to work out ways to avoid them. So, most of the brain power is drained to protect the lie. Most of the brain space is occupied.

But if you are truthful, you already know what has happened and there is nothing to remember further.

There is a great saying – *If you are truthful, you do not need to remember anything.*

### **2. No fear**

Lies beget internal fear. The person telling the truth has nothing to hide. Start avoiding lies and you will soon start realizing that you are becoming more and more fearless.

### **3. Know exactly your strength and weaknesses**

When you are truthful outside, you will be more truthful inside. You will come to know exactly, what your strengths are and how you can nurture and take advantage of it to achieve success.

### **4. Improved confidence**

When you know what your strengths are, when you have started believing in what you can achieve, no one can beat you in self confidence.

### **5. Smiling face, without creases of anxiety**

Your face knots will vanish, smile becomes broader, and life becomes stress free.

### **6. Good sleep**

Lies, false promises, false self-image, cause immense stress and take away your peace of mind and sleep. Just start avoiding lies and you can see that your sleep starts getting deeper and more relaxing. This is because of improved mind clarity.

### **7. Better relationships**

Your friend, spouse and family will know exactly what kind of a person you are. So there will be no false / over-expectations from you. Your relationships will be more meaningful and strong.

If you are truthful, there will be no question of infidelity. Life and family will be more enjoyable.

### **8. Longer healthier life**

Just imagine yourself, while lying – the body will be twitched, brain is pressurized, forehead starts sweating.

Imagine yourself, telling the truth – Just an open mind and open heart speaking what is true with a smiling face. The body and mind are so relaxed. This is the secret behind long life of spiritual masters.

### **9. You will be led in the right path.**

When you are truthful, whenever you come to crossroads, naturally you will choose the right path. It will be very easy for you to analyze yourself and to succeed.

The truth in you will lead to the path of success, for the Truth in you Himself is The God.

So, let us start avoiding those little lies and let us tell the truth for as many times in a day as possible and let us be happy.

**Question: Sometimes people do not want us to succeed and so they lie to us.**

**When I come to know that it is a lie, I do not feel telling them the truth the next time. In such case, what shall I do?**

**Answer:**

When it comes to handling people who hurt our cause for success, lying to them would not cause any harm, as long as we are on the right path. But avoiding a lie by silence or such other method is always a better option.

## **DO NOT STAND BETWEEN YOURSELF AND HEALTH**

I watch a TV show called Shark Tank. It's an incredible reality show to learn everything about business. In the show, there is one Mr Kevin. He often says to many participants – "You are your own enemy. You are standing in between yourself and success. You just don't know that yet."

Sometimes, I remember his words! Some people with illness concentrate too much on their disease. They search for root cause of the disease, they search for symptoms, they search for home remedies, they seek online advice, they go from one doctor to the other, and they do all sort of things. But they fail to do the only one thing that matters – ***to act on the disease.***

When it comes to doing something to tackle the disease, they hesitate to take medicines, to follow doctor's suggestions, to believe in his / her doctor rather than online information, to adjust lifestyle, to quit bad habits, to get up early and go to bed early, to eat and drink only when hungry and thirsty, to remember to take the medicines on time, to self evaluate one's daily routine regularly and apply corrective measures and so on.

*Gathering online information and doing something TODAY to treat the disease are two completely different things.*

Some patients get a prescription from the doctor. Do an online search about the medicines. Get uncomfortable. Read about certain opinions from other patient's experience, get interested in few other medicines, then go to another doctor, get their opinion, then ask the first doctor whether the second doctor is right, sometimes vice versa, then get confused whether to follow first doctor's advice or the second, then go to the third doctor and there is again internet search...

Some even go to the extent of testing if the doctor knows about something that patient read on the internet. They would argue to prove the doctor is

wrong. But if you beat your doctor in the argument, that does not solve the problem at hand. The problem at hand that needs a solution is – ***your disease***. For the patient, the one and only thing that matters is – how to get rid of his /her disease and how to get back to health. All the disease research, finding the root cause, theories, assumptions, knowledge of home remedy etc. do not matter. You are not getting a masters degree on that particular disease anyway. Once the disease is gone, you live on enjoying your health.

Do not just wander around your disease, its symptoms, pathology, physiology, microbiology, radiology etc. Concentrate more on – how you can get rid of the disease.

List down what you need to do ***today*** to get rid of the disease.

If you have enlisted few home remedies, short list them to 1 or 2 that suits you. Talk with the doctor to see if it helps and then go ahead and ***follow those home remedies judiciously. Act!***

See, when a baby holds tight on her mother, she completely believes on the love of her mother, that she will not drop the baby. When I sit in a bus, I have to believe in the ability of the bus driver. When a kid is learning to walk, she has to believe in her own strength. When I have friends, I have to believe that they will live up to my expectation and I will live up to their expectation. The belief is the greatest human strength. So, next time when you go to a doctor, have trust in him to follow his advice at least for 7 – 10 days. Even then if things are not working out, then think of plan B.

I am not asking you not to look for online information. I am only requesting you to concentrate more on the remedy for the disease, than other things. Because, only thing that matters at the end is, whether your disease is cured or not, whether you have done enough to take care of your disease.



**Let me give an example:** Suppose you have Asthma.

**Do not waste time with**

- Excessive research about what is asthma, its genetic factor contribution, its patho-physiology etc.
- Doubting your doctor's prescription, thinking about changing the medicines / home remedies by yourself without consulting your doctor.
- Checking with friends about their opinion on the disease and doing home remedies.

Consulting two doctors at the same time and mixing and matching their prescription.

**Do this –**

**a. Following diet advice:**

Enlist the food items that you can take and food to avoid. Check with your doctor.

Take up the food that you can have, delete the ones that you normally do not use.

With those food items that you normally use, figure out few of the dishes that you can make using those ingredients. Start using those dishes.

**b. Home remedies**

Check with your doctor for home remedies. Go buy the herbs required and start off.

**C. Lifestyle changes:**

Enlist the lifestyle changes that you need to make, such as getting up early in the morning, quitting smoking, and avoiding heavy foods at night.

Discuss with your family members and friends. Ask for their help in incorporating these lifestyle changes. Get their support and win.

**d. Medicines:**

Take medicines regularly and strictly.

Concentrate on whether to take it before food or after food.

Concentrate on whether the kashayam needs water dilution? If so, what is the dilution? and so on.

Try to stick to the same timing for taking medicines.

Do a search on medicines and make a note of possible side effects. Keep them in mind. If you experience any of those, contact your doctor.

In case of asthma, even if there are no signs of improvement after a week's time, then talk to your doctor.

**Bottom line** is, concentrate on how to tackle the disease and win, rather than worrying about the pathology of disease, its complications, getting advice from your friends, comparing them with doctor's advice, and so on.

## **BENEFITS OF SITTING STRAIGHT – HOW TO SIT STRAIGHT FOR A LONG TIME?**

Sitting straight has mental, physical and social benefits. It helps in even distribution of weight down the spine. It improves concentration and it shows that you are 'alert and active'. Let us explore benefits of sitting straight and how to sit straight for long hours.

**Improves Concentration** - Sitting straight has direct positive effect over concentration. All the Yoga postures, Pranayama requires you to sit straight.

**Memory** – Sitting straight helps to improve all the aspects of brain power, including memory.

### **Sit with a pillow at lower back**

Just for 10 minutes, keep a thin smooth pillow beneath lower back and sleep. This helps to stretch back and helps to keep back straight for a longer period of time while you sit. The pillow also reminds you constantly to sit straight. Or use a chair with forward bulge at the level of lower back. This helps to stretch back naturally.

### **Practice Pranayama**

Regular practice of Pranayama with an erect back makes your body straight and tight. It helps to maintain your body (and mind) tightness, effortlessly for longer hours.

### **Yoga postures**

There are many easy – to – follow Yogasanas like Bhujangasana, Dhanurasana which helps to stretch and keep the back straight for a long time.

### **Neck and arm exercises**

To keep the back straight, muscles and ligaments right from the neck till the sacrum need to be strong. Rotatory arm movements, rotating neck exercises help to strengthen the total length of the back.

### **Oil massage**

Regular oil massage with Ayurvedic oil like Maha Narayana tailam or just sesame oil helps to improve back strength.

### **Keep the chair close to the table**

Try to keep the table very close to your body. This makes you avoid leaning forward. Make sure that the computer screen or the book is at the level of your eyes so that there is no need to bend forward.

If you work on a laptop, keep the laptop at a height so that you need not lean forward to watch the screen. In such a case, you may have to use an extra keyboard.

### **Use a lumbar belt**

Using a lumbar belt gives that extra support in the initial attempts of yours to sit straight.

## **DO NOT FEEL SHY TO USE A WALKING STICK. MY TRUE STORY**

By - Ms Simone Van Hove- Van Der Gaag, Netherlands.

“Actually, I felt for a long time that I’m a healthy young lady in an over-aged body. Accidentally on a rainy day out on a city trip with my brother and his wife, I found out how simple improvement can bring a huge change to health. I took an umbrella with me, and because I did not want to take care of myself alone, I took a big sized one.

We had a wonderful day together and the weather was nice. So without thinking about it, I used the umbrella as a walking stick. I neither got cranky nor exhausted. The next day I spoke about it with my physiotherapist. She advised me to buy a real one and see what it does. She already had diagnosed very weak core stability muscles and tensed muscles in my legs.

I had decided to accept the way I am today. I wasn’t sad to have to use a walking stick at this early age of 38.

I was glad and looked forward to use one.

I was a little bit frightened of the reactions of my family, neighbours and friends.

“What would they say...!”

“Would they laugh at me..!”

“Would they be shocked..!”

Because having some pride is not wrong, I bought a lovely stick with design of flowers painted all over it. So it was not only functional, but also stylish. And..

What about the other people?!

***If I’m fine with it... they will be fine with it... one day... ;)***

**By this, I found out:**

- I could walk relaxed again instead of, as if in a hurry because it kind of hurts.
- With walking stick I walk straightened up, so I get more oxygen also.
- I have much more stability while walking or standing.
- I have more energy. After a 15 minutes walk with the dog, I had to rest for one hour. Since I started using walking stick, after getting home, I start house-holding, right away!
- Before using walking stick, there were so many mornings, I got up and had red eyes. I don't have them anymore!
- Since starting using walking stick, I got rid of my morning sickness
- Every day begins grateful and relaxed, instead of ill, exhausted, irritated.
- Within one week I started to feel a change in the way I walk. I feel I walk 'up my legs' instead of 'hanging through my hips'

I'm writing this since I noticed that many people who are looking for right health, concentrate on,

- Food
- Medicines
- sport/yoga/ meditation

*It's not wrong to look for 'support' when you need it. It gives structure, helps you grow, helps you be.*

There is no shame in using a walking stick or a cervical belt or a lumbar belt support. If it helps you, it is good to use. Go for it.

I was always behaving positive and brave, and am rewarded for it. But fact is, without pain or problems or things to bother, there is no need of being brave.

So people who seem really brave have great risks of ignoring their true feelings., risks of getting traumatized.

I Hope this information will result in more happiness for other people also,  
somehow.”

## **DO YOU CONCENTRATE ON IMPROVING CONCENTRATION? 14 EASY TECHNIQUES**

When it comes to improving productivity, several aspects come to mind – multi-tasking, time management, work scheduling etc. Of all these, I would say that improving concentration is the most important one. During this information age, being surrounded by internet, Facebook, twitter, tablets, laptops, smart phones and what not, improving concentration has more significance than ever.

### **Who needs to improve concentration?**

If you are a housewife, improved concentration helps you with better memory, helps you attend to all the home chores without forgetting anything, clears your mind of all the unwanted things and helps to do your job better.

If you are a professional, having a razor sharp concentration will help you learn new things in your field quickly, adapt to new conditions and excel in your field.

If you are a spiritual seeker or a worldly guy, whether you are a KG level student or CEO of a company or a housewife, efforts to improve concentration is a must for everyone.

### **Few examples:**

In Mahabharat (Hindu epic), Dronacharya, the Guru teaches the students to learn archery. He asks the students to aim at a bird. He asks the students what they see. While many students say that they see the tree with the branches and leaves, the bird, the sky in the background etc. Arjuna, choicest disciple of the Guru says, “I cannot see anything but the bird. He was so focused on the



bird that his entire mind and body were totally concentrating on hitting the bird with his arrow.”

### **Power statements by Swami Vivekananda:**

“How has all the knowledge in the world been gained by the concentration of powers of the mind?”

“The more this power of concentration, the more knowledge is acquired, because this is the one and only method of acquiring concentration.”

“The mind uncontrolled and unguided will drag us down, down, forever – rend us, kill us; and the mind controlled will save us, free us.”

“Most of the thought force is wasted by the ordinary human being, and therefore, he is constantly committing blunders. The trained man or mind never makes a mistake.”

### **Here are a few easy tips that I am trying to follow to improve concentration:**

#### **1. Sweet –**

Having a light sweet or a small dose of juice feeds glucose to brain and helps to concentrate better. If you have some brain storming to do, consider eating a little sweet. Though, continuous eating of high sugar diet is not good for health, this suggestion holds good just ahead of a heavy work schedule.

#### **2. Light stomach**

Keeping the stomach light keeps you away from sleepiness and laziness. Wait till you feel hungry before having meals.

#### **3. Scheduling work on hour by hour basis**

An organized work schedule helps to prioritize the work / study, keeps the mind calm and well composed for long time. At every point of time, you can easily assess where you are, how long you have travelled and how many miles to go before you sleep.

#### **4. Spending time away from gadgets, Facebook.**

While doing an important work, just keep yourself away from the gadgets.

#### **5. F 11**

While working in google chrome, if you want to see nothing but one tab, press F11 button. This helps to view your present screen / tab bigger and keeps you away from all other tabs and windows. To revert back to normal view, press F11 again.

#### **6. Pranayama**

Pranayama is a time tested technique. It helps to improve breath control and trains mind to organize things better.

#### **7. Prayer**

Prayer helps to improve concentration. There is a Yoga technique called as 'Trataka'. It refers to continuously looking at one object for about 5 – 10 minutes. The object can be a lamp, or picture of your favourite Deity. If you are accustomed to praying regularly, continuously looking into the picture of Deity can be done to improve concentration.

#### **8. Self help books.**

Self help books, biographies of great people of your area of interest, keeps your mind motivated and concentrated.

#### **10. Exercise and waking up early –**

Strong and healthy body begets powerful mind. Exercise in morning is especially beneficial for this purpose. Waking up early in the morning has many benefits along with improving concentration.

### **11. Food and habits to avoid –**

Too much oily food, excess non vegetarian food, garlic and onion are considered Tamasik (leading to darkness). Hence minimal use of these helps to improve concentration. Also don't forget that garlic and onion come with a bunch of health benefits. Hence a balance needs to be maintained. Avoiding alcohol and smoking helps.

**12. Watching mind –** Sitting erect while doing any work, Concentrated efforts to watch mind, how it is behaving, what are the areas that need to be improved, concentrating on your concentration levels will surely help you improve concentration.

**13. Abstinence:** – Brahmacharya / Celibacy is a proven and trusted way to improve concentration.

### **14. Afternoon nap –**

If you find it hard to continue working in the afternoon hours, or during summer, or if you have chronic illness, afternoon nap for just 15 – 30 minutes can work wonders to improve your concentration levels.

