



Panchakarma ~ 'the king of detox' at Carnoustie

Carnoustie

Ayurveda & Wellness Resort



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Ayurveda

Ayurveda - the science of life

The name 'Ayurveda' literally means 'the science of life' and is derived from two Sanskrit words, 'ayuh' meaning life or longevity and 'veda' meaning science or sacred knowledge. It is regarded as the oldest documented system of medicine known to man. The earliest known references to Ayurveda and its sister science - Yoga, appeared in scholarly texts called 'the Vedas' (the Rig Veda (3000-2500 BCE), Yajur Veda, Sam Veda, and Atharva Veda (1200-1000 BCE) believed to date back to over five thousand years! The Vedas are revered as the holy scriptures of the Hindus who refer to them as Shruti - a Sanskrit word meaning "that which is heard" by the seers/sages/ rishis. These men were perceived to be spiritually elevated and received this knowledge through direct cognition during meditation, which in the modern context can be regarded akin to a cosmic download from the higher spiritual realms.

The practice flourished during the Vedic period of ancient India and was passed on in the oral tradition from accomplished masters to their disciples. Its popularity waned and it struggled to remain relevant in the face of India's frequent foreign invasions. Credit goes to its faithful practitioners that kept the tradition alive in the fringes of society despite the western onslaught until India gained independence in 1947. Ayurveda then resurfaced as a major system of healthcare that endures in India to this day and is becoming increasingly popular among the health conscious individuals looking for preventive answers and for more holistic solutions to their health problems from across the world.

A photograph featuring three smooth, rounded stones stacked vertically on a light-colored wooden surface. The top stone is light gray and has the word "Mind" written on it in a black, handwritten-style font. The middle stone is dark blue/black and has the word "Body" written on it in a white, outlined, handwritten-style font. The bottom stone is light gray and has the word "Soul" written on it in a black, handwritten-style font. To the right of the stones is a single, vibrant red flower with several petals, lying flat on the wooden surface. The background is a blurred, light blue wall.

Mind

Body

Soul



Ayurveda's definition of health

In Ayurveda, 'svastha', the Sanskrit word for perfect health is defined as "a balance between body, mind, spirit and social well being". Ayurveda has a holistic approach to health and believes that restoring balance between our mental, physical and spiritual side is essential to be healthy. For instance, there can be no physical health without mental or spiritual health and vice versa. This balance is not only internal but also external. External balance is the balance between the individual and the environment. Hence, it emphasizes on a balanced relationship with nature on one side and the people around us on the other.

Basic tenants include:

- All things in the universe (both living and nonliving) are linked together. In fact, everything in the universe is actually made of the same five natural elements: space, air, fire, water and earth.
- There is a deep connection between the self and the environment and harmony between the two is essential for living a healthy life.
- Disharmony between our mental, physical and spiritual self leads to sickness.
- Our lifestyle choices are important. Our choices in areas like diet, exercise, profession and relationships etc have the potential to create physical, emotional or spiritual imbalances making us more susceptible to disease.

Thus Ayurveda places responsibility of one's health on oneself. It is not simply about taking herbal concoctions and treatments and encourages you to be an active participant in your own journey toward healing.



Theory of Five Elements (Panchamahabhoota)

Ayurveda views the human body as an evolutionary wonder no different from the rest of the universe. According to this theory all matter in this universe is composed of five basic elements - the Pancha Mahabhootas, namely Earth (prithvi), Water (jala), Fire (agni), Air (vayu) and Space (akasha). These elements are the building blocks of our world and can be found in everything around us in varying proportions. They combine in unique ways to create different environments and a wide variety of flora and fauna including human beings. The ancient Ayurveda texts mention the orderly sequential unfoldment of the Bhutas with each preceding element being subtler in nature than the succeeding one. The first element to come in to physical existence is space / akash which has the most expansive but the least concrete value. Space/akash is followed by vayu/air which is more tangible than akash/space and yet not as much as its successor agni/fire element. The last two elements to manifest in this wondrous sequence are jala/water and finally earth/prithvi; the most concrete/tangible ones.



The seed germination analogy to understand the existence of the Mahabhootas

The best analogy to understand the sequential existence of the Mahabhootas is to understand the transformation of a seed into a full-fledged tree. To begin with, the seed is hard and compact. Once it begins to sprout, it becomes softer and less dense and begins to expand in all directions. One can see how the element of space/akash begins to manifest as the seed begins to make space to allow further development. Thus akash/ space dominates the first stage of development of a life form. Next we see, how the seed begins to grow in one specific direction and a sprout begins to form and is gradually pushed out in one direction. Ayurveda explains it as the manifestation of air/vayu exerting its directive on the seed and governing its movement. This is followed by the sprout exerting pressure and breaking free out of the seed and piercing through the earth's surface. This is now the manifestation of fire/agni which causes thermogenesis or change in temperature caused by the change in the seed's pH value. The manifestation of fire/agni can be seen in the subtle increase in temperature/heat that facilitates the metabolic transformation. As the sprout grows, the jala/water manifests and transports nutrients from the seed to the growing sprout and nourishes its healthy growth. Finally the sapling acquires a more solid/concrete form and structure and becomes a tree, a stage where the more solid earth/prithvi dominance comes through. To stay alive all the five mahabhootas continue to work in unison and close coordination. The plant/tree is harmed if any of these five elements are imbalanced. Human life develops in a similar fashion.



Akash (ether) - the element of Space

The word 'space' conjures an image of an incomprehensible vast expanse of open and free nothingness. This nothingness holds the planets and the stars. Similarly, in our bodies the space element can be understood as various hollows/spaces of the body for e.g the skull cavity that accommodates the brain or the abdominal cavity that holds various organs etc. In yogic philosophy, the other four elements are said to originate from this space. Space gives rise to wind, which gives rise to fire and so on.

The space element is the most subtle form and its qualities reflect that. It is still because it lacks the movement of the wind. It is cold because it lacks the heat of fire. It is dry because it lacks the moistness of water and it is light because it lacks the weight of earth.

In Ayurveda, un-cramped space element has no predilections and can host everything just as it is. So when a person is dominated by the unfettered space element, he/she can accept his/her own and others' situations. The person is flexible and open-minded and can accommodate changes and challenges with a natural ease because he/she doesn't hold on to things too firmly.

It is important to note that this space element in the body stays healthy only if it is neither too constricted nor too lax and has to be in definite proportions. The moment this space becomes squeezed and fettered, sickness emerges. Similarly if this space increases and there is a decrease in structure, it again creates problems. Vitiation of ether in the body results in an increase of space and a decrease in structure. The result is the destruction of tissue. Parkinson's disease is an example of a condition where space is created in the body where once there was a cellular structure.

The element of space is associated with sound. We know that sound propagates by virtue of space. There can be no sound without space. Sound and ether are inseparable. Because of their intimate relationship, the ear is considered the associated sense organ of the space/ether element and voice (mouth) is its organ of action. Hearing loss and loss of voice are difficulties that are often due to vitiation of the ether element in the body.



Vayu (air) - the element of movement/direction

This element governs the entire movement in the universe. One could say that potential energy is space while activated space is air. Vayu is the kriya shakti or universal power of action, from which all other powers emerge. It is the causal power that guides and directs things. Vayu governs all cosmic forces, movements and actions, including the movement of the stars and galaxies, the gravitational network underlying the universe, electro-magnetic forces and the forces that govern subatomic particles. It can be found in every object in nature and in the bodies of all creatures that consists of various channel systems. Vayu impels blood to flow through our veins and governs the circulatory system, makes breathing possible and controls the respiratory system, makes food move through the intestinal tract and carries impulses at lightning speed to and from our brain. The list is endless. Vayu propelled movement governs all organs that cannot function without movement - lungs, colon, urinary bladder, heart and everything else. The day Vayu leaves our body, we get breathless and die. Without Vayu there is no life. Vayu is the Shakti or cosmic power that electrifies everything and without which everything is inert.

The sense of touch is associated with Vayu. The skin feels the touch in the form of movement/pressure /friction/vibration against it. Without movement there is no sense of touch. For example if a friend rests his hand lightly on your arm, you register the touch because of the sudden change in pressure against your skin caused by the movement. If he stops the movement completely and exerts no pressure , you forget that he is holding you.



Fire (agni) - the element of energy creation

The Sanskrit word Agni means ‘fire’. Sequentially, it comes third because it evolves from ether and air, containing the essence of these elements within it. Ether provides fire the space to exist within, while air provides fire the capacity to burn.

Just as the Sun generates energy for all life, the fire element creates energy for our body. The fire element is categorized into five types basis its support in body functions. The fire that provides our body with the capacity to digest food is called pachaka agni, Sadhaka Agni ignites the intellect, Alocaka agni helps in vision, Ranjaka agni energizes and invigorates the body and Bhrajaka agni gives radiance to the skin.

Interestingly, according to Ayurveda, since fire by itself is destructive, it is always mixed with small quantities of water in the human body. Excess fire in the body results in excessive heat production and deficient fire element brings down the body temperature and makes it uncomfortable. Excessive fire results in increase in body temperature causing fever, skin eruptions and rashes, bloodshot eyes and tissue damage. To avoid this, the body has an inbuilt mechanism to get rid of excessive heat. The body eliminates this excessive Agni/fire/heat through sweat and urination and the stools become looser and more frequent. Decrease in the Agni/fire element of fire results in lackluster and pale /greyish skin tone and color, impaired digestion, sluggish brain and a slow metabolic rate. As the body tries to hold on to heat, sweating, urination and bowel elimination all decrease.

In Ayurveda, the Agni element is associated with our sense of sight as it is believed that if it were not for the light springing from Agni/Fire, we would have been surrounded by eternal darkness. Agni illuminates and allows us to see. We can detect this Agni in the glow of the eyes and that is why when a person dies we say that the ‘fire of life’ is extinguished.



Jala (water) - the element of life

Jala or water is the fourth element to arise sequentially from the cosmos. The word 'Water' conjures images of liquidity or fluidity and this keeps life alive. Without water, there would be total dryness. Water is also a binder/adhesive. For example, we cannot make a ball out of dry sand, but the moment we add water, we can make sand balls. Thus, water /jala is a constructive force in nature. Water is also the transportation medium in the body and also balances the Agni /fire element. It is a transporter medium in the sense that it carries nutrients and the vayu element throughout the body and removes toxins. It is also protective and coats all membranes to allow solid structures in the body to move without friction. Its importance makes Jala therapy a very important part of Ayurveda treatment for ailments.

This element is associated with the sense of taste. There can be no sense of taste without the jala based saliva because food must dissolve in saliva before it can interact with the taste receptors. A totally dry mouth can never experience taste.



Prithvi (earth) - the element of form/structure

The word ‘prithvi’ in Sanskrit means the earth. This evolved in the fifth spot in the sequence of evolution and contains the essence of the four elements (ether, air, fire and water) preceding it.