## **GET RID OF SEDENTARY LIFESTYLE – SOLUTIONS THAT ACTUALLY WORK**

Sleeping for long hours, indulging in chocolates, junk foods, aerated drinks, soda, feeling comfortable in the couch / working desk all day long, no time for exercise, neglecting constant weight gain, lowering energy levels and mental sharpness.. Rings a bell? It is time for a reality check.

### **Activities that constitute sedentary lifestyle and over nourishment:**

- Random eating of fried foods, sweets, heavy-to-digest foods, non vegetarian food
- Using newly harvested rice, grains, fresh wine
- Excess usage of dairy products
- Aversion towards exercise, gym, Yoga, outdoor games, camping, trekking
- Indulging in long time day-sleep,
- Sleeping and resting all the time,
- Feeling comfortable in your couch / desk for long hours, without any movement / physical activities
- Feeding on junk foods, aerated drinks, colas.

### **Effect on Tridosha –**

By above activities, Kapha Dosha builds up excessively in the body, Ama (a product of indigestion and altered metabolism) in the stomach and Tamas in mind.

### **Diseases that you are most likely to suffer due to sedentary lifestyle:**

**Urinary track disorders** - With more junk food, aerated drinks and over-nutrition that body metabolism cannot handle, free radical build up in the body hits kidneys and bladders hard.

**Diabetes** – With excess sugar build up coupled with lethargy, muscles fail to use up the sugar, leading to diabetes.

Carbuncles, urticaria, itching and such other skin disorders – As per Ayurveda, Kapha Dosha increases due to sedentary lifestyle and lazy attitude. Hence person becomes more prone to itching, urticaria etc Kapha dominant skin disorders.

**Anorexia, Indigestion, altered metabolism** - As per Ayurvedic rule, one should eat and drink only when hungry. But that rule is heavily broken when one feeds himself again and again, inviting an array of digestive and metabolism related disorders.

**Drowsiness, lethargy, lack of interest** – With Kapha build up, like a person sitting in darkness for a long period of time, starts to feel comfortable in the darkness, you will no more feel guilty about your wrong and lazy lifestyle. In fact, you start enjoying it; you will start finding more reasons to continue with unhealthy lifestyle.

**Sterility, infertility, excessive obesity** - If you are over eating and not exercising, obviously calories that you are taking in is more than calories that you are burning out, which leads to obesity. As per Ayurveda, high obesity and infertility are related. In Obesity, fat tissue alone receives nourishment, depriving bones and sexual organs. To support this unique theory of Ayurveda, there is umpteen number of modern research articles clearly establishing the relationship between obesity and infertility – both in men and women.

In men, it causes decreased sexual interest and semen quality and decrease in sperm count. In women, it causes glucose intolerance and PCOS.

**Delusion, weak sense organs** – With increased body weight and junk food, brain will suffer from lack of stimulation and nutrition that it actually seeks. Active body leads to an active mind.

**High BP, cardiac disorders** - with ever increasing body cholesterol levels and salts in junk food, blood pressure raises and free radicals start hitting the heart and blood pipes related to heart.

**Management of the diseases caused by over nourishment:**

**Mental shift:**

First step is to break the status quo in mind and accept that it is an emergency problem that needs fast fixing.

Determine to stop feeling comfortable with yourself and develop positive attitude to adopt changes.

**Lifestyle changes:**

Make sure you go to sleep before 11 PM and wake up early around 6 AM.

Avoid afternoon naps.

If you are hooked to your chair for long hours in your office, try stand working.

Standing burns more calories.

**Regular exercise** – Undertake any of the physical activities like Yoga, gym, jogging, walking, which will make you sweat.

**Fasting:** Many a time, regular fasting, at least once a week or skipping a meal or two per day, helps to break the jinx of lazy lifestyle. Try it. If you cannot do full day fasting, you can take up juice fasting.

Give up junk food.

### **Panchakarma treatment and other therapies:**

**Vamana therapy** – This is emesis therapy, helps to expel out excess Kapha from the body. This treatment will act as a trigger to your path of recovery. After this treatment, you will start feeling light, will lose some weight and become more active.

**Virechana therapy**– Purgation therapy is usually done as follow up for Vamana treatment helps to expel out remnant Kapha dosha and also Pitta dosha.

**Dhumapana** – herbal smoking – helps to clear your mind and makes it more active.

**Swedana** – fomentation / sweating treatment – helps to clear up the body channels and initiates the process of reducing cholesterol.

**Herbal Powder massage** – helps to burn fat quickly from arms, abdomen and legs.

### **Useful herbs and spices:**

Ginger, long pepper, black pepper, Coriander seeds, Asa foetida, Moringa, cardamom, neem, turmeric, Triphala, Aragvadha (Cassia fistula), Patha (Cissampelos pareira Linn), Saptaparna (Alstonia scholaris .Br), Vatsaka (Holarrhena antidysenterica Wall.), Musta (Cyperus rotundus), Madanaphala (Randia dumetorum Lam), etc.

### **Ayurvedic medicines:**

It largely depends on the associated complaints of obesity that needs concentration. However, here are a few.

**Triphala churna** – rich in anti oxidants, excellent rejuvenator, helps to lose

weight

**Agastya haritaki** – useful in respiratory disorders, obesity, clears body channels and reduces cholesterol.

**Ayaskruti** – indicated in obesity. Fatty liver changes, anaemia, skin disorders

**Asanadi Kashayam, Varanadi Kashayam, Varadi Kashayam**

You have so many other options. Consult your Ayurvedic doctor to know which one is the right combination for you.



## **FOR GOOD HEALTH AND A CALM MIND – CONTROL YOUR TONGUE**

We can be healthy, we can be happy only if we can control what our tongue speaks and what it tastes. Silence is the 'closed golden treasure' of every individual. But 'eagerness for recognition' in the community or in a group of people and 'ambition for opportunity' will make us to open this treasure very often. Once opened, everybody will peep into this 'magic box' and the nobleness of the mysterious golden antique is lost. This is seen quite often in some individuals. Most likely the 'nature' of the individual prompts the person to do so. But, the repercussions, after breaking the silence, are not pleasant. That is why excess talking is not entertained in the corporate world but such people have golden opportunities in reality shows!

There are two famous proverbs in Kannada (an ancient and beautiful south Indian language, my mother tongue)

Speech is silver, Silence is gold.

It is better to be known as dumb, being silent, than as rude / awkward by being talkative.

Even though the 'urge of talk' starts from the mind, but soon it is taken over by the tongue, that is when the connection between the mind and tongue is lost.

The cleverness is hidden in controlling what we talk.

It does not mean that we should shut our mouth and avoid speaking all the time. But we should have awareness about where, what and when to talk. It is like exhibiting the 'golden antique' in front of the people who are seeking to buy it from you. Only in such cases it gives big return/ recognition/appreciation or else it becomes a common object of lesser interest.

To sum up, the tongue has the power to make the time and energy as an investment or tool to invite a trouble.

### **How to control what you speak:**

**Ghee** - Regular use of ghee makes your brain sharp and enables it to control tongue. Make sure to use at least a teaspoon of ghee in your diet.

**Regular practice of pranayama** – Pranayama gives good control to your breath, mind and tongue. Hence, practice it regularly.

**Bhramari type of pranayama** is especially prescribed to control tongue and mind

**Before a meeting**, plan well ahead about what to talk and what not to. A conscious mind will help you to delete unnecessary chapters from the mind. Bite your tongue gently, before starting a conversation. This alerts the mind and tongue to be double-careful.

After a conversation, repeatedly analyze how you could have made it better. Another mishap usually is caused due to hyperactive tongue, which is longing for all the dishes this universe has to offer. The rule of Ayurveda is, eat only when hungry and stop eating just before you feel you are satiated. You are supposed to include all the 6 tastes in your food – sweet, salt, sour, bitter, astringent and pungent.

Once again it is due to the greediness of the hyper-active mind the individual likes to have varieties of food. Ultimately, one will end up in indigestion and is exposed to all sorts of diseases – obesity, diabetes, etc.

### **Remedy for extra craving:**

There is no remedy as such for this. Just stop over-eating, avoid junk foods, soda, very spicy foods, aerated drinks and excess alcohol.

Drink good amounts of water when thirsty, of course, Pranayama, strict lifestyle; a co-operating family help a lot.

Let's control our tongue both while speaking and eating and let's enjoy a healthy body and calm mind.

Article by Dr MS Krishnamurthy and Dr Hebbar

## **GIVE YOUR BODY A CHANCE TO HEAL ON ITS OWN**

Our body has an in-built system to hit back to the normal health. For every small health variations, medicines are not needed. But if we start using medicine for each and every small health variations, our body will get accustomed to the medicines so much that it loses its innate ability to fight on its own, it loses the art of self healing. So, before you pop up that pill for that little headache, which you can bear for a while, give your body a chance for self healing.

Even Indian Government recently advised doctors not to prescribe strong medicines and antibiotics in case of fever, common cold, cough and more

### **How to do it?**

1. By adopting a healthy lifestyle.
2. By maintaining regular timings for sleeping and eating, setting up a **rhythmic body clock**.
3. By eating smartly i.e., eating healthy nutritious food, avoiding junk foods.
4. By listening to your body for signs of recovery
5. Smart use of Ayurvedic home remedies. Eg. Garlic is an efficient herb to curb cholesterol.
6. By choosing a good physician, who would prescribe appropriate medicines for appropriate conditions for appropriate time period. Many times, the patient himself expects the doctor to prescribe medicines, though the doctor will be of opinion that medicine is not required. He is compelled to write one. So, if the doctor says that you do not need medicine, let's respect his decision.
7. **Exercise** is one of the best medicines for pre diabetes, PCOS and hypertension.
  - Exercise is a clinically proven way to **treat diabetes** and hypertension.
  - Exercise helps to fight **insulin resistance in PCOS**

8. There are certain conditions, which heal on their own. Examples:

- Common cold: Have ginger tea and allow the body to fight the virus. You will be successful within 3 – 5 days.
- Little headache: Follow these tips to fight headache
- Depression: There is difference between depression – the disease and temporary state of sadness. Learn them and avoid **medicine for depression**

9. Stopping the paranoid attitude towards each and everything around you.

*“How much protein your daughter should eat? ooohh little dirt in her dress, she may get allergic reactions!.. oh my God, Today she ate 4 almonds in place of 2, she may suffer from excess of Vitamin E.”*

I am not suggesting that if you have a severe chest pain, you should neglect, which can be life threatening.

But I am suggesting to

- Adopt smart natural ways to heal.
- Judge your health and disease with smartness
- Use Ayurvedic home remedies wherever needed and
- Choose a good doctor.

## **MY WORK – MY LIFE – LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW**

I get up early in the morning and workout... put my best effort on my muscles... like there is no tomorrow.

I hurry up with mundane routines to get to my laptop to start punching words to my blog or to reply to my clients..... like there is no tomorrow.

I pray to the Lord for the strength to do my life's best work today.... like there is no tomorrow.

I think about my work all the time.. How I can improvise the blog, how I can bring a change in the lives of so many people.. like there is no tomorrow.

If I am reading a book or watching a movie, I try to absorb the most out of it... like there is no tomorrow.

Along with reading medical news, I also focus on grammar, English usage, software technical stuff etc.. to put in the best set of words in my articles.. like there is no tomorrow.

While I concentrate hard to keep concentration and mental peace at mountain levels, I try to hurry up with my work, to extract most out of the day, like there is no tomorrow.

I *try* to forgive harsh words of others, try to gulp in all the frustrations, absorb all the sorrows, yet try to give my best to people around me... like there is no tomorrow.

I *try* to take care of my family and give valuable time to my friends... like there is no tomorrow.

I cry and weep hard if I get to know a bad news, I laugh out loud, relish and enjoy all the small funs of life, ignoring what others think of me, I try to live close to my genuine self... like there is no tomorrow.

However,

I do not spend money like there is no tomorrow.

I do not drive my car fast like there is no tomorrow.

I do not brag / abuse people like there is no tomorrow.

I do not consume alcohol or smoke like there is no tomorrow.

I do not eat like there is no tomorrow.

Because I know, that, if at all there is a tomorrow for me, I would want to make that a better day than today.

The best way to make a dent in the universe, the best way to bring a change to this world, the best way to find inner peace and satisfaction, that I know is... to work and love people... like there is no tomorrow.

## **HOBBIES – AN EFFECTIVE CURE FOR DEPRESSION**

Mental depression is a very tough condition to tackle. Effective cure for depression depends not only on the medication, counselling etc. but also on the personality. Hobbies are the major factors that configure personality. Having a hobby or developing hobbies is very important in your fight against mental depression.

### **How hobby acts as a cure for depression:**

**Boost self-confidence:** Hobbies help to boost self-confidence. It gives you an extra talent and extra ability to showcase your talent. You are special than the rest due to your extra talent.

**Positive investment:** Hobbies help you to invest your time and money in a positive activity.

**Showcase passion:** Many people do not get to indulge in their passion at the workplace since routine repetitive type of work turns out to be boring. For such people, hobbies give them a chance to live their passion. This brings happiness.

**Keeps you busy:** Hobbies keep you busy and happy. They help to get rid of lethargy, loneliness and dull mood that are the basic pillars of depression.

**Positivity:** Gives a chance to divert your concentration towards positivity, to do something productive, something useful.

**Health benefits of hobbies:** If dance or a sport is a hobby, it helps to keep you fit. This way you may not think of taking up gym or any other physical activity to keep yourself fit.

**Builds personality and character:** Hobbies help you to develop a personality of your own.



### **List of hobbies and their mental benefits:**

**Drawing, clay modelling, art and craft** – injects creativity into mind, keeps you busy and active.

#### **Cooking –**

- Keeps you busy, helps improve health with healthy cooking.
- If you make others happy with your delicious food, then you also will become happy.
- Gives you a sense of achievement.

#### **Swimming, Dancing, sports:**

- Keeps you busy and fit.
- Helps you to develop fighting spirit.
- Makes you see victories and losses with a balanced mind.

#### **Solving puzzles, crosswords:**

- Makes the brain active
- Gives a sense of achievement.

**Singing, Music:** Calms your mind and gives you a sense of achievement.

#### **Reading self help books and famous biographies –**

Self help books such as “Leading with no title”, “Monk, who sold his ferrari” by Robin Sharma, Biographies like those of Steve Jobs, Swamy Vivekananda etc can really help to boost self confidence. Reading habit gives a fresh perspective towards what can be done better in the future.

**A word of caution:** Online hobbies like chatting / befriending unknown people, too much indulgence in Facebook etc may not always be creative.

So, make great hobbies a part of your life and live a happy and successful life.

## **POWER OF THE HEART IS IN LOVING EVERYTHING IMPERFECT**

Simone Van hove-van der Gaag, a reader of my articles from Netherlands sent a poem card to me. The meaning is so refreshing that I was compelled to elaborate. It is about loving everything imperfect.

### **The poem – (Dutch)**

The power of the heart  
Is in  
Loving  
Everything imperfect  
Who is able to do so...  
Will see pure beauty  
within oneself,  
within others  
within the world around us  
and in everything that surrounds us  
...and is able to live from the heart  
To do whatever he does: with love...

### **Loving the imperfect –**

**Swami Vivekananda**, the great Hindu monk of India says,

*“You must give your body, mind and speech to the welfare of the world. You have read – ‘Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava:- Look upon your mother as God, look upon your father as God’,*

*But i say, ‘Daridra Devo Bhava, Murkha Devo Bhava:- the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted-let these be your God’. Know that service to these alone is highest religion.”*

### **Loving ourselves –**

We all know that each one of us has some imperfections. “My looks are not

good, my hair is not silky enough, the way I speak does not impress anyone, If only I was taller by five inches..”

But we must love our strength and we have to develop confidence. We have to understand first that everyone is imperfect in one or the other way. We have to accept our imperfectness and concentrate on our strengths.

When I asked Simone, if I can share this in my blog, she wrote back –

*“Art is to share... – years I hold everything I made just for myself- shy and insecure as I was.. as I found out..that art is meant to be shared... – and suddenly the things I make, share or give away are much more beautiful.. “*

So, let us love our imperfections, let us love others’ imperfections and consider all as one among ourselves, let us concentrate more on our strengths and let us excel in our chosen fields of work and life.

## HOW TO DO MULTITASKING IN A HEALTHY AYURVEDA WAY?

Living in 21st century-wired weird world, you cannot live without multitasking. Just try to organize yourself to do only one thing at a time, by afternoon, your day will start going awry. There are opinions that multi tasking is not good for health and it causes attention deficiency, induces panic etc. But there is surely a healthy *Ayurveda* way of doing many things at a time, without losing your mind.

### **Ayurveda concept of mind –**

As per Ayurveda, there are two characteristics of mind.

**1. Anutwa – Minuteness** - Mind is minute and moves fast to link with different sense organs, hands and legs.

**2. Ekatwa – Single** – Mind is only one.

Mind is the co-ordinator between sense organs and intellect.

Mind and intellect should be in unison for

- **Knowledge in flow** (sensory – Inward flow of message from external world to brain)
- **Action** (Motor – outward flow of message from brain to the sense organs, hands and legs, to take action)

When mind connects between eyes and intellect, we see and *perceive* things.

When mind connects between ears and intellect, we hear and *understand things*.

When mind connects intellect with our hands, we can write, *what we want to express*.

Let me call the above three actions, where mind's full presence is required, as **Full mindful actions**.

**Full mindful actions** are those, where we cannot do anything without full involvement of mind. For example, if mind does not connect between eyes and intellect, we may be looking at an object, but we cannot perceive it. We may be hearing, but we cannot understand things. We may be writing, but we cannot write to express our ideas.

However, each and every action of ours may not require our mind's full participation. I will call such works as **Semi mindful actions**.

**Semi-mindful actions** - There are some works for which, continuous connection of organs with intellect is not required.

For example walking. Mind decides where to go and where to stop. It hands over the responsibility to legs. Leg will take care of walking, while mind may indulge in, say, listening to something.

This is why; you can consciously listen to what your friend is talking about, while you are walking. Note here, though mind is presently connecting ears to intellect, it has assigned the walking job to legs, and that job is going on smoothly.

Apart from working with sense organs, hands and legs, mind also does thinking, planning, guessing, analyzing etc, on its own.

So, with this elaborate background, let us come back to multi-tasking.

### **How to multitask like a professional?**

Since mind is only one, you simply *cannot take up **two** full-mindful-actions* at the same time.

For example, you cannot drive and answer a phone call at the same time. Something undesirable can happen, when you drive and talk on the phone simultaneously. Because, driving is a full mindful action, there are lot of decisions to be made each and every second, and listening, thinking and

talking over the phone, is again another full mindful job. *So, no two full-mindful jobs should be done at the same time.*

But you can surely combine one semi-mindful action and one full mindful action. You can do these two types of actions simultaneously.

For example, you can surely drive, while you're listening to music. Can't you? Driving is a full mindful action, but listening to music is only a semi-mindful job. You're not totally into the music. It just runs in the background and you only feel the enjoyment, without bothering much about what the lyrics is all about and so on.

So, follow this simple principle and pick only two tasks at a time, one – full mindful, and another – semi mindful and enjoy multi-tasking.

**Examples for good multitasking:**

1. Putting cloths to washing machine, and cooking. Once you put cloths into washing, your mind is not required there. It is a semi-mindful action. You can continue cooking, which is a full mindful action.
2. Downloading big size software, typing an email. – Once you hit the download button and assign a disc space in your laptop, you're free till the download is complete. Use that time to type, browse, drinking a cup of coffee etc.
3. Jogging and listening to a self-help podcast. Jogging requires only your semi mind. You can utilize that full attention of your mind to listen to podcast related to your favourite topic.
4. Reading a document, while enjoying a cup of herbal tea. You can surely do both things together, unless you end up spilling tea over your important document.

**Examples of bad multi tasking:**

1. Driving and talking over the phone. They simply cannot go together. A recent research says even a walking and texting makes you distracted and prone for accidents.
2. Students doing homework while watching TV. TV, being more interesting and engaging, mind will be dragged into it, harming the progress of your studies.
3. Eating and texting / talking over the phone. As per Ayurvedic eating etiquette, eating should be your full mindful job. You should concentrate on quality and quantity of stuff, going into your mouth. Talking over the phone, being more active job, is a full mindful job and will take away concentration from your plate.

### **Basic pre-requisites for a successful multi-tasking**

**A perfect plan** -If you do not plan the tasks ahead, you will not be able to achieve a healthy mix of semi and full mindful jobs. It is better to plan early in the morning, or just before going to sleep.

**Measurement of time** – As your experience grows, you should have a clear picture regarding, precisely how much time is required to complete one task.

**Example:** The clothes are getting washed in the machine, meanwhile you can finish cooking or do other important works like sending email, writing a blog or reading news paper, etc.

**Write it down** – Writing down the future tasks as and when you think of one, is a very healthy habit. You can even use your mobile to make a note for planning your day.

So use these techniques and become a champion of multi-tasking without losing your mind.





## HOW TO APPRECIATE THE HEALING PROCESS? A SIMPLE METHOD

Sometimes we are so hard on ourselves that we concentrate more on our illness symptoms and we fail to feel and appreciate the healing process.

Turning our concentration towards healing process makes life all the more enjoyable.

This positive attitude itself will help in relieving the stress, boosting immune system and further improves the chances of curing the disease.

This excellent poem from **Simone Van Hove – Van Der Gaag** from Netherlands will help you in concentrating more on healing, and to stop worrying about your illness. Here is her poem –

“Here is something I wonder....

There is so much written on the internet and in books and magazines everywhere about symptoms of illness...

Many people do not have a clue anymore about what are good signs and good indications of health and healing.

In my own way of recovery, I found out it is pretty hard to describe to others the many tiny but so special and precious steps / vibrations of health coming back to me...

Sometimes it can be overwhelming.

Grateful, amazed, without words...

Those rich moments of peace in mind/ heart/ body etc... are so hard to describe...

It's like the beauty of the moon and stars on a bright night...

They make you feel part of it all and also very little..

They make you feel calm and excited together.. !

They give you space to breathe... and make you hold your breath in respect...

They make emotions and thoughts that move... and in the same time.. make

you stand still..and ***hold you in the moment...***

It's the peace which you 'll pledge yourself to hold on... but you know that's just impossible.

Just make sure you'll hold the memory...to help you whenever you need it. And be grateful..

To be short: wonderful....!"

## **HOW TO IMPROVE BRAIN SPEED AND MEMORY SPACE? 25 SURE SHOT TIPS**

Ignore the people who say that your brain and mind has limited powers. You can surely work to improve your brain speed and improve your memory irrespective of your age. Newspapers often report people in their 80s and 90s graduating from college. If they can, then why can't you? Here are a few tips.

**Use it or lose it-** This applies to your brain. It means – more you memorize, more you read, more you try to understand new stuff, more you think positively, more you analyze, more will be the brain power. On contrary, less you read, less you think and innovate, less will be your brain speed. So, make an effort to read more, learn good and interesting things.

**Confidence and self belief** – If I do not believe that I can ride a horse, I surely will not be able to ride a horse. “It is all in the mind” they say and it's true. For you to do anything, you have to believe that you can do it. That is the first and basic pre-requisite.

**Do not listen to others** - If Steve Jobs believed in what others had said, he could have ended his career as a clerk of a bank. Travis Kalanick, CEO, Uber told that he had heard at least 10 “No's” per day, continuously for 10 years.

**Prayer** – A positive mindset is really needed to improve brain and mind qualities. There is nothing as good as prayer to inject positivity. Prayer is just a way of connecting your brain and mind to your soul. Prayer is a way of instilling purity into your heart. Prayer is a way to cleanse your mind off impurities.

**Pranayama** – Controlling our breathing pattern for a few minutes helps to control our mind better. It adds to the inner strength.

**Yoga or any physical activity** – A strong body helps to have a strong mind. (And vice versa). Exercise and mental strength are directly related. So, whatever is your age, and body strength, try to have some sort of physical activity. E.g. 10 minutes brisk walk, swimming, skiing, cycling, playing Tennis, Kabbaddi, hide and seek.. Just practise whatever you like, at least 10 minutes a day.

**Spend time with kids – Develop Childlike Innocence** – This may not be possible to all. But it is really effective. If you spend an hour with someone, then your mind will have positive or negative impact due to influence of that person. Similarly, if you spend some time with a toddler, watching her play, how she learns new things, etc., chances are that you will acquire more innocence. Steve Jobs famous quote – “Stay hungry, stay foolish” – probably hints towards being innocent and open to learning new things.

**Write down and prioritize** – You need to feed your brain in some order so that it can process the incoming information systematically. Writing down lists helps to think clearly and gives you an extra advantage of analysing things differently. When you write and see your notes, another set of information is fed to the brain, about your topic. Hence, it improves your thinking power over the topic.

**Memory games** – More your brain is trained to memorize, more will be its memory.

**Chess, Su Do Ku** – and such other games help to improve analytical capacity of the brain.

**Ayurvedic supplement** – Ayurvedic herbs like Brahmi, Ashwagandha, Shankhapuspi, Jyotishmati, Aparajita etc are very useful in improving memory and concentration. Consult your Ayurvedic doctor for a right medicine for you. (If in case, he thinks that you really need one)

**Ghee** – Regular use of clarified butter helps to improve intelligence and memory power.

*Cow ghee is very well suited for those seeking improvement in intelligence and memory.*

**Sit with straight back** – As per the terms of Yoga and Ayurveda, sitting straight helps for easy flow of Prana through the six chakras present in the spinal column.

**Cold water bath** – Cold water bath improves the level of alertness and helps to understand and interpret the things faster. But cold water bath is not for all.

**Eye exercises** – Rotatory eye movements, or playing with a ball and watching it continuously brings in sharpness to brain.

**Be fast in whatever you do** – Faster body activities help you to accelerate the learning process. So, whatever the work that you do, using a typewriter, chasing a robber, etc., try to do it fast. It saves a lot of time and it trains your brain and body to be faster.

However, this does not apply to eating, though.

**Good sound sleep** – Sound sleep for 6 -7 hours is really helpful in improving memory. It helps to keep the brain calm and concentrated.

**Multitask with great care** – This topic has been explained in a separate chapter. Multi tasking It is good, saves a lot of time, but only when it is done the right way.

**Watch what you eat** -Too much of potato, garlic, onion, oily food and non vegetarian food do not contribute for your memory and concentration, though they may be good for your physical health.

**Do not test and tease your brain** – While you're trying to improve memory, do not test yourself to know how much you've improved. It is a long process and you will surely win. Have self belief.

**Keep away distractions** – As far as possible, limit your Facebook, twitter times, limit those TV serials that you watch and indulge in something creative and positive. Write a poem, draw a picture, and help your son solve his maths problem, instead.

**Perfect physical health** – Swami Vivekananda says – Good physical health is necessary for Spiritual journey. The same applies to memory and concentration as well. Try to be proactive. Use Ayurvedic remedies and stay healthy.

**Happy mood** – A happy mind is an active mind. In your free time, read some jokes, crack some jokes and try to spread laughter. It is rewarding.

**Good stomach health** – You really cannot concentrate on anything when you've bloating or gastritis. Can you? Soon after a full meal, you'd rather sleep than study a neuroscience fiction novel. Keep your stomach light.

**Brahmacharya** – I kept it for the last but abstinence is the most powerful tool ever to improve brain power and concentration. Purity of mind and heart gives rise to unbelievable brain powers.

## **IF DISEASE IS DUE TO BAD KARMA, SHOULD WE FIGHT IT OR NOT?**

Having kids is one of the means to spend our Karma. We take a lot of pain in bringing up them in a good way. That pain is a way to spend our bad Karma out. Similar is, serving our parents when they are old. Serving them burns out our bad Karma and wins our parents' and God's blessings. While bringing up kids or taking care of our old parents, we do not take a short cut. We suffer through it and enjoy the experience. Does this rule hold good to diseases also? If we have any disease, should we just suffer, thinking it as a result of bad Karma or should we fight against it?

### **Fighting for survival is our real nature**

It is the very nature of every living creature, plant or animal, to fight to live, to fight to restore health. When there is an infection attack on our body, white blood cells increase to fight against micro organisms. It is in our nature to fight against attack – either a physical attack or a health attack. Fighting against odds (health / social) is in our nature. The body/ mind do so, because survival is the most important matter for any living being. So, when disease attacks us, naturally body will fight for its survival. Hence, all the efforts should be made to help our body and mind to fight the disease, for our survival.

**Health is the most precious thing** that we can ever be gifted with by Mother Nature. If there is health, there is life. If there is life, then there are hopes, efforts, and achievements.

Hence, all the efforts should be made to protect our health.

### **Examples:**

Suppose you are a bus driver with migraine. The purpose of existence of a bus



driver is to drive the bus carefully with utmost attention. If the bus driver thinks that suffering with migraine is his Karma and leaves it as it is without getting it treated, drives the bus. If he gets a bout of migraine while driving, feels like vomiting, gets blurred vision and causes an accident, then his bad Karma will further increase, because of his inaction towards his migraine. His Karma would have got reduced, if he had taken the treatment for migraine and drove the bus properly.

Whatever disease we have, we need to fight it out to keep the body healthy and fit.

*“Shareeram Adyam Khalu Dharma Saadhanam”* - Vedanta and Kalidasa.

If we have strong body and strong health, then only we can follow path of righteousness (Dharma), then only we can take a good care of our kids and parents, then only we can earn to support our families, then only we can do our duties with utmost attention and sincerity and then only we can lead a spiritual life.

So, during a disease attack, all efforts should be made to get the disease treated and to lead a meaningful life.

When you have good health, all the efforts should be made to protect it.

### **What if the disease is incurable?**

*Karmanye Vaadhikaaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadaachana* – Lord Sri Krishna, Srimad Bhagavad Geeta.

We have right to put in our efforts, but we do not have any rights for the fruits.

Our primary goal is to do whatever we can, to fight disease. We do not have any right to claim for good health, just based on our efforts.

But then, we can do adjustments in health and life so that, we are functional

and we are chasing our dreams.

*While there's life there's hope* - Prof. Stephen Hawking

### **What if I am poor and cannot afford costly treatment?**

Up to whatever level we can fight the disease, we should fight. But we should leave no stone unturned. But when we are healthy, we should make all the efforts to follow –Dharma – path of righteousness, and earn Artha – money.

We should also make all efforts to protect money for the tougher times of disease in future.

Let us hope and pray that all human beings can have good money to protect their health and to fight their diseases.

### **This body is abode of God!**

When someone dies, in Hindu custom, we bow down (do Pranam) to that dead body, thinking that God had lived inside that body. As long as life is there, the God lives within us, pumping the heart, functioning the liver, digesting the food, excreting the waste, pushing in and out the air, healing the wounds. So, this body needs utmost attention to maintain best possible health.