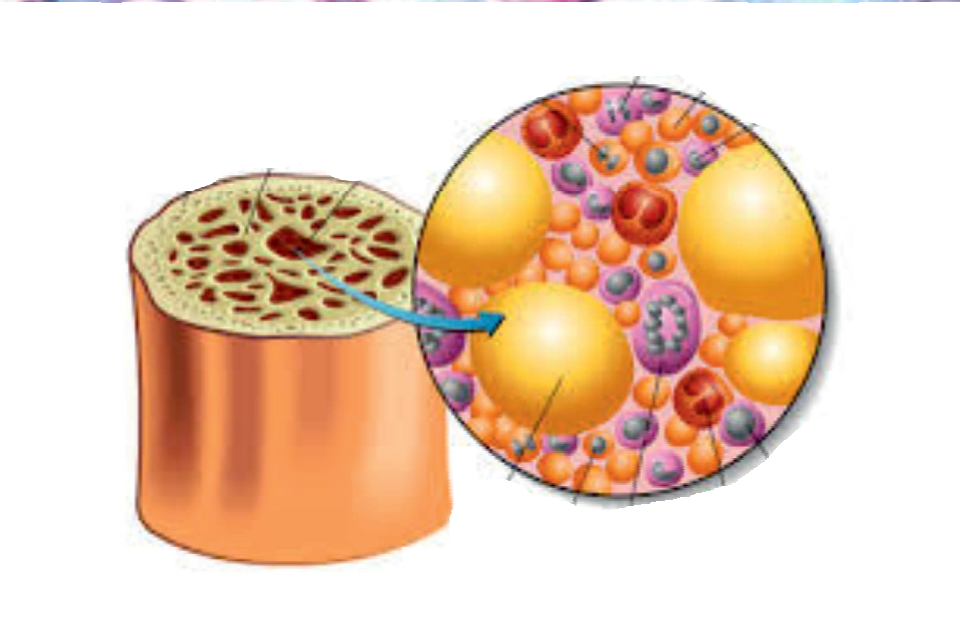
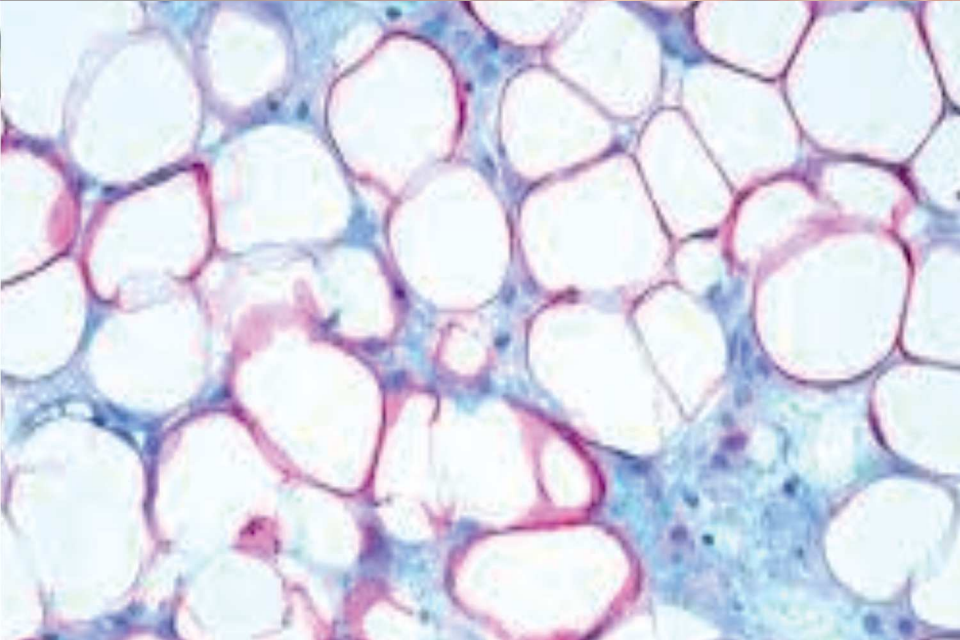
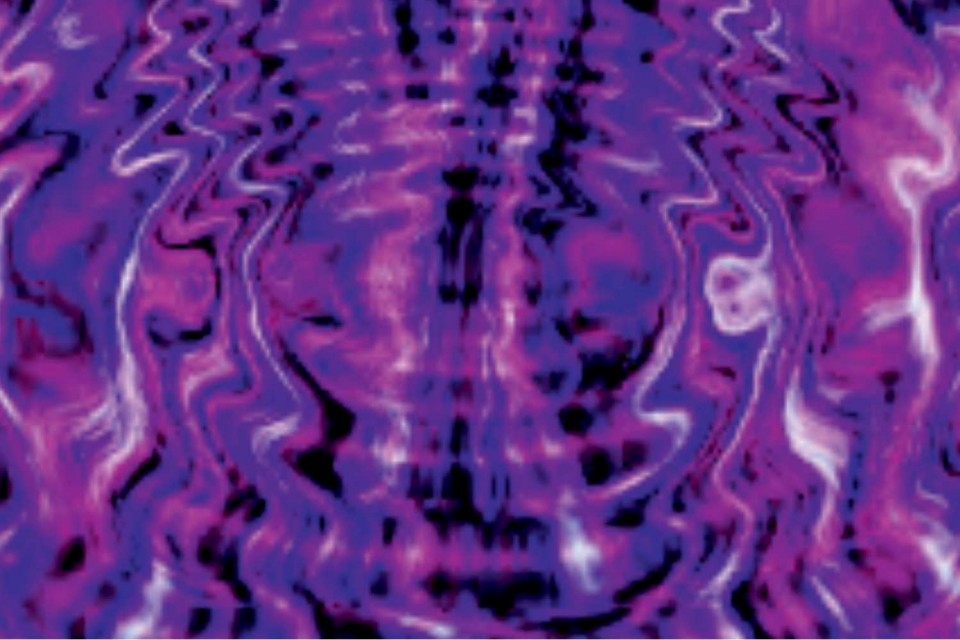
The earth element represents dense matter which lends structure or form to everything in the universe including the human body. This structure or form in turn is the conduit through which the other elements flow. Therefore, the entire body is dependent upon the earth element for its health and well-being. The earth elements also includes the food that we consume. It is found in larger proportion in grains, nuts, legumes and meats, in moderate proportions in dairy products and in relatively small proportions in fruits, vegetables and spices. When we consume excess earth element by overeating, the body form changes to adjust to the excessive earth element. On the other hand deficiency of the earth element makes the body structure and its various organs weak. The earth element also helps the body conserve heat and also lends emotional and physical stability. The person deficient in the earth element is weak and can be easily overpowered both physically and emotionally.

The earth element is associated with the sense of smell. Disorders of the ability to smell reflect an imbalance of the earth element. The rectum is the organ of action for the earth element. The earth element in our body is balanced by the cycle of consumption, absorption and defecation. Ailments like diarrhea, release too much of the earth element and weaken the body, while on the other hand, constipation makes the body hard and toxic. Since the earth element and smell are intimately connected, both diarrhea and constipation negatively impact the ability to smell. Excess earth element can obstruct the sense of smell while deficient earth element can weaken the structures responsible for smell. Thus, healthy elimination is essential to the balance of the earth element, the sense of smell and the over-all well-being of the body.



Diagnostic value of the five elements and the senses associated with them

Ayurveda has used this concept of five elements and their corresponding physical characteristics and the senses associated with them to understand how the universe as a whole and in particular, the human body operates. The Ayurvedic specialists use the above to diagnose imbalances and the ailments resulting from it without costly and invasive diagnostic procedures. For example, auscultation or thumping various body cavities makes them understand the element of space or akash. The resonance resulting from thumping helps them understand if there is any abnormality or obstructive growth. Another example is the diagnostics through the sense of touch. It is the sense of touch that helps them do the famous Nadi Vigyan or pulse diagnostics. This is based on the principle that every organ or tissue in the body has its own signature/unique vibration which conveys its state of functioning. The fluids in the body (lymph and blood) circulate throughout the body from the heart to the surface and back again picking up the vibrations from each organ and tissue which are studied by the physician. The propulsive force of the heartbeat gives the physician a wealth of information about the physical and emotional functioning of the patient. He also carefully observes the eyes and other parts of the body to detect the Agni imbalance when arriving at a diagnosis.



Dosha, Dhatu & Mala - the three components of the body

Ayurveda expounds the body's composition in terms of three basic components : dosha dhatu and mala. It is the dynamics between them, if clearly understood, help in disease prevention and cure.

Dhatus: are the retained elements that give structure/form/life to the body These elements give the body physical strength, regulate its functions and maintain its structural integrity. In the western concept, they are nothing but the body tissues. They can be solid, semi-solid and liquid. They have to be replenished and rejuvenated to keep the body in optimum health. They must be retained by the body in correct proportions and unnatural loss of these dhatus can even cause death. There are seven dhatus found in the human body:

1. Rasa - Nutritional fluid plasma
2. Rakta - Blood or life force
3. Mamsa - Muscles
4. Meda - Adipose tissue or fat
5. Asthi - Bones
6. Majja - Bone marrow
7. Shukra - Semen/ ovaries

Interestingly, they are formed in the body in the same sequence that they appear above. . The developmental sequence of the dhatus is reflected in the manner that the human foetus matures. Initial stages of the growth of a foetus are characterized by the first dhatu that mainly signify nutrient fluid, muscle tissue and blood. The deeper dhatus like marrow, bones and other subtle forms of reproductive tissues arise later.



Malas - the toxic waste

These are substances that the body normally releases in the entire process of creating and maintaining the dhatus. Malas naturally arise as the unusable natural by-products of the digestive process that are closely connected with the formation /maintenance of the seven dhatus. The body has an inbuilt mechanism to separate the waste material from the dhatus at each stage of metabolism. These substances are not useful for the body and need to be expelled. In fact, if they are not expelled, they cause harm and imbalance in the body, causing disease. These malas are eliminated from the body in the form of fecal matter, sweat, urine, mucus, tears, saliva and carbon dioxide.

If the malas do not get separated from the body at the appropriate time and in proper quantity, they get accumulated. This accumulation causes an imbalance and damages the functioning of the dhatus. Everyone is familiar with the discomfort and disease caused by constipation and infrequent urination. That is why, Ayurveda places great emphasis on elimination and encourages us to never restrain or ignore the bodily urge to eliminate the malas.



Understanding the Doshas

Have you ever wondered why each individual has different characteristic traits? Why some are gregarious, while others are reserved and quiet? Why some people love food and can eat just about everything, while others are poor eaters and dread food? Why are some people always happy and positive, while some are melancholic and pessimistic? While genetics has its own explanation, Ayurveda explains them through the understanding of the three doshas: Vata, Pitta and Kapha. According to the Ayurvedic concept of prakriti (constitution), each one of us is born with a unique combination of vata, pitta, and kapha dosha. This proportion at birth remains the personal reference point for optimal health and determines our physical and mental self. We remain healthy as long as our bodies can maintain the specific ratio of vata, pitta, and kapha that we were born with. However, any imbalance in this natural proportion, leads to physical and mental disease. No particular dosha is superior to the other. Each one has specific physical and emotional influences and are found in varying proportions in every individual. This is the underlying reason behind the fact that no two individuals are identical. However, generally only one dosha dominates an individual, but in some cases there might be an interplay of two together in varying proportions. Thus, Ayurveda recommends that we seek expert help to identify our correct dosha or body type and make subtle lifestyle and dietary changes to suit it so that we can be healthy always.



The three primary doshic states

The Doshas are biological energies that govern all physical and mental processes and provide every living being with an individual blueprint for health and achievement. They are found in the following three states:

- **Balanced:** in this state all the three doshas are balanced in their natural proportions.
- **Aggravated:** in this state, one particular dosha is in excess and dominates.
- **Depleted:** in this state, one particular dosha is present in less than normal proportion.