Again there is a question that, some people, how hard they may try, they do not earn good money. For that, the answer is, whether to earn money or to fight the disease, we have to do our best and leave the rest to the Mother Nature. So, it all boils down to the will of Mother Nature, whom, the Hindus call in different names as Durga, Kali, Devi, Bhairavi, Lalita, Gayatri, Sharada, Shive, Ambe, Maata, Lakshmi, Saraswati etc.

Additional comments by Dr M Narayana Bhat.

janmAntara kRtamM pApamM vyAdhirUpēNa bAdhatē  
tacchAnti auSadaiH dAnaiH japa hōma surArcanaiH (yōgaratnAkara)  
yathA zAstrantu nirNatō yathA vyAdhi cikitsakaH  
na zamaM zAnti yO vyAdhiH saJJeyaH karmajO budhaH

Scriptures & puraanaas support your views. Anushaasana Parva of epic  
Mahabhaarata deals with the subject so also 'karma vipaaka' texts.

As you have rightly pointed out, medical treatment should be supported by  
other measures as indicated here below. If the evil done is so grave, even  
medication may not come to our rescue.

## **IMPROVE MEMORY AND FIGHT MEMORY LOSS WITH SIMPLE EFFECTIVE TIPS**

Memory loss is a common problem faced by people across all age groups. Sometimes, it leads to disasters in our lives. Fight memory loss with these effective tips.

Here are a few memory improvement tips.

**Ghee** improves memory power –

*Shasyate Dhee smruti medha agnikaanskhinaam Ghritam* – Ashtanga Sangraha

For people seeking memory power, intelligence and digestive power, ghee is the best. Ghee is a wonderful adjuvant. When herbal products to improve memory etc are advised, they should be taken with ghee, because lipid soluble herbal constituents cross blood brain barrier easily, to bring about the desired action at the level of brain. Even in normal circumstances, a little bit of ghee (say half spoon per day), included in your diet will be great. Since the quantity is less, there will not be any issues regarding lipid level increase. Take at least half a teaspoon of ghee per day. Make it a part of your diet.

**Organize work schedule** – Suppose you have to do a phone call to your friend, who is in hospital, bring vegetables from market for cooking, check the emails and also have to buy movie ticket online. Then the correct order will be calling your friend first, (it is important to have a get together with your ailing mates), bring vegetables from the market (it is important to have lot of vegetables in your diet), then sit down to check emails, along with that you can buy the tickets. (It's equally important to have relaxation!)

**Practice Pranayama** for at least three minutes. It is one of the sure shot memory booster that I usually prescribe to my clients!

Cow milk is another memory booster according to Ayurveda.

Playing memory games, sudoku, chess etc helps to improve memory power.

Regular exercise schedule also aids in proper blood circulation and energy supply to all parts of the body, so it also helps.

If you want to memorize an answer or a paragraph, reading it loud helps because, information enters your brain through your ears also.

If you are having problem with memory, please do not curse yourself or unnecessarily do not check your memory power by trying to remember something. It affects your self-confidence, creating negative energy. In case you forgot something, say to yourself – “that is ok, better luck and efforts next time” and move on positively.

Include fruits, fruit juices, almonds and vegetables in your diet. It gives sufficient nutrition to brain and are Satwic in nature. Avoid onion, garlic, extra spicy foods, junk foods, chips, heavy-to-digest non veg foods.

Breakfast can be a bit heavy, so also the lunch. But dinner should be light and more with fibrous materials. Since during night, the digestive process will be slow, heavy dinner may lead to indigestion. Ayurveda Says Agni – digestive power and memory are related to each other.

**Sadhaka Pitta** is a type of pitta, which resides in the brain and heart and is related with will power, memory etc. Pitta and Agni are very closely related. So, memory and digestive powers are linked, according to Ayurveda. So, proper diet plan also helps.

Brahmi (bacopa monneiri), Shankapushpi (Clitoria ternatea), Shatavari (Asperagus racemosus) an Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera) are a group of

herbs having excellent anti oxidants, and immune-modulator properties. Many research studies show the role of these herbs in improving memory power. Consult your doctor for the right herb for you.

## **MONEY, AYURVEDA, SPIRITUALITY – HOW TO STRIKE PERFECT BALANCE?**

In explaining four distinct qualities of an ideal patient, Vagbhata has enlisted first quality as Adya – rich.

Vairagya Shatakam, a spiritual textbook says, “In wealth, is the fear of poverty. He alone is fearless who has given up everything”.

Charaka explains that there are three basic human desires. The second one is – Dhaneshana – desire for wealth.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa (Guru of Swami Vivekananda) opined, poverty begets dispassion (Vairagya). If someone is really following spiritual path, he should not have desire for wealth.

There are four stages for salvation; the third one is Artha – wealth / money. In the midst of all these, let us try to find out how to strike a balance.

### **Four qualities of a patient:**

Vagbhata has explained the first ideal quality of patient is being rich.

(Reference: Ashtanga Hrudaya Sutrasthana 1) Being rich enables the person to undergo superior quality of treatment, giving him maximum chance to survive, if other parameters are kept constant.

### **Vairagya Shataka says:**

“In wealth is the fear of poverty, in knowledge the fear of ignorance, in beauty the fear of age, in fame the fear of backbiters, in success the fear of jealousy, even in body is the fear of death.

Everything in this earth is fraught with fear. He alone is fearless who has given up everything”

### **Charaka has explained three types of desires.**

- Praneshana – desire to live

- Dhaneshana – desire for money and
- Paralokeshana – desire to have superior position after-death.

(Reference: Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 12th chapter)

The chapter further explains that – one must have a desire for wealth because there is nothing as miserable as a long life without wealth. So, one must try to tap in various sources of wealth. These sources of wealth are – farming, cattle breeding, trade, government service, etc. One can also adopt any other means of livelihood that is not disapproved by good men. Doing so, one lives a long life, without suffering any loss of prestige.

There is also a true belief that if someone is really on a spiritual path, he needs to be dispassionate about wealth. If someone gets engulfed in the vicious desire of wealth, he will gradually lose analytical mind to decide what is right to do and what is not.

Saint Kabir sings –

Childhood is spent in playing, youth is spent in making money and old age is spent in disease. Thus the gem-like human life is spent wastefully.

### **There are four basic stages to attain Moksha – Salvation**

- Dharma – following the path of righteousness
- Artha – earning money in a legal way
- Kama – fulfilling our desire
- Moksha – achieving Salvation

### **Swami Vivekananda opines:**

- “There is a tendency to bind everyone down by the same laws as those by which the Sanyasin is bound, and that is a great mistake. But for that



a good deal of the poverty and the misery that you see in India need not have been. A poor man's life is hemmed in and bound down by tremendous spiritual and ethical laws of which he has no use. Hands off! Let the poor fellow enjoy himself a little, and then he will raise himself up and renunciation will come to him by itself."

- He says; do not preach spirituality for a person with hungry stomach. He doesn't need your spirituality. He needs food to fill his stomach.
- He further says that, for a person to become Satvic (spiritual, righteous), he should leave out Tamas and have good amount of Rajas (attraction, energy to do work). Once when his desires are completely satisfied, then only he will be able to follow the spiritual path.

- 

I think in this world, we need to live a spiritual life. Without some basic level of spirituality, there cannot be meaning for life. Life will lack lustre and purpose. Take out spirituality from our lives and we will end up being – "I have all, but there is nothing to enjoy".

At the same time, we need to earn money to take care of ourselves and our families. Supporting them with facilities, education, healthcare etc is our basic duty.

If you are really after your profession and wealth creation, if that is where, your heart lies, then, it is best for you to follow your dreams with full vigour. If you try to deviate from that path to spirituality, you may not feel real happiness because, it is a forceful conversion. If your real desire lies in money, for the time being, then it indicates that, in the four stages of salvation, you are at the level of Artha. Have belief that you will overcome it one day, for a higher cause. But for now, continue to follow your heart and passion.

We should make all the legal efforts to earn money to support our families and ourselves.

We should make all efforts to earn but with a sense of detachment, knowing that ultimate goal of ours, is to be one with Divine.

The detachment for money can be practiced by giving away some part of our earning towards charity.

We should maintain the balance between money and dispassion with the help of spiritual practices like devotional songs, chanting, meditation etc.

## **MY FAVORITE FIVE WORDS, WHICH RULE MY LIFE. WHAT IS YOURS?**

Our character, belief and mindset largely depend on the words that we use on daily basis. We all have some words that inspire us and drive us forward, some words that are very close to our heart. Here is my list of favourite words and phrases. Also, do let me know about yours.

**1. Perseverance** – This is my favourite-most word. It sounds so sweet. I always try to stick with what I have got and persevere with it for a long time. If you give me two options like, easy money with quick work and lot of money after a long work, I will surely choose the second option.

I was doing my post graduation in Ayurveda at the age of 25 – 27 (3 years), during when, my friends were buying cars, buying house, and getting married and I used to feel a bit jealous and anxious. But I knew that perseverance with whatever I am doing right now, doing it perfectly and waiting for a right opportunity is the right way.

I developed and worked on my website 'easyayurveda.com' for first three years without any monetary benefits. Now it is where I work every day.

**2. Behaviour – character** – Our regular reaction to things around us constitutes behaviour and behaviour gets ingrained into our mind and body to become character.

Kabeera (Ancient Indian saint sings) – All the wealth of the world are hidden inside character.

**3. Studios** – is interest to learn new things. Being a doctor, if I was not eager to learn about how a website works, I would never have started the 'easyayurveda.com', through which I am able spread the message of Ayurveda.

It is the interest in learning that keeps the mind active and positive. It brings about openness to mind. It makes us feel fresh. It takes away prejudice.

**4. “It’s never too late to start”.** Other day, I saw Hrithik Roshan (famous Indian actor) posted a photo with his mother. She has lost 20 kilograms at the age of 60.

It’s never ever too late to take a fresh start, be it your career or your health or your life goals. Never think it is too late. Do not give up. You always have time. Just find it and work it out. You are here to win. Have trust in yourself!

**5. Move on! Get on with life.** I see many people get stuck up with a sad moment – love failure, lost opportunities etc., and neglect a long line of happy moments that are waiting to happen. They suck up their energy and also of people around them. Whenever I am stuck with something, get-on-with-life is what I think of.

So, what are your favourite words? What inspires you? What keeps you positive, ahead of others and at the direction of your goals?

## **SHOULD YOU STUDY IN THE MORNING OR AT NIGHT**

Study in the morning or at night is a very important decision. Whole process of studying and performance may be affected, just by the wrong decision made in this regard. Studying in the morning or at night both come with their own advantages and disadvantages. But which one suits you, should be decided very carefully. It depends on different aspects.

### **Benefits of studying in the morning:**

1. The mind will be fresh after a good night sleep. Mind will be sharp to gather and absorb maximum information.
2. Waking up in '*Brahmi Muhurtha*' - about half an hour before sunrise is very auspicious and concentration levels will be maximum.
3. If you study in the morning, the other plans of the day will go according to plans. It boosts confidence.
4. If you are facing exams or tests in the class, if you have studied in the morning, chances are more for recollection of the studied subject.
5. If you have a good control over wake up time, then morning hours are suitable for studies for you.

### **Disadvantage of study in the morning:**

1. If you do not have control on your sleeping hours, and if you do not get up as per the plans, the whole day may go wrong.
2. As the morning progresses, the routine works such as bathing and breakfast may become hurdles for some.

### **Advantages of studying in the night:**

1. If you have good control over your sleep, you may study at night.

2. If you have good control over yourself to keep on studying, without falling a prey to video games or TV, you may study at night.
3. The calmness and darkness brings clarity to mind and it gets better and better hour after hour.
4. If you complete the studies as per the plans and go to bed, the joy of sleep will be fortified.
5. Do not imitate your friends. Your body and mind patterns are different from anybody else. You will need to take your own decision.

#### **Disadvantages of studying in the night:**

1. Distractions such as TV and Video games, especially after parents retire to bed.
2. If you are going for dance class, or any sports, you may be too tired to concentrate on studies at night.

#### **How to decide on fixing the study hours?**

- **Sleep control:** If you can control yourself from falling into sleep, night is the right time for you to study. But if you can control the exact time to wake up, morning is the best time for you.
- **Hobbies:** If you have extra-curricular activities, then it makes sense to choose the morning option. A tired body cannot concentrate. You can complete the home works and writing stuff at night and can study in the morning.
- **Homework and studying:** Even if you have chosen morning study hours, it is better to finish homework and writing works at night and study in the morning.

**If you are a parent** and wondering about choosing the right time for your kid, do the following:

1. Watch kid's sleeping pattern.
2. Make sure he sleeps for 8 hours a day.
3. Can he control his / her sleep or can he wake up at the said time decide by observation.
4. Do a little trial and error and fix the right time to study.

## **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES – BEST MEDICINE FOR GOOD MENTAL AND SPIRITUAL HEALTH**

There comes a moment in our lives, where a question arises –

“For what I should live in this world?”

“For what good reason, should I continue living?”

Having been blessed with the most beautiful gift, ‘The life’, having absorbed so much of love and happiness from our beloved people, it is our duty to give it back to the society, from where we have got so much. When everyone thinks on the same line, the world will be a better place to live. With this attitude, it is easier to find answers for the above questions.

“I live for others. So for helping the needy, I need to continue living”

“ I need to live on, because God has enabled me to offer help to others.”

### **What are social activities?**

Any activity that helps people who are not known to you, or related to you can be grouped under Social activities.

The basic features of social activities are –

1. Social activity does not have any selfish motives.

2. Social activity is done to help others.
3. Social activities are not carried out just to get name and fame.
4. It is a constructive work, yielding positive results.
5. It will make you humble and peace-loving.
6. It brings a sense of togetherness in you.

It may be done in a group or individually as well.

It may be done by going into public, reaching out to people, or even by sitting at home.

It may be done with any cost involved, or without.

#### **Examples of social activities:**

- Joining a group and fighting for a positive cause, like water supply for a poor area.
- Joining a group and doing constructive work – like building a compound of a school for the under-privileged.
- Regular act of kindness – like visiting an orphanage and offering some fruits, every Sunday.
- Writing and publishing an article for the welfare of public. (Without any financial interest).
- Offering free service in the area of your expertise to the needy. Example: If you are a lawyer, offering free legal counselling to the needy.
- Taking a resolution to offer free help to at least one needy person per day. If you are a doctor, donate free medicine to just one needy person per day.
- Answering a question online, for a query of public interest, in forums such as yahoo answers.



## **Benefits of social activities:**

- In a research study published in Journal of American Medical Association – Pediatrics, (February 25, 2013) it was found out that, the group of students who volunteered for social activity for one hour per week was having lesser amounts of cholesterol deposition, lower levels of inflammation and lower Body Mass Index. The volunteer group was compared with a non-volunteer group. It clearly indicates that indulging in social activities has direct positive impact even on physical health.
- It helps to analyze and understand other's problem easily. By which, you can become a better manager at office.
- It makes you a better person.
- It helps to curb anger and ego.
- It makes the person large-hearted, with a universal vision.
- It helps to calm Pitta and leads to calm mind and healthy body, without stress related disorders such as hypertension, diabetes, sleeplessness etc.
- We have learnt that definition of health comprises of mental, social and spiritual well-being. Leading a social active life helps to promote these three aspects of health.
- If you are suffering from depression, joining a social community is the first thing that you should do. Making other people happy, seeing that your work has helped a family brings immense joy, happiness and prosperity to your mind. It energizes your mind. It empowers your personality. Helps you find answer for the query regarding your existence.