Of the three, the aggravated state is the worst and leads to imbalance and disease. An aggravated dosha state can be the result of an imbalanced diet or a stressful lifestyle. Ayurveda offers an individualized treatment for each type or body condition which is very different from the western model's "one-pill for all" approach. If detected on time, imbalanced doshas can be cured by making alterations in diet and lifestyle. It is important to note that each dosha type has its own specific dietary and lifestyle recommendations to keep it balanced and for this apparent reason, Ayurveda does not believe in an universal diet for all. Every individual should consume a diet compatible to his/ her predominant biological humors/doshas, to keep him/her in a state of perfect equilibrium in different seasons. This is both a preventive and curative approach to optimal health.



Prakriti - Vikruti understanding for optimal health

According to Ayurveda, each individual has a unique personal constitution type which is the individual's distinctive life force mechanism. It is called Prakriti in Sanskrit. The term is derived from the Sanskrit 'pra' meaning beginning and 'kriti' meaning creation. This 'prakriti' is genetically determined and determines the individual's appearance, temperament and habits. The concept is used by Ayurvedic doctors in predicting an individual's susceptibility to a particular disease, prognosis of that illness and selection of therapy. A person's prakriti is the inherent balance of the three doshas at birth. All of this is coded in the constitution. Every living creature has all three doshas without the presence of which they cannot stay alive. Kapha provides each of us with tissues, pitta provides metabolic action and vata allows us to move and express ourselves. Our constitution is best defined in terms of the percentage of each energy within a person's constitution. In this way there are not three types (vata, pitta or kapha), or even seven types (combinations), but an infinite number of combinations and permutations with no two people being exactly the same. A person's prakriti (constitution) does not usually change throughout a person's lifetime. To know a person's constitution is to know their tendencies. If a person knows their tendencies they can take the actions that keep their tendencies in check. A person who knows that they have a tendency to feel cold, easily avoids becoming too cold by wearing more clothing or drinking warm beverages. To know your constitutional tendencies is to be empowered with the knowledge needed to create balance in your life.

Vikruti- the nature of Imbalance

Vikruti means 'after creation.' The Sanskrit root 'vi' means after and the root word 'kruti' means creation. In Ayurveda, when we talk about the vikruti of a patient, we are referring to the current state of the three doshas and how they are expressing themselves in the body and mind. In an optimal environment, the vikruti and the prakriti are the same. An important goal of Ayurveda is to understand a person's vikruti and then understand what aspects of a person's environment have contributed to the disturbance. Once known, the goal is to correct the environment, both external and internal.



Pitta dosha - the fire energy

Pitta is made up of the Fire (agni) and Water (jal) elements. It has the qualities of being hot, sharp, light, liquid and oily. Physiologically, Pitta provides the body with heat and energy through the breakdown of complex food. It governs all processes related to transformation of energy throughout the mind and body. Thus, it governs nutrition and metabolism and the body temperature. A Pitta type individual will have qualities reflective of fire and water, such as a fiery personality and oily skin. Pitta is related to intelligence, understanding, digestion, and transformation. It governs joy, courage, willpower, anger, jealousy and mental perception and intellect. The balanced Pitta individual is blessed with a joyful disposition, a sharp intellect and tremendous courage and drive. However, when Pitta is imbalanced it leads to anger, rage and ego leaving an individual who is bitter with life and haughty towards others. There is a saying that imbalanced Pitta individuals don't go to hell; they simply create it wherever they go! Pitta imbalances leads to bodily disorders like infection, inflammation, ulcers, heartburn and fever.



Pitta dosha - location, functions & signs of imbalance

SUBDOSHA	LOCATED IN	FUNCTIONS	SIGNS OF IMBALANCE
Pachaka pitta	Lower stomach & Small intestine	• Governs digestive enzymes, • regulates temperature, • maintains circulation	When high, it can cause: • indigestion • heartburn • ulcers, • hyper acidity; When too low, it can cause: • poor absorption • lack of body heat
Ranjaka pitta	Liver, spleen & gallbladder	• Gives colour to the blood, bile and stool, • transforms lymph chyle into blood cells	• Jaundice • anemia • blood disorders • skin inflammation, • anger
Sadhaka-pitta	Brain & heart	• Hearing, • mental functions • thought • memory • intelligence,	• Lack of clarity • confusion • anxiety • anger • uncontrolled emotions • indecisiveness • heart disease
Alochaka pitta	Eyes	• Visual perception, • formation of impressions • vision	• Vision problems • eye disease
Bhrajaka pitta	skin	• Controls lustre, complexion, pigmentation of the skin	• Rashes & skin problems • discoloration of skin,



Diet advisory for Pitta mind-body constitution

- Should eat cool or warm food and avoid steaming hot dishes.
- Should favour bitter, sweet and astringent tastes.
- Avoid excess of butter and other saturated fats.
- Although the Pitta type have good digestion, they should avoid the temptation to overeat and consume excess salt and spicy food.
- Pittas should take lots of salads but avoid sour cream or vinegar based salad dressings. They should use more of lime.
- Cold milk and ice creams are good for the Pitta type.
- Avoid pickles and fermented food.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Avoid coffee. Have herbal teas particularly, mint and licorice.
- Prefer cereals with cold milk for breakfast. Avoid white flour at all costs.
- Avoid red meats. Vegetarianism should be favoured.
- Avoid fried, oily, spicy and heavy food.

Diet advisory for Pitta

DO'S	DON'TS
VEGETABLES	
Asparagus, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Celery, Cucumber, Green beans, Green (sweet) peppers, Leafy Green Vegetables, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Okra, Parsley, Peas, Potatoes, Sprouts, Squash, Sweet potatoes, Zucchini	Beets, Carrots, Eggplant, Garlic, Hot peppers, Onions, Radishes, Spinach, Tomatoes (sour)
FRUITS	
Apples, Avocados, Cherries, Coconut, Figs, Dark grapes, Mangoes, Melons, Oranges, Pears, Pineapples, Plums, Prunes, Raisins	Apricots, Bananas, Berries, Cherries (sour), Cranberries, Grapefruit, Papayas, Peaches, Persimmons, Oranges (sour), Fruits, Green grapes, Oranges, Pineapple & Plum unless they are sweet and Ripe.
GRAINS	
Barley, Oats, Wheat, White rice (prefer Basmati rice)	Brown rice, Corn, Millet, Rye
DAIRY	
Butter, Egg whites, Ghee (clarified butter) - Moderate portions, Ice cream, Milk	Buttermilk, Cheese, Egg yolks, Sour cream, Yogurt
MEAT	
Chicken, Shrimp, Turkey (Small portions)	Red meat and sea food in general

mind-body constitution

DO'S	DON'TS
BEANS/LENTILS	
Chickpeas, Mung beans, Tofu and other soybean products	Lentils
OILS	
Coconut, Olive, Soy, Sunflower	Almond, Corn, Safflower, Sesame
NUTS AND SEEDS	
Coconut, Pumpkin seeds, Sunflower seeds	Oily ones to be avoided completely
SWEETENERS	
All are acceptable except honey and molasses	Honey and Molasses
HERBS AND SPICES	
Cardamom, Cilantro (green coriander), Cinnamon Coriander seed, Dill, Fennel, Mint Saffron, Turmeric, Cumin and black pepper-small proportions	All pungent herbs and spices, Barbecue sauce, Mustard, Pickles, Salt, Sour salad dressings, Vinegar



Kapha Dosha - the water energy

Kapha is composed of the earth (prithvi) and water (jala) elements. It has the qualities of being heavy, thick, slow, oily, moist and humid. Kapha lends structure and firmness to the physical body. Physiologically, Kapha moistens the food, gives bulk to our tissues, lubricates joints, stores energy and makes up the cool bodily fluids such as water, mucous and lymph. A Kapha type individual has a sturdy body structure/frame and a calm temperament, reflecting the underlying elements of earth and water. Psychologically, Kapha governs love, patience, tranquility, compassion, greed, attachment and mental inertia. When imbalanced it leads to depression and lethargy and this makes the body prone to obesity, sinus, congestion and ailments related to the mucous.



Diet advisory for Kapha mind - body constitution

- Eat warm and light food with minimal butter or oil.
- Eat food with pungent, bitter and astringent tastes.
- Avoid sweets or fatty foods. Excessive salty food may cause water retention in kapha types.
- Follow a routine when it comes to meals and have light breakfast and dinner. Lunch should be the main meal.
- Avoid oily and fried food. Eat steamed, lightly cooked or raw foods. Cold foods should be avoided.
- Consume ginger tea once or twice a day.
- Avoid or restrict the intake of dairy food items.
- Avoid ghee and oils. Consume in minimal proportions.



Kapha dosha - location functions & signs of imbalance

SUBDOSHA	LOCATED IN	FUNCTIONS	SIGNS OF IMBALANCE
Avalam-baka-kapha	Heart & lungs	• Lubrication of heart/lungs; • basic plasma formation • provides strength	• excess weight • pulmonary disorders • accumulation of phlegm
Kledaka-Kapha	Stomach	• Moistens the food • lubrication of the stomach lining/all other delicate mucus membranes	• Impaired digestion • excess phlegm
Tarpaka-kapha	Sinus cavities, head & spinal fluid	• protection/strength • nourishment of nerves • emotional balance • stability • happiness • memory	• discontentment • malaise • nervousness • insomnia • Congestion of the sinus • headache • impaired senses
Bodhaka-kapha	Mouth & tongue	• Lubrication/moistening of food • Sense of taste	• Impairment of taste & salivary glands
Shleshaka-kapha	Joints	• Lubrication of joints. • strength and stability for physical movement	• Loose/watery/painful joints • arthritis

Diet advisory for Kapha

DO'S	DON'TS
VEGETABLES	
Beets, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Eggplant, Garlic, Leafy green vegetables, Lettuce, Mushrooms, Okra, Onions, Peas peppers, Potatoes, Radishes, Spinach, Sprouts	Beets, Carrots, Eggplant, Garlic, Hot peppers, Onions, Radishes, Spinach, Tomatoes (sour)
FRUITS	
Apples, Apricots, Berries, Cherries, Cranberries, Figs, Mangoes, Peaches, Pears, Prunes, Pomegranates	Apricots, Bananas, Berries, Cherries (sour), Cranberries, Grapefruit, Papayas, Peaches, Persimmons, Oranges (sour), Fruits, Green grapes, Oranges, Pineapple & Plum unless they are Sweet and Ripe.
GRAINS	
Barley, Buckwheat, Corn, Millet, Oats, Dry, Rye, Basmati rice	Brown rice, Corn, Millet, Rye
DAIRY	
Warm skim milk, Small amounts of whole Milk and Eggs (not fried of Cooked with Butter)	Buttermilk, Cheese, Egg yolks, Sour cream, Yogurt
MEAT	
Chicken, Shrimp, Turkey (All in small portions)	Red meat, Seafood

mind - body constitution

DO'S	DON'TS
BEANS/LENTILS	
All legumes are acceptable except kidney beans and tofu	Avoid cheese and fatty dairy items
OILS	
Almond, Corn, Safflower, Sunflower (All in small portions)	All, except the ones in the favoured list.
NUTS AND SEEDS	
Sunflower seeds, Pumpkin seeds	All, except sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds
SWEETENERS	
Raw honey	All, except honey
HERBS AND SPICES	
All are good. Ginger is especially good for improving digestion	Salt



Vata dosha - the wind energy

Vata is primarily composed of the space (akasha) and air (vayu) elements. Intrinsically, the vata dosha is dry, light, mobile, cold, subtle and clear like the characteristics of air and space. Vata is also called the “King of the Doshas” because it is the energy of movement and governs all biological activity and gives the body its life force. A person with a predominantly Vata constitution will have physical and mental qualities that reflect the essential qualities of space and air and consequently, the Vata type of individuals are quick thinking, thin and fast moving. The balanced Vata individual is energetic, artistic, articulate and communicative. However, when the Vata type is disturbed then, like the hurricane effect it causes imbalance and the person becomes restless and anxious. The bodily disorders related to Vata imbalance are dryness of the skin, digestive disorders and constipation, painful joints, hampered circulation and movement.



Diet advisory for Vata Mind - body constitution

- Prefer salt, sour and sweet tastes. Avoid bitter and pungent foods.
- Since vata is a cold and dry dosha, warm and nourishing foods should be preferred by this type.
- Should eat small and frequent meals and never skip breakfast.
- Consume warm milk, cream, butter, warm soups, stews, hot cereals, freshly baked whole wheat bread and any other dish which is warm, milky and sweet.
- Avoid cold salads with vinegar based dressings and raw vegetables.
- Avoid caffeine and have hot herbal teas. Avoid ice cold drinks.
- Have lots of vegetable soups.
- This type can have oily food. However, avoid excess oil. Preference to be given to clarified butter (ghee), olive and sesame oil.
- All milk products are good. Drinking warm milk with honey is recommended.
- Prefer salted nuts that are heavy and oily as opposed to dry salty snacks.
- Eat lots of sweet and heavy fruits and avoid sour and unripe ones.
- All sweet fruits are good for vata. Avoid unripe fruits.



Vata Dosha - location functions & signs of imbalance

SUBDOSHA	LOCATED IN	FUNCTIONS	SIGNS OF IMBALANCE
Prana-Vata	Brain, head, throat, heart & respiratory organs	• Governs perception through the senses • inhalation • mind stability • ingestion of food • sneezing • belching	• Worry • anxiety • hiccups • asthma • respiratory complaints
Udana-Vata	Navel, lungs & throat	• Verbal expression • vitality • enthusiasm • work capacity • perception and memory • complexion	• Speech defects • diseases of eyes/mouth/nose/ear/larynx • dry coughs • general fatigue
Vyana-Vata	Centred in the heart, but moves rapidly through the whole body	• Governs circulation/heart rhythm • opening and closing of eyes • cleansing of channels • blood supply through the body	• Colic pain • inflammation • fever • poor circulation & difficulty in moving
Samana-Vata	Stomach & small intestines	• digestion • absorption of nutrients • waste elimination • peristaltic movements of the digestive system • sweating	• Jaundice • anemia, blood disorders • skin inflammation • anger • hostility
Apana-Vata	Lower abdomen & colon	• urination • elimination • menstruation • sexual discharges • absorption of water in the large intestine • Support/control all other forms of Vata	• urinary/menstrual disorders • sexual dysfunctions • intestinal cramps • constipation • diarrhoea • colitis

Diet advisory for Vata

DO'S	DON'TS
VEGETABLES	
Asparagus, Beets, carrots, Cucumber, Garlic, Green Beans, Onions, Cooked, Onions, Cooked, Sweet potato, Radishes, Turnips, Leafy greens in Moderation	Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Celery, eggplant, Leafy green vegetables, Mushrooms, Peas, Peppers, Potatoes, Sprouts, Tomatoes, Zucchini
FRUITS	
Sweet Fruits, Apricots, Avocados, Bananas, Berries Cherries, Coconut, Fresh Figs, Grapefruit, Lemons, Grapes, Mangos, Sweet Melons, Sour Oranges, Papaya, Pineapple, Peaches, Plums, Sour Fruits, Stewed Fruits, Sweet, Well-ripened fruit in general	Apples, Cranberries, Pears, Pomegranates, Avoid dried fruits, in general and unripe fruit (Especially Bananas)
GRAINS	
Oats (as cooked oatmeal cereal, not dry), cooked rice, wheat	Barley, Buckwheat, Corn, Dry Oats, Millet, Rye
DAIRY	
All dairy is acceptable	
MEAT	
Chicken, Seafood, Turkey (Small portions) and well cooked	Avoid Red meat

mind - body constitution

DO'S	DON'TS
BEANS/LENTILS	
Chickpeas, Mung beans, Pink lentils, Tofu (Small portions)	All, Except as noted.
OILS	
All oils are acceptable Sesame oil and olive oil are especially good.	
NUTS AND SEEDS	
All are acceptable in small amounts. Almonds are best.	
SWEETENERS	
All sweeteners are acceptable	
HERBS AND SPICES	
Almost all, in moderation, with emphasis on sweet and/or heating herbs and spices, such as: Anise, Asafoetida, Basil, Bay Leaf, Black Pepper (use Sparingly), Caraway, Cardamom, Cilantro (Green Coriander), Cinnamon, Clove, Cumin, Fennel, Ginger, Juniper Berries, Licorice Root, Mace, Marjoram, Mustard, Nutmeg, Oregano, Sage, Tarragon, Thyme	Avoid using spices in large quantities. Minimize or avoid all bitter and astringent herbs and spices such as: Coriander Seed, Fenugreek, Parsley, Saffron, Turmeric



Dosha Clock

As per Ayurveda, the three Doshas - Vata, Pitta and Kapha have different energies at different times of the day. Accordingly, Ayurveda divides the 24 hours of the day into phases wherein one particular Dosha is dominant as follows:

- 6 am to 10 am - kapha time
- 10 am to 2 pm - pitta time
- 2 pm to 6 pm - vata time
- 6 pm to 10 pm - kapha time
- 10 pm to 2 am - pitta time
- 2 am to 6 am - vata time

By understanding our dosha type, we can work our own body clock around these times to derive maximum benefit and to be most dynamic. Knowing and understanding the dominant dosha can really help in improving everything about oneself- right from digestion to productivity of the body and mind. For example, people who have a particular aggravated dosha should be especially careful during the time when that dosha is prevalent, because they might find it too much to handle. While one dosha type might feel at peak energy at that time, another dosha type might be the laziest and slowest during the same time. While those who have an aggravated or disturbed dosha might find it difficult during the phase when their aggravated dosha is at its peak.



The dosha and the seasons

Ayurveda believes that external conditions directly impact the internal functioning of the body mechanism and that the doshas also get impacted by the seasons and the prevailing weather conditions. In seasons when the 'jala' or water increases in the atmosphere in the form of rain or snow, the kapha dosha dominates and can get imbalanced leading to watery secretions. That is why if we don't take precautions to keep the kapha balanced, we develop chest congestion, cold, watery eyes, sinusitis etc.

In the summer, the pitta dosha dominates because of the increase in temperature in the external environment. If Pitta is not kept under control, it can lead to excessive heat in the body resulting in ailments like high blood pressure, heated emotions, anger, irritability etc.

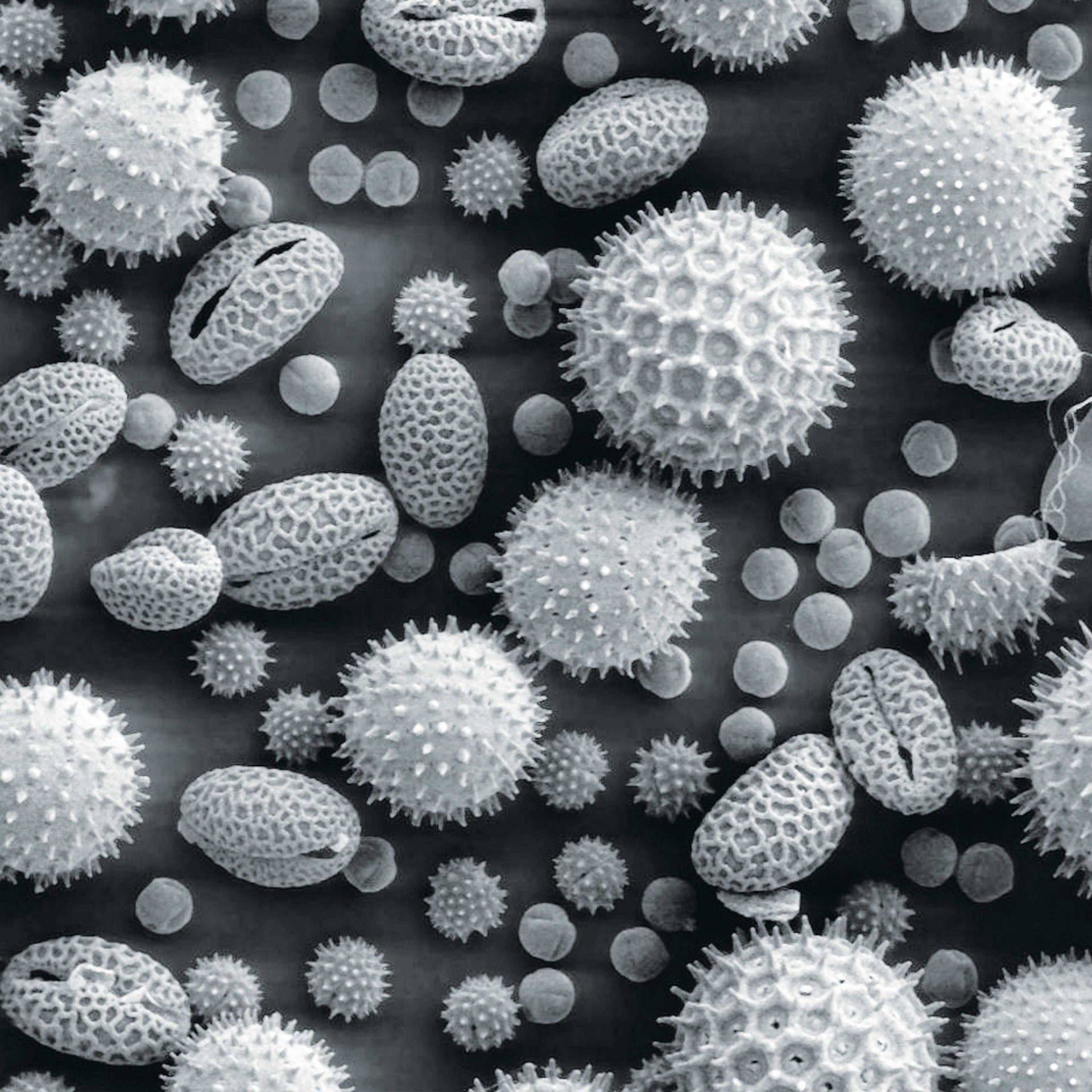
Vata dominates in the autumn and spring. Since vata causes dehydration, if it is not controlled during this season, its imbalance can lead to excessive dryness and ailments related to mobility in the body. Its imbalance causes constipation, dry skin, anxiety, insomnia, stiff and aching joints and muscles, gas and bloating.