## **THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS NOW IS...**

While I am working, the only thing that matters the most is –

If it is morning hours, it is writing articles

if it is afternoon hours, it is email replying to patient queries

if it is evening hours, social media engagement – arranging Facebook, twitter and google plus posts.

If it is night, is to keep myself engaged with kids, wife and mom.

**In the morning**, during work, when I start wasting time with my whatsapp friends – the only thing that matters the most is that I punch more words into my blog and write more and more articles. Chatting with friends is not the thing that matters the most. So, keep the phone down and get your hands on your laptop. Your friends can wait.

**In the night, only thing that matters now**, is to spend time with family, to play with my daughters, to chat with mom and wife and so on, so if I start staring at my blog viewership, website analytics etc, I say to myself, the only thing that matters the most, now, is to spend time with family. So, keep the phone down.

**I chant this Mantra – Only thing that matters the most now, is...** around 50 times a day, to focus and re-focus and re-re-focus the mind and body to do actually those things that matters the most.

It is brutal, it twists the mind, it squeezes the brain, it makes you feel uncomfortable, it pricks you. You may have to switch off the TV abruptly or close the Facebook tab or stop chatting with your friends and immediately get back to the thing that matters the most. Sometimes you may feel breathless doing this. But your pain, that uncomfortable feeling does not matter at all.

Who cares?

Who cares if I spend less time in front of TV, Do the actors in that TV serial care? Do those candies that you crush care? Do you think your friends will start

crying if you do not like their photos on Facebook? Do you think Lionel Messi will score a goal less, if you do not watch his football match?

Just think about it, Lionel Messi is playing a football match and his close friend waves at him and by chance Messi sees his friend. Does Messi start chatting with that friend? Or does he continue with his game?

Then concentrate hard on what matters the most, NOW, right at this point of time.

If you practice this, just for 30 days, you will fall in love with it. Because, you will start scoring more in your exams, you will start earning more in your business, you will get more work done in astonishingly less time, your family will start loving you more. I think that is what matters the most. Not how many serials you watched, how many candies you crushed, how many sheep you grew in Farmville?

**So at least 50 times a day,**

Close your eyes and ask yourself what am I doing now? And what is the thing that matters the most, now? If both the answers match, then carry on. If not, stop doing what you are doing and immediately, abruptly switch to the thing that matters the most.

**Planning –**

Just write down your priorities on a piece of paper and divide the day based on your priorities and do nothing other than that particular thing, in those chunks of time. Absolutely only that thing and nothing else. Plain and simple.

If you are thinking that this cannot be so simple, your life is so complicated, then listen to me. It can be done. It is this simple. This life thing is very complicated. The trick is to undo one knot at a time and go to the next knot, rather than staring at the complicated knots and feeling uncomfortable

with it, all day long. Stop giving excuses and wake up to reality that it is possible.

## **WHY GENIUS PEOPLE ARE ECCENTRIC? WAIT! IT'S NOT ECCENTRICITY**

When we think about Steve Jobs, Albert Einstein, Mark Zuckerberg, etc along with their success, their eccentricity is also conspicuous. When you analyze their eccentric behaviour, one thing becomes very clear. The use of word 'eccentric' in relation to them is wrong.

I was watching an interview of VP of Marketing of Apple, Allison Johnson. At the end of the interview, she makes a super point about Steve Jobs. She says, he was 'authentic' and 'genuine'. She also goes on to narrate two stories when Steve Jobs cried like a baby, during corporate meeting. One such occasion was during a meeting after iPhone 4 antennagate incidence. He cried because he could not digest that such a lame thing can happen at his Apple. He was genuine and pure in his behaviour. There is no drama, there is no hypocrisy. His behaviour is natural, so it is normal. He was authentic to himself. He cared for none while expressing his feelings. He was just being 'himself'.

I think, the word eccentric should be replaced with "genuine" and "authentic" in dictionaries. Because, when we categorize a person as eccentric, there is no room for further exploration. There is nothing more to learn. He is being judged and there is no fruitful outcome of this analysis.

But if we call it as genuine and authentic, there is huge scope for further exploration and learning.

These geniuses of course had one-of-a-kind brain and mindset. But they never hesitated to 'express themselves'. If we talk about art, dance, scientific research, etc, they are all a kind of genuine expressions of one's self.

We all are studded with one or the other talents, skill sets, mental and physical powers. These powers come to us because of Karma of past lives and our habits of this life.

We often fail to make the best use of what we've got, because we fear – “what if others do not accept this? What if it fails? How my relatives would think of my art? A normal person would not risk this. So, I will not.”

We think too much about doing things and end up doing nothing. Whereas, the genius people toil day and night in just what they believe is right, both in their lifestyle and in their work. They get a few thoughts in their minds, they analyse and they act upon it, without thinking what others would do, in similar circumstance. They do what they love. They do what their heart and brain tells them. They don't care to search for a path to follow. They carve out their own path and walk on it.

Because these people are authentic to their own self, they are fearless and are able to concentrate all their energies in the things that they love. A beautiful piece of art is nothing but a fearless expression of a genuine and authentic soul.

So, in our works, let us be authentic to our own selves.

Let us always try to put the best foot forward.

Let us not worry about what others would think of our actions.

Let us not think about what they would have done, if they were in our position.

Let our hearts and brains guide us.

Let us express ourselves fearlessly and give our best in whatever we do.

Cheers!



## **SUCCESS TIP – NEVER LISTEN TO YOUR FRIENDS**

Friends can be great to have during time of fun and sorrow. But when it comes to chasing your dreams, I suggest you to better walk a lonely path than relying on friends.

Suppose you live in a hostel surrounded by your friends. You are planning to go for a movie by 6 pm. Say, you come back from college by 5 pm, get fresh and you have half an hour left before you join your friends to go.. But you have half an hour left. In that half an hour you decide to finish up tomorrow's important project. You can finish your work, but not in the presence of your friends. By this, you will lose the precious half an hour. Instead you can explain your friends about your work and request them to let you finish the work before you leave for the movie. Since they are your good friends, they will understand and leave the room because good friends never come between you and your success. If they don't consider your request then they are not your good friends.

Though you kept 2 hours for enjoyment with your friends (movie), you are made to pay extra and precious half an hour, just because you listened to your friends more than you listen to yourself.

Consider your intellectual quotient is 7 out of 10. And your friends' average intellectual quotient is 6. If you hang out with your friends, over a period of time you will be dragged to an intellectual quotient of below six, since, negativity has the great power to pull down positivity. It can crush creative thinking. It can wipe off an incredible dream. It can suck up all your energy. You are living with your friends. They are part of your life. Without them your life will be incomplete. I agree. But do not trade your intellectual dreams, ideas and positive spirit with them.



Protect it. Preserve it. Do not listen to your friends saying that you cannot do something. Do not let them say that you cannot be best in algebra. Do not believe them saying that you cannot sing better.

You see, if Steve Jobs had believed in his naysayers the world would not have had apple today. His thoughts were crazy; his method of working was insane. He was obnoxious. He was intolerable, because he used to challenge status quo. He was pushing things forward forcefully. He was relentlessly challenging his engineers to think above and think beyond.

With that much of insanity, commitment and ruthlessness towards inertia only, something can be achieved my friend.

Imagine what would have happened if Sachin Tendulkar preferred hanging out with his friends rather than practicing cricket in his teenage.

If you keep on listening to your friends and family advice that you have to play it safe, you can never achieve the things that are haunting your mind right now. Like a mother protects her newborn child, protect your inner most desires, positive attitude and your dreams from your friends. Preserve them in the deep corner of your heart and nourish it with utmost care.

Share your happiness, fun moments etc with your friends. But do not share your dreams, ambitions and positive energy with them.

It is hard, it is difficult. It is not for everyone. It is painful. There is a lot of inner struggle in doing this.

But its rewards are the sweetest and prettiest.

## **SPENDING QUALITY FAMILY TIME – HOW IMPORTANT IS IT?**

Spending quality time with family is often given less importance by most of us.

*“If you cannot spend at least one hour for yourself, for your family,*

*if you cannot invest one hour to be with your family, chatting, sharing, caring and playing,*

*if you cannot manage to allocate 4 % of your day (one hour of a day) to be with your family,*

*Then what on earth is your purpose of life?*

*What is the meaning of such a living? “*

Are these statements making you think about the way you spend your time with your family?

**Types of lives:** A day can be divided into many lives.

**1. Personal life:** sleeping, enjoying music alone, reading newspaper, hobbies, watching tv alone, gym etc.

**2. Professional life:** work life.

**3. Family life:** Spending quality time with family, family vacation, enjoying a movie or TV show together, playing games, helping kids in home work etc

**4. Social life:** spending time with friends, or doing some work for good cause

**5. Spiritual life:** prayer, Yoga, visiting the place of worship etc.

Among all these things, I would say that the family life is the most important.

Professional life – though you may not concentrate hard, you would spend at least 8 hours a day with work, by effort or by default.

Personal life – you would invest in it even if someone advises not to.

Social life –It is a mixture of voluntary and involuntary activities, which are purely subjective in nature.

Spiritual life – Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says – If you cannot love your family and people around you, who are visible to you, then how can you love God who is not visible to the naked eyes?

### **Ways to spend quality time with family:**

If focussed properly, except for professional life, we can easily merge all our lives with family life.

### ***Merging personal life with family life:***

- Include your family members in the hobby of yours. It will create bonding and fills lot of fun into the hobby.
- If you are reading a news paper, share the important news with your family, you will get different angled opinions.
- If you go to gym or outdoor games, play the same outdoor game with your family. You will discover the hidden fun in the game.

### ***Merging social life with family life:***

- If you are going for a social work, let your wife or husband be involved in it.
- What is the fun in the party without your life partner?
- What is the fun in watching a movie, without your spouse / kids beside you?

### ***Merging spiritual life with family life:***

- You can visit the place of worship with family. It will strengthen the bonding.
- It will give time and space for everyone to retrospect and to correct mistakes.
- You can do prayers together with family.

**Bottom lines:**

- Balance life and work – you will be a winner.
- No one except your family would accompany you in the journey of life.
- You are nothing without the love and support of your family (and friends)
- Hence the most important thing of your life is – your family.
- Taking care of them is nothing but taking care of you.

## **MY SISTER IS FAT ! EVERYONE IS TEASING. HELP!!**

“My Sister is Fat! I do not know how to deal with it!” Many wonder how they can help their family member to lose weight. If they say it directly, it may hurt them, if they do not do anything about it, things may worsen. There are a few techniques which can be adopted by you, to help your kin lose weight.

### **My Sister is fat. How can I help her?**

First, realize that it is a sensitive issue. If she is willing to lose weight, by regular exercise, diet control etc, your job is half done. If she is not willing to work hard to lose weight, take healthier steps to help her.

These principles can be generalized to any obese family member needing help from you.

### **Tips to lose weight –**

**No Free and frequent advises.** Do not give free advises to your sister about losing weight. Repeatedly telling to lose weight may irritate her and make her rebellious.

**Do not compare** – Avoid these kind of sentences – “See sis, that lady is so slim, when you will be like her? When can I be proud, walking next to you?”

### **Don't offer too much food –**

- Serve her limited quantity of food, without her notice.
- Stop asking her to eat more.
- Help her to adjust to small quantities of food.

### **Plenty of water throughout the day**

Remind her to drink good amount of water throughout the day. This way, her hunger can be kept under check.

### **Join her in fasting –**

Encourage her to do fasting.

Complete fasting is not encouraged. Fruit fasting, vegetable fasting or water fasting etc are really helpful. (Having only fruits / vegetables / water throughout the day).

If she can find a companion in you for fasting, that will boost her confidence a million times.

### **Fruits are better than fruit juices**

Fruit juices have added sugar. Hence fresh fruits are the best. They are low in carbohydrate than fruit juices. Have fresh fruits with her.

### **Do not bring junk and oily foods to home**

Food choices involve emotional aspects. We often make our food choices on-the-spur-of-the-moment.

It is very important for your sister to have an all-round congenial environment that encourages her to lose weight.

If you are eating junk food in front of her, she will feel tempted.

### **Play outdoor games with her –**

Play outdoor games, or join her in gym, walking or yoga. It will help both of you to keep fit.

### **Limited parties and functions**

Very difficult to control your hunger temptation when there is variety of food all around you, and your sister. So avoid functions and parties, where varieties of delicious foods are served.

**Appreciate them whenever they make minor effort to lose weight.**

A little appreciation can go a long way in boosting her confidence. Try it.

**Fibre rich food –**

There are dual advantages of fibre rich food –Adds fewer calories, even after eating more quantity and keeps the hunger under check.

## **HOW TO BE POSITIVE DURING THE TIME OF ILLNESS?**

Being a patient, suffering from a disease for a long time can be the most painful thing. That is why, Veda chants – *“Sarve Santu Niraamayaaha!”* - *May all stay disease-free.*

When you are bed ridden for more than 2 days, questions like “why me?” “For how long?” and such other thoughts worsen the suffering many folds. Having undergone a major abdominal surgery at the age of 9, and having suffered from fractures many times during childhood, I just cannot forget those bitter days. It is like, when you see someone standing, your mind turns jealous. *“God! When can I stand like him and kick some ...”* Here are a few effective tips to stay positive and focused during illness and to keep your mind sane.

### **Get to know the recovery time**

Ask your doctor, when can you walk, when will you completely recover from the pain? How long will be the rest time at home? Etc. Though the doctor may not be able to give the exact time required for recovery, at least you’ll have a rough idea about it. Getting to know the time for recovery helps you to plan your future.

### **Set up a route map for your carrier, study or life**

One positive thing about being ill is you will get time for yourself. Utilize the time for assessing the path that you travelled so far in your carrier or studies and build a better plan for the future.



Plan hard for the next few months. Take pen and paper – write down everything that you would want to achieve in the coming year, and set up a clear blueprint.

### **Positive books**

Read some great books which help you stay focused and be positive. Biographies are good, because it helps to know how successful people overcame adversities and conquered the world. I recommend Steve Jobs, By Walter Isaacson. Self help and motivational books are also very helpful. I recommend – The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.

### **Talk to people**

Talk to your friends, family, your mentors and be in touch with your beloved ones. Talk positive things and get ideas and inspiration for future.

### **Get to know your disease**

Learn more about disease, alternative treatment options, possible home remedies etc, discuss with your doctor and adopt them. It enriches your knowledge, makes you aware of your condition, and possible shortcuts to recovery. You may also write the entire experience of disease and recovery in the form a blog to help others with your disease.

### **Develop a new hobby**

It can be learning some design work in computer, learning new techniques of gardening, writing poems, novels, drawing, etc., anything that excites you. There are umpteen how-to videos in YouTube.

### **Get Spiritual**

Read spiritual books that you like, pray for others who are suffering similar to you. Spirituality helps in complete makeover of mindset. And there is no better time than this to get spiritual.

### **Get to know what you can do**

Get a list of things that you can do and you are not supposed to do. Get to know what you can eat and what you cannot. And follow those dietary restrictions and lifestyle changes with utmost sincerity. It helps to heal fast.