Constitutional test for

	VATA	PITTA	KAPHA
Physique	Small	Normal	Large
Bone structure	Fragile	Normal	Healthy, strong
Skin	Thin, dry, rough, cold	Warm, moist, pink	Thick, white, oily, cold
Hair	Thin dry	Moderate normal	Abundant, thick oily
Eyes	Small	Normal	Large
Lips	Thin, small, dry	Medium, soft, red	Thick, smooth, firm
Whites of the eyes	Bluish or brownish	Yellow or red	Completely white
Teeth	Unpolished	Yellowish	Polished white
Nails	Small, thin; break easily	Medium, soft, pink	Large, thick, white
Hands	Small, long	Normal	Large
Voice	High	Clear, well-articulated	Low, deep, pleasant
Stools	Irregular	Regular, copious	Slow, scarce
Feces	Scanty, dry, hard	Soft to normal	Fatty, full
Urine	Little, colorless	Profuse, yellow or red (burning)	Moderate, whitish
Thirst	Little	More	Little

better understanding of self

	VATA	PITTA	KAPHA
Body Temp.	Cold hands and feet	Hot, warm forehead	Low
Perspiration	Little, without smell	Profuse, strong smell	Moderate, pleasant smell
Weight	Difficult gaining weight	Normal	Gains weight easily
Temper	Changes quickly	Fiery	Stable
Emotions	Excited	Passionate	Romantic
Appetite	Variable	Strong	Low
Way of Walking	Hurried	Decisive, audible steps	Sluggish
Concentration	Many ideas	Strong	Slow
Decision making	Talking initiative impulsive, indecisive	Mediocre	Thinks long
Mental nature	Quick, adaptable	Sharp intellect, critical	Slow, steady
Workpace	Works fast	Constant	Work slow
Tiredness	Quickly tired	Mediorce	Almost never tired
Dreams	Fearful: flying, lot of movement	Emotional; fights, golden objects	Beautiful landscapes romantic
Sex	Irregular	Passionate, moderately	Frequent, long-lasting
Finances	Spends money easily	Cautiously spends, money on luxurious item	Saves money



The root cause of disease according to Ayurveda

According to Ayurveda , the root cause of disease is the imbalance of the three Doshas. This imbalance is primarily caused by bad habits, an erratic and fast paced life style, unhealthy eating habits, poor hygiene, stress and anxiety, overwork, suppressed emotions, personal, social or family problems, insufficient sleep, trauma and negativity. The weather conditions are also known to cause this imbalance or aggravate it. Living in a windy place can aggravate vata, hot weather can magnify pitta and humidity and moist weather can worsen kapha.

This imbalance weakens the immune structure and eventually lets diseases and ailments manifest easily. Sushruta, the ancient sage, revered as the ‘father of Surgery’ in Ayurveda defined good health as a state of physiological, psychological and spiritual equilibrium. In Ayurveda none of these states are studied in isolation and each one impacts the other. Hence in Ayurveda, the Ama or the toxins are not only related to food but also to the mental thoughts that we consume and process.

The interdependence between the three states can also be understood by understanding our digestive system. It is a known fact that a robust digestive system leads to a strong and capable mind. In fact the food we eat has a direct bearing on our mood. When the digestive system works well, we feel light and happy both physically and emotionally. On the other hand, when our digestive system is impaired, we feel more heavy/lethargic and irritable. Please note that Ayurveda does not imply that a good digestive system automatically ends all emotional turbulence. It however, boosts a person’s physical and emotional strength and helps him/her to cope a lot better with situation and the ensuing stress.



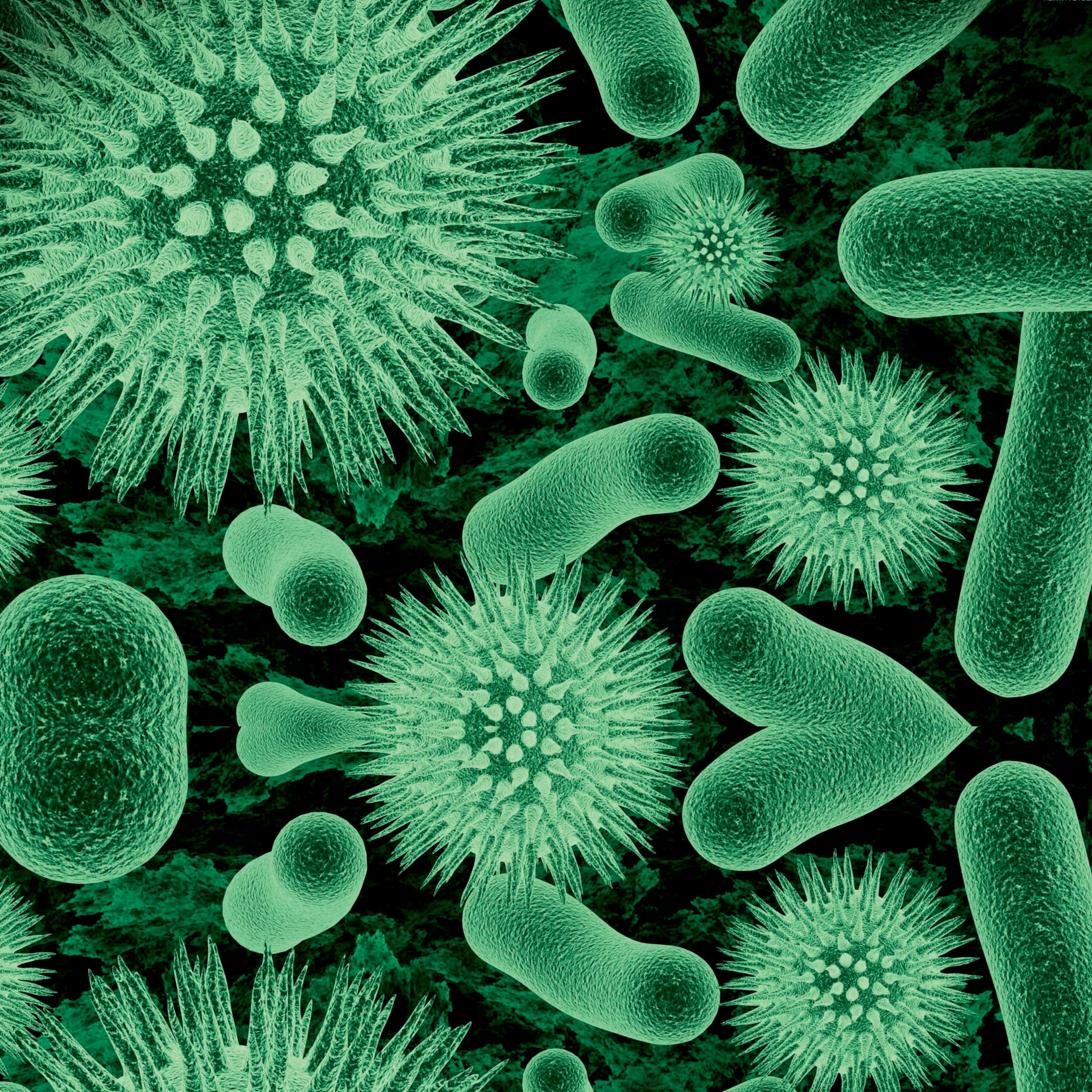
Disease management in Ayurveda

Ayurveda believes that we are all born with a unique constitution. If we understand this basic blueprint of our constitution, we can find ways to maintain our own unique balance and achieve optimum health.

The doshas are the connecting links between our physical body and the life-force energy that flows through our body and the outside world. These doshas are not in a static state and therefore each one of us will experience aggravated and decreased doshas from time to time due to our environment, lifestyle and emotions. Ayurveda teaches us to keep our body constitution as close as possible to its original state for which it prescribes diet and lifestyle recommendations according to our unique body-type. To restore health, there are following seven traditional components in Ayurveda disease management:

- Determining a person's constitution.
- Locating the imbalance of doshas in the body.
- Finding the underlying causes of the illness, such as diet, stress lifestyle, emotional or relationship problem.
- Detoxification treatment by elimination like Panchkarma or Shodhana. This purifies the body by eliminating the toxins - the underlying causes of disease.
- Rejuvenation in order to strengthen specific organs and tissues.
- Providing treatment and medicines to remove the cause.
- Prescribing appropriate regimen according to the person's body constitution (Prakriti), present condition and outside elements like season and work. This regimen consists of - diet, lifestyle, exercise/ yoga and relaxation recommendations.

Contd...



Disease management in Ayurveda

These seven steps have the following objective:

- To identify the health problem
- To eliminate underlying causes of illness
- To purify the body
- To re-establish and restore balance
- To strengthen and revitalize affected organs, tissues and circulation to prevent reappearance.

These processes unearth many things, such as an improper lifestyle, bad eating habits and unprocessed stored negative emotions, that the individual might not have proper cognisance of. Uncovering these issues, helps the individual make changes that help in restoring good emotional and physical health.

A holistic ayurvedic treatment will consist of all the earlier mentioned recommendations, therapies, as well as herbal remedies. The strength of this process lies in the fact, that while the treatment starts and we adjust our lifestyle to our natural rhythm, the body tunes in with its own nature and will start to react more positively to restore balance and begin its natural process of healing. Depending on the severity of the complaints and the intensity of the treatment, this can be a long but rewarding process.



Agni - the digestive fire - the key to good health

“Agni is the flame of life. When the flame goes out, life will end as well”

Ayurveda emphasizes that all diseases originate first in the mind which on a physical level manifest as a breakdown in metabolic function governed by the digestive system. It is cyclic. Thus, if the digestive system is impaired, it effects the metabolic functions which in turn impact the general health of the human body and mind. It is the Agni or fire element that propels this digestive system and helps in breaking down our food intake into energy and nutrients which can be easily assimilated by the body. Agni is also needed for the assimilation and elimination process. Agni gives the body heat and keeps it alive at a certain temperature. This natural fire controls all transformative processes, including mental, physical and spiritual and plays a critical role in the maintenance of overall health. It impacts and affects everything from our digestive and excretory functions, to our mental capacity, emotional health and enthusiasm for life. A perfect example is to study how we behave when we suffer from a stomach disorder. In a situation like that, everything seems listless and one feels emotionally and physically exhausted. It is thus, important to appreciate this life force and protect and care for it.



Signs of balanced and imbalanced agni

- Normal appetite (Note: healthy hunger implies a pleasant anticipation of food and not an urgent need to eat)
- Clean tongue
- Proper appreciation of taste
- Good digestion, balanced metabolism
- Proper (and regular) elimination
- Stable health, steady weight and normal blood pressure
- Good immunity
- Sound sleep
- High energy and strong vitality
- Calm mind and clarity of thought
- Sharp intellect
- Cheerful, optimistic and enthusiastic demeanor.

Impaired Agni signs:

- Emotional disturbances, with an increased tendency toward fear, anxiety, anger, confusion, lethargy or depression.
- Low energy, weakness or fatigue
- Weak or over-active appetite
- Indigestion: gas, bloating, constipation, nausea, hyper-acidity, loose stools, a sense of heaviness, feeling tired or mentally foggy after meals.
- Bad breath and coated tongue
- Being underweight or overweight



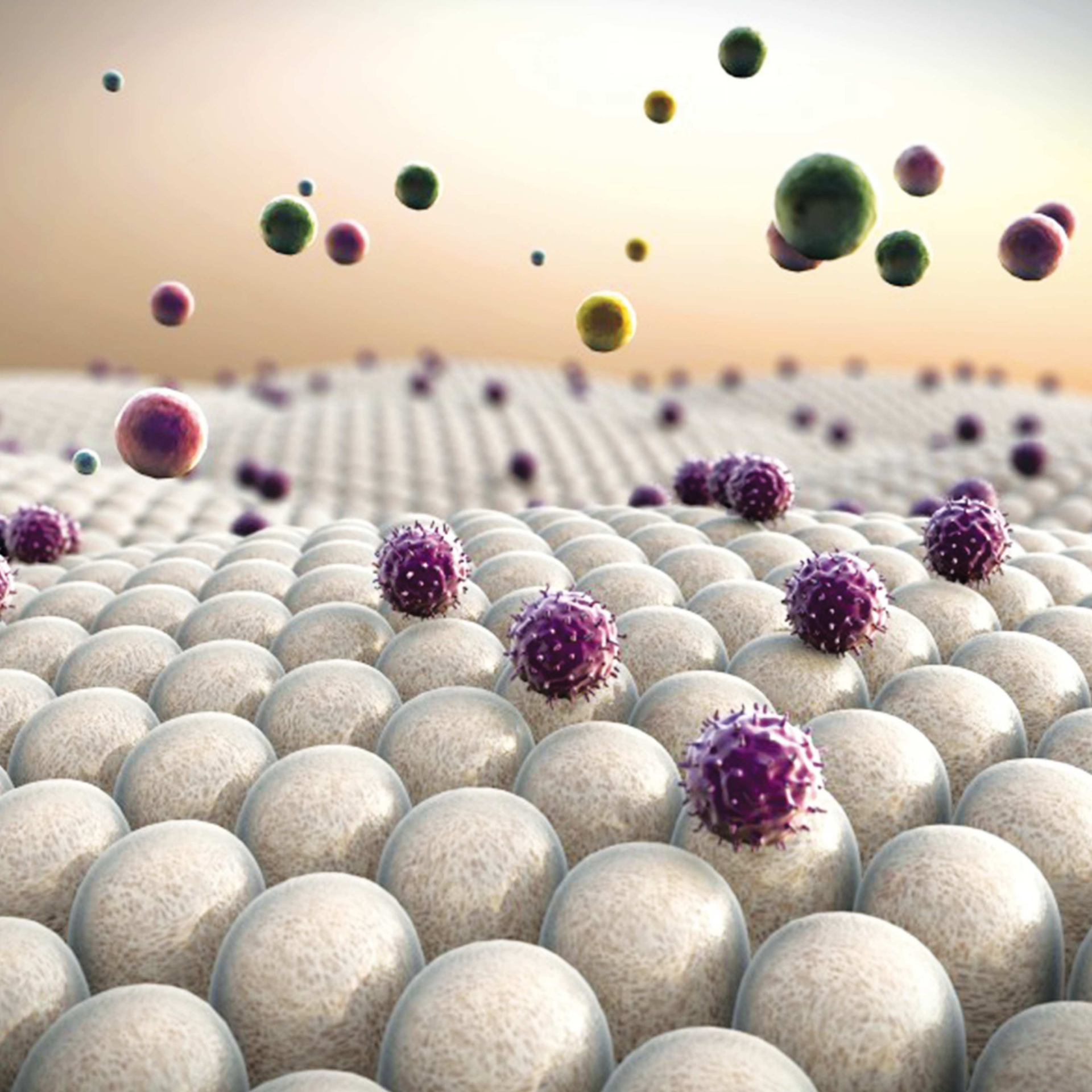
Dos of maintaining good agni

- Eat three meals a day.
- Agni is strongest at noon, therefore lunch should be the biggest meal of the day. When the sun goes down, our Agni decreases and that's why it is best to keep the dinner lighter than the lunch.
- Try to eat around the same times everyday, because digestion benefits from routine.
- Use freshly cooked whole meals with seasonal products according to your constitution.
- Spice your meals with some basic Ayurvedic spices like ginger, cumin, asafetida, cinnamon, turmeric, cayenne or black pepper, cardamom and coriander.
- Eat in a calm setting, without distractions like television, active conversation, newspaper/ books. Focus has to be on the food and its taste.
- Take out time for your meal, relish what you eat and chew well.
- Drink ginger tea, warm water throughout the day or warm water with small slices of ginger before meals to improve digestion.
- Avoid stress as much as possible. Practice Yoga and meditation.
- Exercise regularly.



Don'ts of maintaining good agni

- Try to avoid snacking frequently between the three meals.
- Avoid irregular eating habits as they weaken the digestive powers.
- Avoid stimulants such as coffee, caffeinated drinks, tobacco, alcohol and salt.
- Avoid excessive fatty and junk foods.
- Do not drink ice-cold drinks.
- Do not eat when you're upset.
- Fasting and skipping meals are not recommended .
- Do not work, read, watch television, talk or speak on the phone while you eat. The diversions weaken the digestive process.
- Do not eat until you feel full. Stop eating when you begin to feel that the stomach is filled to approximately two third its capacity.
- Try to sit quietly for a few minutes after meals rather than rushing to complete tasks.



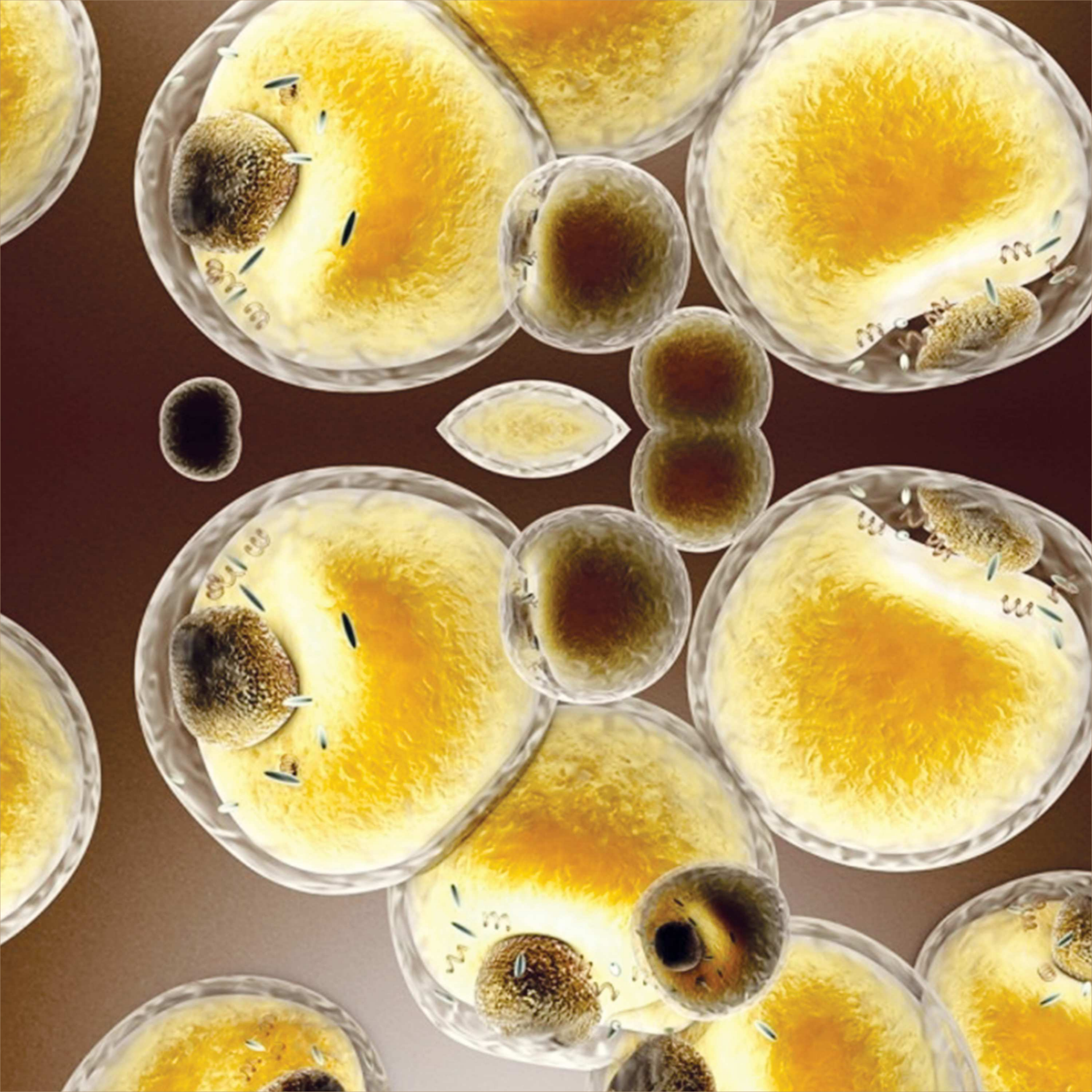
Ama - the disease causing toxins

In Ayurveda - "You are what you digest. If you can't digest it, you'll be imbalanced and sick”!

In Ayurveda, Ama is a metaphor for toxins. It is a kind of thick ‘sludge’ that accumulates in the body and clogs all the channels through which energy flows. This is composed of all undigested or improperly digested food that we fail to cleanse or eliminate. This ama then begins to rot and becomes toxic and begins to cause physical harm. Ama is caused by weak digestion which in turn can be blamed on poor or weak Agni - the digestive fire. When the digestion is weak or defective, food sits undigested in the stomach and if not eliminated, starts to rot due to fermentation by bacteria. It can poison the system because it contains endotoxins produced by the bacteria.

Similarly, unprocessed emotions and feelings, like food, turn into mental ama if they are not addressed and released. A negative life experience (e.g. grief, loss, trauma etc.) can trigger painful memories and release negative emotions (anger, fear, anxiety, depression) that can lead to irrational thinking. Unless we address this, the negative unprocessed emotions become a mental sludge/ama that exhausts us mentally and emotionally.

Ayurveda believes that the mind and the digestive system are interconnected. Both need each other to function at the optimum level. This is evident from the fact that we feel emotionally drained when our digestion is impaired and feel bloated and cramped when we are unduly upset. Hence, an Ayurvedic detox addresses both, the physical and emotional waste/toxins.



Signs of increased Ama

The common early signs of Ama in the body include:

- Thick coating on the tongue.
- Sluggish, bloated and lethargic feeling, especially after a meal.
- Strong cravings for junk foods and sugar.
- Skin breakouts or grey or luster-less skin.
- Dull eyes or yellow teeth.
- Irregular or reduced appetite.
- Body aches and joint pains.
- Bloated stomach, gas/flatulence.
- Constipation, foul smelling stools which may be sticky and heavy.
- Lack of mental clarity and energy.
- A sense of heaviness in the abdomen, legs or body as a whole.
- Chronic constipation, sinus congestion and difficulty in breathing.
- Lethargic feeling with undue fatigue despite a good night's sleep.
- Insomnia.



Panchakarma - the master therapy or the king of detox

Panchakarma is a Sanskrit word which means ‘five actions’. The Panchakarma is the most significant treatment for purification and detoxification in Ayurveda. It is a five-step, total mind-body rejuvenation experience that comprises of herbal oil massages, steam baths, cleansing enemas, a healing satvic diet and other purifying practices. It eliminates deep rooted toxins from the system, rebalances the Doshas, heals numerous ailments and reinstates a sense of clarity and inner-peace. Panchakarma in Ayurveda is an extremely intense, and at the same time, a very gentle internal cleansing. However, since each individual’s constitution and body type are different, there cannot be a set procedure for all. It is a highly individualized treatment and needs to be undertaken under close supervision. The treatment varies from individual to individual and depends on factors like the individual’s Ayurvedic constitutional type, doshic imbalances, age, digestive strength, immune status and many other factors. These treatments/procedures must be administered by specially trained therapists in an exact sequence for a specified period of time. Although Panchakarma is for the most part a delightful and comfortable therapy, there can be periods of discomfort associated with the intense release of toxins, which does occur. It is therefore essential for a knowledgeable expert to supervise the treatment.