### **Do not waste time**

Do not get stuck to TV, mobile phones or gossip magazines. Do not develop mental laziness. Do not feel self pity. Be positive and be mentally active. It is only your body that is getting repaired. Keep your mind healthy and focused!

## **FEELING TIRED ALL THE TIME? 10 REASONS AND SOLUTIONS**

“Why I feel tired all the time? My doctor says I am okay” is one of the commonly heard health complaints. Tiredness and fatigue can haunt you in many ways. If you can formulate your daily life routine intelligently, you can get away with tiredness and fatigue. For this, the causes for fatigue are very important to know.

### **Causes for fatigue and solutions:**

**Lack of physical fitness:** Fitness is very important. By fitness I do not mean being slim or lean, without fat deposits. Fitness is the ability of the body to sustain hard work.

Gym, exercise, Yoga, dance etc. physical activities are the solutions.

If you are feeling tired just because the body is not tolerating the daily physical activity, it is time for you to consider joining Gym or Yoga.

If you are starting a new physical activity, you will be tired in the initial week. But after 2 -3 weeks, things will start improving.

Conversely if you feel too much worked out / burnt out due to gym etc, it is better to reduce the amount of physical activity and take sufficient rest.

**More food less work:** If your total calorie intake is more than the energy spent in a day, then you are storing extra calories in the body, leading to weight gain. This causes lethargy and tiredness.

**Less food more work:** If you are eating fewer calories compared to energy spent, then also you will end up being tired.

For both the problems, maintaining balance between physical activity and diet is the solution.

**Lack of nutrition rich food:** Fast food, colas, aerated drinks, excess alcohol are in no way substitutes for home made foods, fruits and vegetables. Junk foods generate dangerous chemicals called free radicals, which cause damage to organs like heart, liver, kidney etc and cause excess tiredness.

**Indigestion / Ama:** This is one of the authentic causes for tiredness according to Ayurveda.

#### **Fatigue symptoms –**

- You do not feel fresh after waking up in the morning, though you had a good night sleep.
- You feel your stomach heavy all the time.
- Either you eat more or eat less. There will be no balance in hunger.

In such cases, correcting the digestive system is the right approach to cure fatigue.

**Lasting illness:** Chronic illness or disease is one of the major causes. If you are suffering from any disease for a long time, then it is better to consult your doctor for a supplement to take care of overall body nourishment. This will cure fatigue and tiredness.

**Mental fatigue:** Lethargy, taking it easy, no mood for hard work, will train the mind and the body to feel tiredness, though you actually are not tired.

Having a disciplined lifestyle, with good work - rest balance is crucial to be competitive in this world, and to have a robust health.

**Depression & anxiety:** These cause mental fatigue and lead to tiredness.

Solution lies in treating depression and anxiety.

**Stress:** It is related with mental and physical fatigue. Physical stress is due to accumulation of free radicals, affecting the organs.

Physical stress can be handled with rest and appropriate Ayurvedic treatment.

**Excess alcohol and smoking** – One of the obvious reasons for feeling tired and burnt out all the time and you already know the solution.

Implementing at least a few of these Ayurveda tips would help you to a great extent.

**Tiredness and laziness** –

Confusion between tiredness and laziness is not uncommon. If you are willing to work, but do not have enough power within you to go on, then it is tiredness. But if you are not willing to work, though you have the power within you, is laziness.

Laziness can be due to mental and physical causes.

## **Special aspects of Ayurveda**

## **6 COMPREHENSIVE AYURVEDA PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE TIPS**

Ayurveda emphasizes equally on both preventive and therapeutic aspects of healthcare. In most of the Ayurvedic textbooks, preventive aspects like healthy daily routine, seasonal routine etc are explained first. The disease description, treatment options, medicines etc are usually found in the later chapters. Here is a brief summary of preventive healthcare tips as per Ayurveda.

### **1. Living by the rules of nature, avoiding suppression of physical natural urges**

–

This means, we must attend to 'nature calls', aka natural urges. These are

- Flatus (fart)
- Defecation
- Urination
- Sneezing
- Thirst
- Hunger
- Sleep
- Cough
- Breathing on exertion
- Yawning
- Tears, weeping
- Vomiting
- Semen ejaculation.

As per Ayurveda, these natural urges should not be initiated forcefully, when they are not there and should not be suppressed, when they are there.

**Reason:**

By initiating or avoiding these urges, the natural body rhythm gets upset and the body tends to move away from its natural course of living. This leads to diseases.

In Ayurvedic terms, this vitiates Vata first, which further vitiates the Pitta and Kapha and leads to sudden onset of diseases. Ayurveda explains in detail about the adverse effect of suppression of each of these natural urges.

**2. Urges that should be suppressed –**

Having said that, there are some urges which are better suppressed.

They are –

Greed, envy, jealous, Raga – unlawful, excessive attraction, lust, anger etc.

The definition of health also includes spiritual, mental and social well being.

The above advice is to take care the latter aspects of health.

**3. Panchakarma treatment –**

Ayurveda advises Panchakarma treatment even to healthy people. This is because, seasonal variations, food, sleep and lifestyle habits will cause Dosha (toxins, in general sense) to accumulate over a period of time. Hence, it is advised to undergo Panchakarma treatment once in a while to eliminate these toxins, as a preventive measure.

**4. Rasayana treatment-**

After Panchakarma, usually rejuvenation and / or Aphrodisiac treatment is



given to promote longevity. This is usually done by advising medicines such as Chyawanprash, Brahma Rasayana, Amla powder etc.

#### **5. Sticking to the advised regimens –**

Ayurveda advises daily and seasonal regimens. Strictly following the regimen is the surest way to prevent diseases.

**Ayurveda daily regimen** includes exercise, massage, bath, herbal smoking, nasal instillation of drops, betel leaf chewing, good sleep and more.

**Ayurvedic Seasonal regimen** – We have six seasons, and Ayurveda explains specific routines to be followed in each. This is based on the effects of weather on our body and mind.

**6. Avoiding external** injuries, maintaining personal hygiene, preventing quarrels, good control of the senses, prayer, and meditation are the general guidelines to prevent all types of diseases.

## **11 FACTORS THAT AN AYURVEDA DOCTOR CONSIDERS TO DECIDE ON TREATMENT**

An able Ayurvedic doctor will consider the below mentioned 11 factors before deciding on treatment. Keen observation of these factors helps the doctor to answer the following questions.

1. Is the disease treatable or not?
2. Is it difficult/easy to treat?
3. What should be the course of treatment?
4. Should the treatment include Panchakarma or are just oral medicines enough?
5. Long term treatment course / short term medication?
6. Strong / mild medicines? etc.

**The 11 factors are –**

**Dushya – the Dhatus (body tissues) and Malas (waste products) involved in a disease**

The Tridosha – Vata, Pitta and Kapha, when vitiated; affect the body tissues (Dhatus) and waste products (urine, sweat and faeces). This leads to disease. The extent of vitiation (imbalance) in the body tissues and waste products is very important while considering treatment.

**Desha** - The area of the body where disease is manifested and the living place of the patient need to be considered.

If the disease afflicts vital organs such as heart, brain and liver, strong treatments will be required.

If we divided human body into three parts, the upper one third has general domination of Kapha Dosha, middle one third has Pitta Dosha dominance and lower one third has Vata Dosha dominance.

If we consider living place of the patient, arid regions with wind will have Vata dominance, hot and humid regions will have Pitta dominance and moist and rainy areas will have Kapha dominance.

A person living in moist areas, with problem in lungs (upper one third part of body, Kapha dominant), will be heavily influenced by Kapha Dosha. So, strong Kapha pacifying treatments will be required.

**Bala – strength of the patient** – A person with strong immune system can respond to mild treatment. But a person with low immunity may require higher dose of medicine.

**Kala- season-** Duration of the disease, age of the person, the season in which the disease is caused etc are considered under this.

**Anala- Digestion strength** of the patient is a very important criterion. A person with good digestion strength can be administered with strong dose of medicine. So, the chances of cure are good in him.

**Prakriti- Body constitution** – Usually, person with all three Dosha (Vata, Pitta and Kapha) is considered ideal, because none of the Dosha is dominant in him. The person with 2 Dosha body type (Vata Pitta, Pitta Kapha etc) is considered moderate and person with single Dosha body type is considered most difficult to treat.

Suppose, a person has Pitta body type and if he gets any Pitta related disease, then the extent of damage to his body by vitiated Pitta will be very huge since a Dosha, which is already dominant in his body, has become more aggressive. Hence very aggressive treatment will be required.

**Vayas - Age of the patient**

Children and elders need milder treatment. Adults and youngsters may tolerate strong treatment. Hence treatment options are more in them.

**Satva- mind, tolerance capacity of the patient** – More the tolerance capacity, more options for treatment. Strength of the body and strength of mind are two different things.

**Satmya** – This means the food and activities to which the patient is accustomed to. For example, if the patient is accustomed to take ice creams and has aversion towards hot food stuff, (seeks Kapha increasing food and habits). In such a patient, treating cold and cough etc Kapha disorders will be tough. Hence, strong medicines might be required here.

It is very difficult to treat asthma in a regular smoker.

**Ahara- food habits** – If the patient is okay with taking bitter and astringent tastes, then the choice of medicines will be wider. If he is not accustomed to all tastes (not ideal), then the choice of medicines will be limited.

**Avastha- stages of the diseases** Newer the disease, milder the required treatment.

### **A few examples**

1. We have learnt that Vata resides in Asthi (bones and joints). Consider, Vata imbalance leading to a bone disease in an elderly patient.

Elderly means, there is already Vata increase, bone is naturally controlled by Vata and over that Vata is further increased, leading to bone depletion and arthritis. Hence, treatment to balance Vata needs to be quite strong, though the patient is elderly and can tolerate only milder treatment. Hence, an energy boosting medicine such as Ashwagandha rasayana might also be required.

2. A highly tolerant person, who can eat wide variety of food, who has Tridosha body type, can tolerate harsher treatment. Hence, in him, usually, effectiveness of any treatment is more.

3. If a Vata body type person, who lives in arid place (Vata dominant place), gets any Vata dominant disease, then a serious Vata balancing treatment has

to be planned. If a Pitta body type person, who lives in hot place, gets Vata disease, then a milder form of Vata treatment might just be sufficient because in him, hotness is more because Vata has cold quality. So, already, there are some qualities in him that are opposite to his disease. So, milder treatment will do well.

4. If the disease involves only one Dhatu (body tissue) then it is easy to treat. If it involves many, then it is difficult to treat.

## **AYURVEDIC DEFINITION OF HEALTH – WHO VS AYURVEDA**

Aims of Ayurveda, the Indian system of medicine are two, as quoted in *Sushruta Samhita*.

- To maintain the health of the healthy individual
- To treat the disease of the diseased.

A complete and comprehensive definition of health is highly important to know whether we are totally healthy or not.

There are two major definitions of health.

**1. World Health Organization** has defined health as follows – *“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”*

**2. Ayurvedic definition of health** - ‘Health is a state where in the Tridosha, digestive fire, all the body tissues & components, all the physiological processes are in perfect unison, and the soul, the sense organs and mind are in a state of total satisfaction (*prasanna*) & content”

### **Analysis of these two definitions of health:**

**WHO definition of health** covers three major aspects – physical, mental and social well-being. Physical and mental well-being is quite easy to understand. The social well-being refers to how a person interacts positively with the people around him and more.

Ayurvedic definition of health is elaborate.

**Tridosha** – Balance in Tridosha means Vata, Pitta and Kapha. This refers to physical and mental well-being (Tridosha affects mind as well. Excess Pitta causes anger, Excess Kapha causes laziness)

**Digestive fire** - Ayurveda believes that the imbalance in digestive fire (*Agni*) is the root cause for most of the diseases. Ayurvedic experts analyse Agni not only as digestive fire, but energy behind all the metabolic processes of the body. This also refers to physical well-being.

**Body tissues and processes** – This component also refers to physical health.

**Total satisfaction of Soul, Sense organs and Mind** - The explanation of these components are quite difficult and subjective. These not only refer to mental & social well-being, but also spiritual well-being.

The verse from *Sushruta Samhita* containing the definition of health –

*sama dosha sama agnishcha samadhatu mala kriyaaha |*

*Prasanna atma mana indriyaha swastha iti abhidheeyate ||*

**Definition of health as per Charaka** (Ref: Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 21/18-19)

samamAMsapramANastu samasaMhanano naraH |

dRRiDhendriyo vikArANAM na balenAbhibhUyate || 18 ||

kShutpipAsAtapasahaH shItavyAyAmasaMsahaH |

samapaktA samajaraH samamAMsachayo mataH || 19 ||

Sama Mamsa pramana – proportionate musculature

Sama Samhana – compactness of the body

Druda indriya – strong sensory and motor

Kshut Pipasa Atapa Saha – Ability to stand hunger, thirst, the heat of the sun,

Sheeta Vyayama Samsaha – Ability to stand cold and physical exercises.

Samapakta, Samajara – Ability to digest and assimilate food easily,

Sama Mamsa Upachaya – good muscular body.

These cannot be overcome by the onslaught of diseases.

### **DO YOU NEED TO BE SPIRITUAL TO ENJOY AYURVEDA BENEFITS?**

If you are planning to get Ayurvedic treatment, do you need to be really spiritual to enjoy full Ayurveda benefits?

If you are getting Ayurvedic treatment for any disease, the Ayurvedic doctor would prescribe you Panchakarma treatment, lifestyle changes, home remedies and herbal medicines. The herbal medicines act by the virtue of the chemical constituents of the herbs in the medicine. For example, tannins, alkaloids and glycosides. They affect our health positively and benefit you. So, there is no involvement of spirituality.

But if you are seeking Ayurvedic intervention for a whole life makeover, then spirituality comes into play. Spirituality would help you to improve life orientation, concentration, self confidence etc.

But as such, if you are spiritual, non spiritual, you belong to any sect, caste or religion; Ayurvedic treatment will definitely help you. You may not necessarily be spiritual to adopt Ayurveda in your life.

Ayurveda is for all, who seek good health.



## **I SPENT A LOT ON AYURVEDA WITHOUT ANY RESULTS!!**

It is a common complaint that I hear from many of my clients that they spent thousands of dollars on Ayurvedic treatment without any results. The complaint comes from within and outside India on a regular basis. There are certain things that an Ayurvedic doctor should take care to avoid unnecessary expense by the patient. At the same time, the patient should also take sufficient precautions so that the Ayurvedic treatment that she is receiving turns out completely fruitful.

### **Problem with Ayurveda--**

- Herbs form 60 – 70 % of Ayurvedic medicine ingredient. Day by day, many precious herbs are becoming rare and extinct. This is shooting up the cost of the raw material with time.
- Considering a gloomy economy, high inflation rates, maintaining required man power, and infrastructure has been becoming an expensive affair.

### **Roles and responsibility of a good Ayurvedic doctor:**

- **Analyze** patient's complaints from all the angles – patient's body type, daily habits, disease condition, associated complaints, list of medicines that the patient is taking, seasonal effect on health and disease.
- **Diagnose** the disease using modern laboratory tests that the patient has undergone, along with Ayurvedic tools such pulse diagnosis, Ayurvedic symptom analysis etc. This will help the doctor to confirm the diagnosis.
- Explain the patient,

1) ***The exact course of treatment plan*** – Long term and short term. In case of Asthma, short term treatment can be planned to relieve wheezing and

difficulty in breathing. Long term treatment plan can be made to boost respiratory immunity.