Benefits of Panchakarma - a 5000 year legacy

Panchakarma is the oldest detoxification therapy known to man. It has the following benefits:

- Panchakarma has a strong preventive effect and boosts the body's immunity and energy levels.
- Ayurveda considers the imbalance of the doshas to be the root cause of all disease. The treatment aims to address this imbalance.
- As a deeply profound detoxification and cleansing therapy, Panchakarma is also effective for chronically ill persons.
- It enhances strength and vitality.
- It promotes anti-aging and longevity.
- It improves digestion and metabolism.
- It stimulates the nerve cells and rejuvenates the body.
- It improves the sensory faculties.
- It opens up skin pores and improves skin texture, colour and luster.
- It clears all the channels of the body.
- It calms the mind and improves mental capacities.
- It reduces dependence on alcohol, tobacco and drugs.



Panchkarma for body and mind

Ayurveda defines a healthy person as:

“One whose Dosas, Agni and function of Dhatu and Malas are in the state of equilibrium and who has a cheerful mind, intellect and sense organs is termed as “Svastha” (Healthy)”.

This emphasis on mind-body connection is the underlying principle of Panchakarma. It is a complete and profound mind-body healing experience. It aims to detoxify the body, improve digestion and enhance the immune system on one hand and revives inner harmony, promotes wellness, gives satisfaction and detoxifies the mind on the other. The therapists focus on getting a perfect understanding of the body constitution – ‘prakriti’ and the cause of its imbalance. These causes could be lifestyle or diet related or may be the side effect of excessive stress and a negative mental state. Panchakarma adopts a more holistic approach to the cleansing process as compared to modern medicine because it believes that no amount of cleaning or healing is possible till the mind is at ease. The brain controls the functioning of all out vital systems and when the brain is restless, it impacts their functioning. The maximum impact is felt by the digestive system that breaks down on account of stress. That is why panchakarma incorporates treatments and therapeutic massages that not only cleanse the systems but also calm the mind and reduces stress levels. The treatments aim at releasing both, physical and emotional stress stockpiled in the body. During and after the full panchakarma treatment, the body feels lighter and rejuvenated and the mind and spirit feel elated and calm.



Three stages of Panchkarma

Like all medical procedures, Panchakarma therapy begins with an initial consultation with a qualified Ayurvedic Physician who identifies the individual's prakriti (constitutional type), the nature of the health problem (if any), and the appropriate degree of intensity of the prescribed therapies. It is a highly individualized treatment and needs to be undertaken under close supervision. The treatment varies from individual to individual and depends on factors like the individual's Ayurvedic constitutional type, doshic imbalances, age, digestive strength, immune status and many other factors. These treatments/procedures must be administered by specially trained therapists in an exact sequence for a specified period of time. Although Panchakarma is for the most part a delightful and relaxed therapy, there can be periods of discomfort associated with the intense release of toxins, which does occur. It is therefore essential for an erudite expert to supervise each step closely to recognize the signs and symptoms and modulate the treatment accordingly.

Panchakarma is performed in three stages:

- Purva Karma (pre- treatment)
- Pradhana Karma (main treatment)
- Paschata Karma (post treatment)



Purva karma stage - preparing to cleanse

This is the preparatory stage. The objective of this stage is to draw, slacken, thaw and mobilize the stubborn toxins/ Ama stuck in various parts of the body and to direct them to the body's elimination channels in preparation for being eliminated. This process draws toxins outward from deep tissues and moves them into the gastrointestinal tract and the skin from where they can be eliminated easily. The toxins can be both, physical and mental. It has two procedures namely:

1. Snehana
2. Swedana

What to expect:

- There is no fixed format for this treatment and the treatment varies from individual to individual and depends on the individual's prakriti/constitutional type and nature of disease.
- People with suppressed toxicity or long-term disease may experience some aggravation of symptoms as toxins are brought back into circulation to prepare them for elimination.
- Individuals who have emotional trauma associated with the development of disease might experience emotional releases.
- Some people may experience low energy /exhaustion and may want to sleep longer hours.
- Those in physical pain may experience mild to moderate increase.

These symptoms are the direct consequence of the fact that deep seated toxins are being pushed back into circulation before being eliminated.



Snehana - gifting yourself good health

The word 'snehana' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'sneha' which refers to something that is soft, oily and lubricating like ghee, oil etc. It is important to note that the Sanskrit word snehana means much more than just oleation. It also translates into words like love and opening up. Metaphorically, it signifies the love for our own body for which we soften and surrender to the cleansing process. We are able to "go with the flow" and release our mental , emotional and physical toxins built over a period of time. This perspective makes us view 'snehana' as a gift to ourselves, the end goal of which is to find love, peace and harmony both internal, as well as external. Snehana (oleation) is the first step of Purvakarma. It consists of saturating the body with herbal or medicated oils both externally and by consuming them as well.

Thus Snehana is of two types:

- Internal Snehana or Abhyantra: this involves consumption of subscribed amounts of ghee or medicated oils under supervision. It helps loosen Ama and moves it from the deeper tissues to the gastro-intestinal tract, from where they are eliminated.
- External Snehana or Baahya: this includes application and massage of medicated oils to relax the channels and nourish and revitalise the body. The treatment helps dislodge the deep rooted toxins and doshas and brings them to the digestive tract for further removal.



Internal Snehana or Abhyantara

Internal oleation is started after careful examination of the doshas/elements, prakriti/basic constitution, agni/digestive fire by the physician who prescribes the type and quantity of 'sneha' to be consumed. The therapy involves oral intake of medicated or non-medicated 'Sneha' or oil. The therapists use clarified butter (obtained from cow's milk) mixed/infused with medicinal herbs. Snehapanam is done in the morning after attending to the call of nature on an empty stomach. The dosage will depend on the health, age, diagnosed illness and digestive capacity of the patient. The treatment lasts between five and seven days depending on the condition of the patient and the illness being treated.

At times combination of various other material like oil, ghee, vasa, majja or their combinations are used. There are two methods for internal operation:

- Acchhapana sneha: Where a sneha drug (Ghee /clarified butter) or other oil is directly ingested without any addition except a pinch of saindhava or rock salt.
- Vicharana sneha: In this case the sneha is mixed with other food. It is either eaten or taken by a method other than the oral route. Internally, it can also be given through the rectal route like Vasthi, or through the nasal route like Nasya karma.

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Benefits of internal snehana

- It moisturizes the entire body from within.
- It improves the elasticity of the body.
- It increases the suppleness of all the systems.
- It alleviates the excessive vata/wind element.
- It reduces the pains and aches of the muscles, joints and the skeletal system.
- It dislodges the toxins of the body and helps in bringing them to the GI tract.

Caution: all treatments must be carefully monitored by a trained physician. Internal Snehana has to be taken on an empty stomach. The patient should have taken his last food at least ten hours prior to snehapan. After internal snehana the patient is advised to have only warm water. The treatment is very carefully monitored and the food prescribed is very light and non-spicy. Junk food is totally prohibited.



External snehana or baahya

This includes application and massage of medicated oils externally so as to relax the channels and nourish and revitalize the body. The treatment helps dislodge the deep rooted toxins and doshas and brings them to the digestive tract for further removal. There are quite a few procedures under this category. These treatments use different techniques and different oils and herbs to achieve their objective. The Ayurvedic doctor chooses a specific combination of treatments basis the ailments being cured and the prakriti or basic constitution and the dosha type of the individual. Thus panchakarma is a very individualized regimen for detoxification and there is no one set of treatment for all. All treatments are given under supervision and there is a constant follow up done on a daily basis.

The different types of treatments are covered in the following pages.



Shiro Abhyanga - nourishing the life force

Ayurveda compares the human body with an inverted tree, likening the head of the human body to the roots, the thorax and the abdomen to the trunk and the limbs to the branches. Just as the roots draw nourishment from the soil and sustain the tree, the head is the controlling center of the human body that sustains life and 'prana'- the life force. That is why the head is called the 'uttamanga'- the best organ of the body. The treatment boosts the flow of cerebrospinal fluid, thus strengthening the nervous system. It relaxes and revitalizes the central nervous system, the pineal and the pituitary gland and the hypothalamus. It balances the brain and the hormonal functions and regularizes and relaxes the endocrine system. It is prescribed for migraines, headaches, anxiety, stress, insomnia and the prevention of psychosomatic disorders. It treats morbid vata and kapha, improves vision and stops pre mature greying and balding.

What to expect:

Time: 30-40 minutes

Procedure: The therapist starts the treatment with a ritual offering prayers. Some mantras may be played in the background to create a peaceful and spiritual ambience. The therapist starts the treatment by pouring medicated oils into the crown of the head and then spreads it with a gentle rubbing motion. This oil is prakriti (constitution) specific, vikruti (morbidty or nature of disease) specific and dosha specific. The therapist then applies oil in the multiple sections made by parting the hair away from the center partition on either sides. After application of oil, the therapist massages the head in rhythmic caressing circular movements using both hands simultaneously on both sides of the head with even pressure. Slight additional pressure is applied on the vital 'marma' points or nerve centers. The therapist massages first by standing in front and then by standing behind the patient. Towards the end, the therapist taps or presses the head with the fingers and gives gentle blows across the scalp with her/his fists. On completions, the therapist applies a small amount of Rasnadi Churna - a herbal powder over the crown of the head. This powder induces warmth in the sense organs and the head and keeps the cold away. The patient is advised to take a refreshing hot water bath after a few hours.



Shiro Basti - treating the human roof

The name shiro basti is derived from two words- ‘shiro’ meaning head and ‘basti’ meaning pool of herbal or medicated oils. Shiro basti is based on the Ayurvedic analogy between the head and the roof of a house. Just as the roof protects the house and is kept soaked with stagnant water to make it strong after construction, the head is also soaked in oil to nourish and strengthen the central nervous system. In this treatment a pool of herbal oils is kept over the head in a specially constructed chamber or compartment to nourish and strengthen the central nervous system. It cures all disorders related to the sense organs, metabolism and the doshas. It is prescribed for migraines, headaches, anxiety, stress, insomnia and the prevention of psychosomatic disorders. It treats morbid vata and kapha , improves vision and stops pre mature greying and balding.

What to expect:

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure: The doctor recommends the duration and the type of medicinal/herbal oil to be used basis the patient’s prakriti (constitution), vikruti (morbidty or nature of disease) and dosha. A vertical apparatus/cap made of a leak proof material or leather is fitted well on the head. It is sealed with a soft bolus made of kneaded black gram flour and water and a sterile bandage cloth. The prescribed oil is heated to a certain temperature and poured into this conical cap and allowed to stand for the duration of the treatment. Since the oil has to be warm at all times, the therapist keeps scooping out the oil and replacing it with warm oil to maintain the right temperature. The oil has to stand about one and half inch over the scalp. The patient is advised to stay still and avoid talking or laughing. The treatment is wrapped up with a gentle massage of the neck and the shoulder which feel a bit strained after the cap is removed. The therapist applies a small amount of Rasnadi Churna herbal powder over the crown of the head. This powder induces warmth in the sense organs and the head and keeps the cold away. The patient is advised to take a refreshing hot water bath after a few hours.