2) ***Whether the treatment is symptomatic or to the root cause of disease:***

Sometimes, it may be symptomatic only. For example, in case of a patient with tuberculosis, on Allopathic medication, symptomatic treatment to relieve frequent fevers, cough etc can be given. Many a times, root cause can be treated with Ayurveda, for example, in a patient with lumbar spondylosis, treatment for regeneration of disc tissue will help, over a period of 4 – 6 months.

3) ***For how long the treatment might be required?*** – Treatment for cough and cold will only be required for a week time, whereas treatment for rheumatoid arthritis or Asthma will go on for a longer period of time. Giving a clear idea to the patient will help to avoid setting wrong expectations.

4) ***To use Ayurvedic home remedies*** along with medicines. There are innumerable home remedies which can be prescribed by the doctor along with Ayurvedic medicines. This will definitely help the cause of patient's pocket.

5) ***Offer different medicine options.*** While there are some medicines which are really like Swarna Bhasma, (Calx of Gold) there are lesser expensive Ayurvedic medicines as well. For example, to treat Diabetes, Prameha Gajakesari Rasa can be used which contains Swarna Bhasma and is highly expensive. Nisakathakadi kashayam can also be used, which is quite cheaper. While making the right choice of medicine, patient's body, mind as well as his pocket should be taken into consideration.

6) ***Use appropriate Ayurvedic treatments*** rather than a general course of Panchakarma therapies. Give the patient a customized short term therapy option, targeting the disease condition. While explaining about long term

therapy plans like “Ayurvedic relaxation program” “rejuvenation program” etc, convey to the patient difference between which therapies are need of the hour and which are optional.

7) ***Be prompt, be straight forward and be transparent.*** Do not take up a disease, which you cannot treat. Be open to refer the patient to an Allopathic specialist to investigate further about the pathology of the disease. Be open to discuss the case with fellow Ayurvedic doctor to have a fresh look at the disease and the patient.

### **Advice to the patient:**

Here are general guidelines while undergoing treatment with an Ayurvedic doctor.

- Ask for limitations of the treatment, what you can expect from the treatment / medicines.
- Will it heal completely or is it symptomatic treatment?
- How long it will take to heal completely or partially?
- When will you start noticing difference / improvement?
- What are the names of medicines? How will it act? Basic ingredient info.
- Do not buy any medicine which does not have a label and list of ingredients.

### **Mistakes to be avoided by the patient–**

- Not following the diet and lifestyle changes advised by the doctor, which are as important as Ayurvedic medicines and therapies. For example, in exercise, sitting straight to treat low back ache etc.
- Not pursuing with the treatment for a minimum duration of time. Ayurvedic treatment can never be pursued in a window shopping

method. You have to give at least 2 – 8 weeks for the betterment in health to be observed.

- Not following up with the doctor: Sometimes, following up will be crucial. It will help the doctor to re-adjust the dosage, consider better Ayurvedic medicines etc.
- Missing on dosage and medicine names. Some Ayurvedic medicine names and dosage are really confusing. Double check with the doctor about the right medicine, dosage and course of intake.

It is the primary responsibility of the doctor to give the best and cost effective treatment to the patient. At the same time, it is the duty of the patient to understand the treatment and medicines thoroughly before following them.

## HOW YOUR BODY TYPE AFFECTS CHANCES OF DISEASE (AND HOW TO TAKE CARE OF IT)?

Your body type makes you to like or dislike certain types of food and activities. Your body type has influence on your mindset. Your body type also has its role in proneness (susceptibility) to certain diseases.

The Dosha body types can be explained with the following qualities.

There are three main types.

- Vata – lean, always moving, roughness in skin, prominent veins, weak joints, feeling cold, quick learning but easy forgetting and more
- Pitta – redness, anger, emotional, sweaty, moderate built high hunger etc.
- Kapha – heavy built, slow walker, slow decision maker, good memory, firm joints, slow to get angry etc.

The different combinations of these Doshas also contribute to body types.

- Vata-Pitta body type
- Pitta-Kapha body type
- Vata-Kapha body type

And all the **three Doshas together** form Tridosha body type.

The people with Tridosha body type and single Dosha body types are quite rare. Most of us fall into double Dosha body types.

### Disease susceptibility and Dosha body types:

#### Single Dosha Body type:

- In Vata person, from birth, Vata has natural dominance on his body. This means that the person is easily prone to Vata disorders such as arthritis,

neurological disorders, body ache, bloating, tinnitus, tremors, skin dryness etc.

- And if he gets afflicted with these Vata disorders it will be very difficult to treat, because already Vata is naturally very high in him and it will suppress Pitta and Kapha Dosha and exhibit Vata symptoms more.
- In the same way, a Pitta body type person will always be prone to burning sensation, gastritis, sour belching, excess sweating, increased body temperature, red vesicles, jaundice, stomatitis, bleeding disorders, menorrhagia, etc.
- Similarly a Kapha body type person will be prone to anorexia, drowsiness, laziness, indigestion, obesity, phlegm adhering to throat etc.
- So, in single Dosha body type person, a mild causative factor of respective Dosha, leads to a big disease.
- For this reason, single Dosha body type person is called as Sadatura – they always have one or the other kind of illness.

For example,

- A vata person complains of knee pains after walking for a while, though he looks healthy, otherwise.
- A Pitta person will complain of intense burning sensation upon mild exposure to sunlight.
- A Kapha person complains of cold soon after eating an ice cream.

### **In a two-Dosha body type person,**

In Vata-Pitta person, there are some qualities that are opposite. Like, coldness of Vata is opposing hotness of Pitta. This causes mutual nullifying effect. Of course, there are some similar qualities, adding up, like lightness. If we

consider qualities of Vata and Pitta together, the sum effect on the body is not as profound as single Dosha body type person. Hence, disease susceptibility is lesser.

- In Pitta-Kapha person, hotness of Pitta opposes coldness of Kapha, sharpness of Pitta opposes mildness of Kapha, and lightness of Pitta opposes heaviness of Kapha etc. But both Pitta and Kapha have oiliness (unctuousness) and liquidity. Hence, disease susceptibility is lesser than single Dosha body type.
- In Kapha-Vata person, lightness of Vata opposes heaviness of Kapha, mobility of Vata nullifies the stability of Kapha. But coldness of both propel each other.  
So, in double Dosha body types, proneness to disease is lesser.
- In Tridosha body type, because all the three Doshas are (almost) in equal proportions, the opposing qualities of each Dosha nullify each other and hence, proneness of disease is very less. Hence, these lucky people are called Anatura.

### **Balancing the mental facets:**

**Vata** - Try to be organized. Write down your thinking process. Do not just think about something and act on it swiftly, (though your body type pushes you to do so.)

**Pitta** - control anger

**Kapha** - Rapid chess competition, put deadlines and time-frames to all your works

## **TOP 7 MYTHS ABOUT AYURVEDA BUSTED**

Ayurveda has evolved since thousands of years. The traditional touch of Ayurveda often gives room for myths. Here is a collection of top 7 myths and clarifications about Ayurveda.

### **1. Principles of Ayurveda are not as genuine as that of modern science**

The principles of Ayurveda are quite different from the modern science. Because the tools and techniques used in the previous times were quite different from those available now. According to Ayurveda, diseases occur due to the vitiation of 'Tri-Doshas' viz. Vata, Pitta and Kapha. These three elements, which cannot be seen as such in any part of the human body, but exist throughout the body.

They are responsible for functions like

- Power, mobility, oxygen transport etc (Vata),
- Digestion, metabolism etc (Pitta) and
- Body structuring, immunity, sustenance etc (Kapha).

There have been several inspired attempts to map Tridosha theory to knowledge about the body, as we know from modern medicine. The Tridosha theory was evolved thousands of years ago, in BC, as a simple way of understanding both human physiology and disease pathology. Some Doctors successfully practice Ayurveda, purely based on the principles such as Tridosha while some others practice Ayurveda by integrating the classical Ayurvedic principles with modern diagnostic tools and techniques.

### **2. Ayurvedic medicines are slow in curing**



It is not true. This wrong perception arose because most of the Ayurvedic remedies are targeted towards chronic (long standing) disorders like Asthma, Arthritis, liver disorders etc. Ayurvedic medicines are effective even in some acute conditions like cold, cough, etc.

### **3. One can learn Ayurveda on his own and can advice it very easily to anyone.**

Ayurveda is not just the knowledge about some herbs and their medicinal properties. It is a medical science involving detailed study of human beings, the detailed study of diseases and their treatment using natural resources. Self medication with Ayurvedic formulations or carelessly advising any Ayurvedic or herbal formulation without being a qualified Ayurvedic doctor might lead to severe complications like occurrence of side effects by the herbal medicine or misuse of medicines leading to further worsening of a disease. According to Ayurveda, different people have different physiological constitutions- what Ayurveda calls as one's Prakriti. A medicinal preparation, prescribed for a person for a disease cannot be declared as the common treatment for that particular disease. So, the choice of the medicine depends upon the body constitution of the patient, the stage of the disease, the intensity and proportion of Doshas involved in the disease and the assessment made by the qualified Ayurvedic doctor.

### **4. Ayurveda is not a science.**

Ayurveda has a rich history of more than 3000 years. The principles adopted in this system are evaluated thoroughly over the centuries. There is a systemic order in description of anatomy, physiology, disease pathology, treatment and medicines. Though at present Ayurveda lacks sufficient clinical documentation,

the fact that it has survived over such a long period itself proves the scientific basement upon which it stands high, even today.

#### **5. Ayurveda can only be used as a supportive therapy.**

Ayurveda is highly effective as a mainstream medicinal system. Many diseases like Asthma, Paralysis, arthritis, etc can be effectively treated with Ayurvedic treatment and procedures.

In fact there are certain conditions, wherein Ayurveda has effective remedies, but allopathy doesn't. Example: renal calculi, liver disorders

#### **6. Ayurvedic medicines do not have expiry date.**

It is not at all true. The expiry date of all the medicines have been clearly mentioned in text books. Herbs have their own chemical constituents, which have medicinal properties. These chemical constituents are bound to be affected with time and due to environmental factors. So, it's a big myth about Ayurvedic medicines.

#### **7. Ayurvedic Medicines can cure cancer or aids.**

Many of herbs such as Turmeric, Neem, Brahma rasayana, etc have shown some significant anti cancerous activity. But still, it will be too early to claim that Ayurveda has a remedy for cancer. Likewise, there are many immune enhancer and immuno-modulator drugs in Ayurveda such as Tinospora cordifolia. But still, a lot of research is needed before we go and claim that Ayurveda has a CURE for these diseases.



## **TRADITIONAL HEALER VS QUALIFIED AYURVEDIC DOCTOR**

Traditional healers have contributed a lot to the field of Ayurveda. Before the Ayurvedic medical education system got its shape in India, traditional healers carried the rich tradition of Ayurveda on their shoulders over centuries. Even today we can see a few successful traditional healers across India. At this point of time, when scientific research, experimental and clinical studies, pharmacological and pharmacognosy advances are taking place, here is a look at the advantages and disadvantages with traditional healer and qualified Ayurvedic doctor.

### **Who is a traditional healer?**

Traditional healer is the one who acquires knowledge of science of healing through his ancestors. The practice of healing is passed on from one generation to the other.

When India was looted continuously by Mughals and western powers, when all the treasures of knowledge of Vedas, mathematics, astrology, astronomy, sociology, numerology and other Indian sciences were burnt into Ashes in the libraries of Nalanda and Takshashila (Taxila) universities, Ayurveda survived. It is agreed that most of the Ayurvedic treatises were also burnt into ashes; practice of Ayurveda was preserved in each and every corner and household of India through traditional healers.

### **Advantages with traditional healer -**

- Thorough knowledge of Ayurvedic principles.
- Strict and pure application of Ayurvedic principles.
- No bias of modern medicine system.
- Sound knowledge of very rare Ayurvedic herbs.

- Use and application of yet-to-be-explored treatment techniques, herbs and herbal formulas.

### **Disadvantages with traditional healers –**

**Mix-o-pathy** - Today patients come to Ayurveda having tried all the other medical systems. Often patients are taking allopathic medicines, homeopathy pills, naturopathy treatments, acupuncture therapy, some Chinese home remedies and then come to Ayurveda healer for treatment. Under such circumstances, pure knowledge of Ayurveda alone won't help. Knowledge about interaction of Ayurvedic medicines with allopathic medicines is often lacking in a traditional healer.

**Knowledge about new herbs** – Ayurvedic pharmacopoeia is ever growing. Herbs from Unani and other systems are seamlessly getting integrated into Ayurvedic system with the help of scientific research. Knowledge of such updates is often lacking with a traditional healer.

**Black hats** – I just happened to visit a camp of a traditional healer near Bangalore high court. My friend casually asked for oil for hair growth. The healer picked up an oil and said the price as Rs 1100/-.

Things may worsen when a patient with serious condition goes to a wrong healer.

**Knowledge not quantified** – No one can really know the depth of knowledge of a traditional healer, for how many years, he has studied, what he has studied, what he knows, what he doesn't etc. Patient needs to take a leap of faith.

**Rare herbs becoming extinct very fast** – If the theory of usage of secret herbs by Traditional healers is to be believed, then they must be very rare herbs, because most of the herbs that is around the country is already under the preamble of Academic Ayurveda.

**Secrecy factor** – The general conception about the Traditional healers is that their way of healing and choice of herbs are very secretive. They can put these secrets into tests or research. If their methods are so powerful, they can think of getting patents to their healing methods. But none of these seem to happen in near future.

**Regulation** – As per the rules of Government of India, a person with a degree in B.A.M.S is only eligible to practice Ayurveda.

### **Pros of Qualified Ayurvedic doctor**

**Qualification** – A qualified Ayurvedic doctor in India spends 5.5 years studying B A M S.,

Along with Ayurvedic treatises, he studies,

- Modern Anatomy
- Modern Physiology
- Modern Pathology
- Modern techniques of patient examining
- Pharmacology and Pharmacognosy
- Modern way of diagnosis
- Usage of laboratory tests, such as blood and urine analysis, x ray, scanning, latest imaging techniques, etc.

- Modern ways of performing minor surgeries – such as opening an abscess, dressing
- Ayurvedic ways of performing minor surgeries such as piles, fissures, fistula etc.

The knowledge of a qualified Ayurvedic doctor is quantifiable.

The method of acquiring knowledge is systematic.

Most of the other countries have rules and regulations for Ayurveda practitioners.

**Regulation** – As per the rules of Government of India, a person with a degree in B.A.M.S is only eligible to practice Ayurveda.

**Less or nil secrecy** – The diagnostic decisions, treatment methods, herbs chosen etc are open to be examined in case of an Ayurvedic practitioner.

**Lot of Ayurvedic medicines** – There are umpteen number of Traditional Ayurvedic medicines, proprietary Ayurveda products, Ayurvedic herbs and western and chinese herbs and methods, an Ayurvedic doctor can adopt in his treatments.

**Cons of an Ayurvedic doctor -**

**Poor quality education** – I see a lot of Ayurvedic colleges running without basic infrastructure.

The passing percentage of Ayurvedic graduates is too high. There is a scope to improve the strictness in annual examinations.

**Black hats** – To make quick money, a few wear a spiritual garb, a few mislead the patients. Black hats are not limited to Ayurveda. There are bad engineers, bad lawyers, bad police men.

I, belonging to the latter group might have shown more inclination towards qualified Ayurvedic doctor, but I have tried to see the facts from impartial eyes.

A true traditional healer is still an asset in Ayurveda.



## **WE ARE LIVING LONGER. BAD NEWS TO MANY. RESEARCH REPORT – AYURVEDA VIEW**

A recent research has revealed that the life expectancy of human beings has increased dramatically over the past 40 years. At the outset, it looks good but there are many worrying things to consider, from health and financial perspectives. Let's try to see this from Ayurvedic perspective.

**What the research says:** Ryan Hum, a researcher from Toronto has made this observation that we are living longer when compared to 4 decades ago.

### **What might be the causes?**

Improved health awareness, improved economy, better medical services, advanced research and inclusion of technology in medical fields, inclusion of natural health sciences like Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Yoga, Physiotherapy etc. Of all these, I would say, a multi-pronged approach with people seeking suitable medical fields for their diseases is probably the most effective cause for our longer lives.

### **What are the problems with this?**

- Lack of sufficient investment in research in treatment of old age disorder
- Lack of financial support especially in people belonging to lower income group
- Lack of infrastructure in poor countries, with respect to elders
- Trouble of being a bed-ridden patient for a long period of time

### **Ayurveda perspective:**

If you open any Ayurveda textbook, and go to treatment explanation part, the first chapter that you will see is – Rasayana chapter. It deals with anti aging

treatments and techniques. So, first priority of Ayurveda is and has always been to make people live longer with good all-round health – physical, mental, social and spiritual.

Here are a few quick tips for a longer but healthier life.

**1. A stricter lifestyle** – Regular sleep hours, Strict eating etiquette, regular physical exercise, following seasonal Ayurveda regimen and daily routine regimen- all these help to set the body rhythm in sync with our surrounding atmosphere and helps to improve life expectancy.

**2. Use of spices** – More you use turmeric, cinnamon, ginger, clove, cardamom, pepper, etc, more you will be supplied with anti oxidants and natural anti inflammatory phyto-chemicals. This leads to stronger liver, heart and kidney.

**3. Panchakarma** – Most of the Rasayana treatments explained in Ayurveda are followed after Panchakarma. Hence detoxifying the body, eliminating the imbalanced Dosha plays a very vital role in healthier longer life.

**4. Rasayana therapy** – with medicines like Chyawanprash, Brahma Rasayan etc really help to boost energy of vital organs like liver, lungs, kidney, heart and brain.

**5. Avoid bad habits** – Avoid smoking and excess alcohol.

**6. Live closer to the nature** and allow herbs, vegetables to heal. Give your body a chance to heal on its own.

**7. Do not lie much.** Be truthful. This is pertaining to social and spiritual health. Include prayer in daily routine to instil positivity.

**8. Financial aspects** – Long term, post retirement plans go a long way in leading a stress free life.

**9. Early diagnosis and treatment** – Just google your symptoms and do a research on your own, then consult your doctor and get the symptoms fixed, early.

**10. Loveful relationship** with people around will give you good social health and also want your people to help you during difficult time in old age.

## **WHAT IS OJAS? HOW TO INCREASE OJAS DURING HEALTH AND DISEASE?**

### **AYURVEDA**

A regular reader of my articles asks –

I would like to know about the connection between ojas and diabetes from the point of view of the diet, a diabetic person can take in. As I know, Sattvic food is very important for building ojas. But, doesn't sattvic food in general have a sweet vipaka? If yes, will sweet vipaka affect blood sugar levels? If yes, do diabetics have no way of building up ojas? Please enlighten me on this topic. ”  
Let us analyze a few factors before we come to a few conclusions.

### **What is Ojas?**

Ojas is a quantifiable liquid in the body, responsible for overall health, energy and liveliness. It is both a mental and physical factor.

It is responsible for

- Health maintenance and health promotion
- Fight disease
- prevent disease

Ojas is the essence part of all the body tissues.

Though it can be quantified, it cannot be seen or compared to any elements in the body. Some compare Ojas to white blood cells. At the best, it can be said as a *partial* comparison.

### **Definition of Ojas as per Charaka—**

The one which dwells in the heart and is predominantly white, yellowish and reddish in colour is known as Ojas of the body:

If the Ojas is destroyed, the human being will also perish. The form in which the Ojas is produced in the body of the human beings for the first time has the

colour of ghee; taste of honey and smell of fried paddy (Laja).

As the bees collect honey from the fruits and flowers, the Ojas is collected in the body, by the actions, qualities, habits and diet of human being.

Reference: Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 17/76

### **Heart, the Seat of Ojas:**

yaddhi tat sparzavijjAnaM dhAri tattatra saMzritam || 6 ||

tat parasyaujasaH sthAnaM tatra caitanyasaGgrahaH |

hRdayaM mahadarthazca tasmAduktaM cikitsakaiH || 7 || - Charaka Samhita Sutrasthana 30

The heart is indispensable for all the normal mental and physical activities. In the heart, resides Para Ojas – the superior Ojas, which controls the mind. This is why; the physicians have designated the heart as ‘Hridaya’, ‘Mahat’ and ‘Artha’

### **Qualities of Ojas –**

Snigdha – unctuous, oily

Somatmaka – watery

Shuddha – clear (transparent),

Ishat Lohita Peetakam – slight reddish yellow in colour;

### **Examples:**

- Say, someone has got pancreatitis. Doctor gives medicines and patient takes it. Ojas is that factor of the body that digests the medicines, takes it to the target organ, and does the healing, with the help of medicines.
- A person with good quantity of Ojas is lesser prone to cold, cough, fever etc when compared to another, with lesser Ojas.

- A person with good control over mind, who follows stringent **Brahmacharya**, has more Ojas.
- A person with good memory and concentration has more Ojas.
- A person with spiritual beliefs and practice has more Ojas.
- A person who eats in limited quantities, who has good control over anger, jealous etc has more Ojas.
- A person who exercises and has a well built body has more Ojas.

### **How to increase Ojas?**

- Regular intake of ghee, milk, and such other nutrition rich food.
- Yoga, Pranayama, exercises, physical activities.
- Mental exercises to improve concentration.
- Prayer, Homa, Pooja and such other spiritual practices.
- Being pious, righteous.
- Medicines like Saraswatarishta

### **Food and medicine that might decrease Ojas –**

- Anger, grief, negative attitude
- Excessively salty, pungent and bitter diet.
- Ayurvedic medicines containing Kshara. Of course Kshara is required in some cases, but intake of such medicine over a long period of time would cause Ojas depletion. (reference: Ashtanga Hridayam)
- One who takes very less quantity of food over a long period of time, will have depleted ojas. But that does not mean that over-eating will increase ojas. Proper quantity of food, that digests easily, neither more nor less, increases ojas.

I hope that by this time, you have got an idea that Ojas is contributed with mental, physical and spiritual factors. Let us take up the questions.

**Sattvic food is very important for building Ojas.**

Yes. But it applies to a *healthy person only*. Sattvic refers to light. Tamasik refers to darkness.

From a spiritual perspective, non veg, fish garlic and onion are considered to be Tamasik. (opposite to Sattvik.) But in few diseases, non veg food /medicines with non veg ingredient, garlic, onion etc are used as medicine. In such a condition, for such a patient, these do help in improving her Ojas.

**But, doesn't sattvic food in general have a sweet vipaka?**

Yes. *many* food that are Sattvic are sweet in nature.

**If yes, will sweet Vipaka affect blood sugar levels? If yes, do diabetics have no way of building up ojas?**

If a food tends to increase Ojas, it should always be understood that it does so, only when it is taken in a limited quantity.

It does not mean that the same food in higher quantities will improve Ojas.

Any type of food in more quantity than required tends to vitiate Tridosha and the disease process. It becomes more a cause for disease, than cause for health (or ojas).

In diabetes, which is a disease condition as per Ayurveda, herbs like Guduchi, Neem, Triphala etc are Sattvic. They help to improve Ojas. So, a diabetic person can improve ojas by taking many such herbs. Amla is another great food ingredient for diabetic people to increase Ojas. Many of Ayurvedic formulations like Mehari Chooranam, Nishamalaki Chooranam etc contain Amla

as the main ingredient. So, apart from promoting health and immunity, Amla also helps control blood sugar levels.

Ojas is the essence of all the body tissues. So, exercise would improve muscle and body strength and will also cause increase of Ojas.

Hence, exercise is an excellent means to improve Ojas for a diabetic patient.

### **Cause for decrease of Ojas**

- Ojas undergoes decrease in quantity by anger, hunger (starvation), worry, grief, exertion.
- Too much exercise
- Fasting for long periods of time
- Eating less quantities of food
- Intake of alcoholic beverages which cause dryness
- Intake of mixture of good and bad foods
- Fear
- Waking up at night, skipping night sleep
- Injury
- Assault by evil spirits; micro organisms like bacteria, virus etc.
- Depletion of tissues such as by haemorrhage
- Too much of elimination of Kapha, blood, semen and waste products
- Ingestion of poison.

Increase of Ojas makes for contentment, nourishment of the body and increase of strength.

### **Symptoms of Ojas decrease –**

- The person becomes fretful, fear complex



- Debilitated, constant weakness
- Repeatedly worried without any reason, feels discomfort in sense organs, develops bad complexion, negative thoughts and dryness
- Vyathita Indriya – affliction of sense organs with pain
- Dushchaya – loss of complexion
- Durmana -cheerless, depressed mood
- Rooksha – dryness, roughness and
- Kshaama – emaciation.

### **Home remedy to improve ojas for Vata Pitta person?**

For Vata Pitta person, there is nothing better than ghee to increase Ojas. As per Ayurveda, cow ghee balances Vata and Pitta and it also improves Ojas. So, for people with such body type, regular (but limited) use of ghee in diet is recommended. Amla is also good to control Vata and Pitta.

### **Ojas and its importance:**

yenaujasA vartayanti prINitAH sarvadehinaH |

yadRte sarvabhUtAnAM jIvitaM nAvatiSthate ||9||

yat sAramAdau garbhasya yattadgarbharasAdrasaH |

saMvartamAnaM hRdayaM samAvizati yat purA ||10||

yasya nAzAttu nAzo'sti dhAri yaddhRdayAzritam |

yaccharIrarasasnehaH prANA yatra pratiSthitAH ||11||

tatphala bahudha vA tAH phalantIva(ti) mahAphalAH |12| Charaka Samhita

Sutrasthana 30

It is the Ojas which keeps all the living beings nourished and refreshed.

There can be no life without Ojas.

Ojas marks the beginning of the formation of embryo. It is the nourishing fluid from the embryo. It enters the heart right at the stage of the embryo's initial formation.

Loss of Ojas amounts to the loss of life itself.

It sustains the life and is located in the heart.

It constitutes the essence of all the Dhatus (tissues).

The Elan Vital owes its existence to it. But all this action of Ojas manifests itself in different ways, by flowing through the 10 vessels (channels) attached to it.

Hence, these 10 channels attached to the heart is also very important.

### **Tips for preservation of Ojas:**

tanmahat tā mahāmūlāstaccojaḥ parirakṣatā |

parihāryā viśeṣeṇa manaso duḥkhahetavaḥ | | 13 | |

hṛdyaṃ yat syādyadaujasyaṃ srotasāṃ yat prasādanam |

tattat sevyam prayatnena praśamo jñānameva ca | | 14 | | Charaka Samhita

Sutrasthana 30

Those who want to preserve Ojas and maintain heart and the vessels in good condition, should avoid such factors that lead to unhappiness (worries, stress).

Diets and medicine which are conducive to the heart (Hrudya) should be taken.

The herbs that maintain good health of Srotas (body channels) should be taken.

## **SYNONYMS OF AYURVEDIC DOCTOR AND WHAT THEY GENERALLY MEAN**

An Ayurvedic doctor may represent his profession with different terms such as Ayurvedic practitioner and Ayurvedic physician. For external world it might seem that all the terms carry same meaning, but they have subtle differences in what Ayurvedic doctor is trying to convey or express with his title. It also has got something to do with legality of Ayurvedic practice in some instances. Let us explore.

**Ayurvedic doctor** – This term is usually used in India, or in countries where BAMS – Bachelor’s degree in Ayurveda is a legal academic course and practice of Ayurveda is also a legal profession. The person calling himself as Ayurvedic doctor is usually has BAMS (Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine And Surgery) degree.

**Ayurvedic practitioner** – This term is used to refer a person having BAMS or any degree or training in Ayurveda. This term is more used in foreign countries than in India.

**Ayurvedic Vaidya / Ayurvedic Vaid** – The term Vaid / Vaidya is usually used in North part of India. This term has a traditional touch to it. Apart from a few qualified Ayurvedic doctors, traditional healers who are practicing Ayurveda from many generations usually prefer this term.

**Ayurvedic physician** – Generally this term is used by BAMS or higher qualified Ayurvedic doctors in urban areas. It gives them a modern touch, a hint towards their knowledge in allopathy / modern science.

**Ayurvedic healer** – Not much used in India. It is used in foreign countries, where people might have done Ayurveda course. Usually they are also thorough with other systems of natural healing like Yoga, Naturopathy, Chinese, Reiki etc.

**Ayurvedic Guru** – Used by those who wish to give spiritual touch to their practice.

**Ayurvedic surgeon, Ayurvedic pediatrician**- Usually used by people who have done post graduation after BAMS, and have specialized in respective fields of Ayurvedic practice.

## **SPIRITUAL LOOKING AYURVEDIC DOCTOR OR NORMAL AYURVEDIC DOCTOR?**

There are many Ayurvedic doctors who wear saffron robes and look more like monks than practitioners and there are others who look normal. Whom should you choose?

Those who look spiritual outside might not be really spiritual inside. Those who look as normal may be very spiritual from inside. Spirituality does not lie in how a person looks or what he is wearing. Spirituality lies in the purity of heart and mind. Moreover, there is no hard and fast rule that an Ayurvedic practitioner should be spiritual in order to be successful in healing diseases and promoting health.

However, for a holistic Ayurveda treatment approach, it helps for an Ayurvedic doctor to have a spirituality inclined mindset.

## **AYURVEDA DIET PLAN IN AYURVEDIC TREATMENTS**

Diet planning is an integral part of Ayurvedic treatment. Your Ayurvedic specialist is correct in advising you on dietary restrictions, which is part and parcel of any Ayurvedic treatment.

### **These dietary restrictions help in –**

- Preventing further progress of the disease condition. For example, having turmeric in diet, helps to avoid further development of allergic complications.
- Aiding for better action of the Ayurvedic medicine – For example, having pomegranate juice helps in improving ulcerative colitis
- Relieving the cause of disease condition – water fasting helps you eat less and thus avoids obesity.
- Overall improvement of general health. – Having regular Triphala churna provides body with natural anti oxidants and makes body toxins free and sturdy.
- A simple example on dietary restriction might be: To avoid fried foods and junk foods while someone is on treatment for obesity.

So, I advise you to try to follow the dietary restrictions as much as possible.

### **What happens if you do not?**

In some Ayurvedic treatment schedules, the doctor might include the diet plan as part of the treatment. In that case, the treatment will be less effective if the diet plan is not followed as prescribed. But if the diet plan is only an accessory part of treatment, there might not be much effect of diet plan over the overall success of the treatment. It is always better to stick to the diet plan suggested by the Ayurvedic doctor.

If you cannot follow the diet restrictions suggested by the doctor, then, it is better to ask the doctor for substitutes or any other suggestion to counter balance the treatment. But following the diet plan adds more resilience and will power in you to fight the disease better.