Shirodhara - calming the "third eye" - gateway to higher consciousness

The term 'Shirodhara' is derived from the two Sanskrit words: 'shiro', meaning head, and 'dhara', meaning to flow. It involves the warm and steady flow of medicated oils on the forehead, more specifically on the "third eye." The Vedas describe the third eye chakra or 'Ajna' as the gateway to higher consciousness and enlightenment having deep spiritual and psychosomatic significance. The calming medicated oils flow in a continuous stream transporting the self to a calmer place thawing all negative emotions and clearing fear, anxiety, anger, or irritability. It is said to have a balancing effect on the deepest recesses of the brain, while stimulating the endocrine system's pituitary and pineal glands. The treatment enhances blood circulation to the brain, increases mental clarity and releases deeply trapped toxins. Shirodhara not only helps to reduce stress and soothe the nervous system but it has other beneficial effects as well. It can treat post-traumatic stress disorders, insomnia, high blood pressure, psoriasis, hypertension, chronic headaches and migraines, memory loss, tinnitus and hearing loss.

What to expect:

Time: 30-40 minutes

Procedure: The procedure involves the pouring of about two liters of medicated warm oil or other liquids carefully prescribed basis the patient's prakriti (constitution), vikruti -morbidity or nature of disease and dosha, over the forehead. The patient is made to lie down on a specially designed table with a pot with a hole and a yarn wick fitted hung over the forehead. The oil is poured continuously in a steady stream through this specially designed vessel that is oscillated over the forehead. Care is taken to ensure that the oil does not enter the eyes or ears. The entire procedure may last for 30 to 60 minutes depending on the condition of the patient. A therapist may also give the patient a light head massage before or during the procedure. The entire procedure enables the body, mind and nervous system to experience a state of deep rest, similar to the state a person arrives at after meditation.



Shiro Pichu - soothing the brain

The word 'Shiro Pichu' is derived from two Sanskrit words - 'shiro' meaning head and 'pichu' meaning a sterile cotton pad or a sterile cloth dipped in medicated herbal oils. The treatment is known to calm the nerves and brain. It is very effective in curing many psychosomatic illnesses, migraine, headache, memory loss, insomnia, premature greying of hair and neurological disorders like paralysis and facial palsy.

What to expect:

Time: 45-60 minutes

Procedure: The patient is made to lie down comfortably on the Ayurvedic treatment bed. A sterilized gauze piece or cotton soaked in warm medicated herbal oil is placed on the head for a specific period of time. This oil is carefully prescribed by the Ayurvedic doctor in line with the other treatments for the given ailment and the prakriti (basic constitution) or dosha imbalance. The gauze is mostly placed over the anterior fontanelle. The forehead has a large number of nerve endings and is therefore highly sensitive. The treatment is followed by a relaxing head and neck massage depending on the health condition of the patient.



Abhyangam - the supreme expression of self-love

It is believed that the effects of Abhyangam are similar to those received when one is saturated with love. Abhyanga is infusing the body with 'prana' or vital life force. When we infuse all our cells with love, they are revitalized and energized. It involves massaging of the body with warm oil infused with healing herbs and balancing essential oils. Abhyangam moves 'Prana' (vital life force energy) within the body thereby nourishing and revitalizing all body organs. Its rhythmic motion helps to relieve joints and muscles from stiffness. This stimulating treatment aids the removal of toxins and stimulates both arterial and lymphatic circulation. It increases blood circulation, which in turn encourages quick removal of metabolic wastes, while providing relief to diseases such as anxiety, fatigue, circulatory disorders, arthritic problems, backaches and injuries.

What to expect:

Time: 45-60 minutes

Procedure: The treatment starts with a traditional foot ritual which involves scrubbing and gentle washing of the feet. The patient is made to lie comfortably on the Ayurvedic treatment bed while two therapists work their hands in synchronized harmony, massaging each part using medicated warm oils prescribed by the doctor. Both therapists give rhythmic effleurage in the same direction and with equal pressure with trained precision. The body is treated in sections to facilitate the proper flow of blood and lymph and induce relaxation. The treatment involves synchronized effleurage of the patient in a specific sequence in seven positions. They start and finish together. Head massage can be done with or without oil according to the guest's preference. The patient is allowed to relax for some time after the completion of the treatment and is asked to take a refreshing hot water bath after a few hours.



Podikizhi - the rhythmic way to rejuvenate and revitalize

Podikizhi or churna pinda sweda is an Ayurveda technique of fomentation in which the whole body or certain parts of the body are fomented and made to sweat, by the application of medicinal powders. 'Churna' means coarse or fine powder made of medicinal herbs. 'Pinda' means a bolus and 'sweda' means fomentation. It is very effective in treating 'kapha-vata' predominant conditions of arthritis, back pain, paralysis, gout, bursitis and muscular pains. This treatment is useful for relieving deep seated tension, increasing blood circulation, loosening built up toxins, strengthening muscle tissue and ridding the body of excess Kapha. This treatment increases blood supply to the skin and improves skin luster and complexion and eliminates toxins through skin pores.

What to expect:

Time: 30-45 minutes

Procedure: A prescribed mixture of medicinal herbs are heated or fried in herbal oils. These herbs have analgesic, anti-inflammatory and anti-degenerative properties. These are then tied in to a bolus using suitable cloth. Prior to the treatment, medicated oil may or may not be applied over the body as per the doctor's prescription. The herbal powder bolus's are then heated and softly pounded all over the body in a rhythmic manner by one or two therapists. The bolus is heated intermittently during the course of the treatment to maintain a certain fixed temperature and to induce sweating. The pounding is accompanied by a synchronized massage with herbal oils. Post treatment the body sweats profusely and feels lighter and energetic. The patient is advised a hot water bath after one hour or later.



Udwarthanam - the herbal power house

The word Udwarthanam is derived from the Sanskrit word - “Udvartana” which refers to elevation and upward strokes during massage. Udwarthanam is a special dry therapeutic deep tissue massage using herbal powders or herbal paste prepared with medicated oils. The massage uses vigorous upward strokes rubbing the herbal powders on the body with bearable force. The massage exfoliates the skin, breaks up fatty deposits and energizes blood circulation. The treatment reduces the excess fat accumulated in the subcutaneous tissues, strengthens and tones up the muscles, improves circulation, opens up the body channels (srotas) and releases the toxins. Its principal objective is removal of toxins, increasing metabolic rate, removing cellulite and helping in weight reduction.

What to expect:

Time:45 -60 minutes

Procedure: A prescribed warm herbal powder is used in this treatment. The therapist gives a therapeutic deep tissue massage below the neck either with the herbal powder alone or with oil, as prescribed by the doctor. The warm herbal powder is massaged in the opposite direction to the hair follicles. The powder is rubbed with bearable force. The procedure is performed in seven postures. If the skin is over sensitive, olive oil or sesame oil is mixed with the herbal powder. The patient is asked to rest for 15 to 20 minutes post treatment and is advised to take a refreshing warm water bath after an hour.



Elakizhi - rejuvenate with fresh herbal/medicinal plants

Elakizhi or Patrapotala Sweda is a rejuvenating sudation practice in Ayurveda treatments using fresh leaves of herbal/medicinal plants. Anti - vata plants, such as Eranda (*Ricinus communis*), Arka (*Calotropis Procera*), Nirgundi (*Vitex negundo*), Rasna (*Pluchea lanceolata*), coconut leaves, lemon and curcumin are fried with herbal ingredients and tied into cloth boluses. These are dipped into warm medicated oil and used for massaging the body. The massage with heated boluses induces profuse sudation, which helps in the fomentation process. Elakizhi is effective for various kinds of arthritis, spondylitis, back pain, sports injuries and for all other soft tissue inflammations especially joint pains. The massage promotes better blood circulation within the affected area and induces perspiration which helps the skin to eliminate wastes.

What to expect:

Time: 45-60 minutes

Procedure: A prescribed mix of herbal leaves are fried together in neem or castor oil until a brown color is attained. Lemon pieces and coconut scrapes are then added to it. All these are tied in cloth boluses and dipped in hot medicated oil and then applied all over the body in rhythmic pounding. The bolus is heated intermittently during the course of the treatment to maintain a certain fixed temperature and to induce sweating. Post treatment the body sweats profusely and feels lighter and energetic. The patient is advised a hot water bath one hour or later post treatment.



Pizhichil - the favourite of the erstwhile royalty

Pizhichil literally means squeezing. Pizhichil is one the most popular Ayurvedic therapeutic treatments favored by the royal families and aristocrats of yore. The whole body is bathed in streams of lukewarm medicated oil and the patient is massaged simultaneously by two to four therapists, continuously in a special rhythmic way. The procedure is followed by a medicated steam bath. This is a highly rejuvenating treatment that enhances muscular tone and energizes the entire nervous system. It helps to eliminate toxins from the body, improves blood circulation and revitalizes all organs. It is very useful for rheumatic diseases, arthritis, paralysis, sexual weakness, neurological disorders, blood pressure, nervous weakness and helps to arrest the ageing process.

What to expect:

Time: 60 - 90 minutes

Procedure: The patient is made to lie comfortably on the treatment bed. Prescribed herbal oils are poured on the patient's body in streams. Two to four therapists, together massage the body in a synchronized pattern. This gentle synchronized massage is carried out under a constant flow of warm herbal oil for 60 minutes. The treatment is given either in the sitting or in the supine position on specially designed Ayurveda chair/bed. Once the treatment is over, the body sweats profusely and feels lighter and energetic. The patient is advised a hot water bath one hour or later post treatment.



Njavarakizhi - the miracle with rice pudding and herbs

‘Njavara’ is an indigenous variety of rice grown in Kerala, having medicinal properties. In this therapy, the body is made to perspire using Njavara and other herbal medicines. A special type of rice called Njavara is cooked in milk and herbs. This herbal decoction is packed in small cotton boluses which are used to massage the body with a rhythmic pressure till it begins to sweat profusely. This treatment rejuvenates and revitalizes all internal organs, makes the body suppler, slows the ageing process, improves luster and texture of the skin, calms the mind and reduces stress. It also promotes sound sleep, develops the muscular system, cures rheumatic troubles, boosts the immune system, pacifies vata dosha and strengthens and nourishes the nervous system.

What to expect:

Time: 60-90 minutes

Procedure: A generous amount of medicated oil is applied over the head and body. After this, the body is massaged with a warm muslin bag bolus containing njavara rice puddings cooked in an herbal decoction by one or two therapists simultaneously with identical movements on both sides of the body with equal pressure. The boluses are heated to tolerable temperature that is maintained throughout the treatment. At the end of the procedure, the stuck rice paste is removed using coconut leaves. The treatment is wrapped up with a gentle massage with herbal oil. Once the treatment is over, the body sweats profusely and feels lighter and energetic. The patient is advised a hot water bath one hour or later post treatment.



Padabhyanga - revitalising the life force feet upwards

There is a very famous ancient Ayurveda quote - "Disease does not go near the one who massages his feet before sleeping, just as snakes do not approach eagles."

Ayurveda treats the feet as very important as all the nerves terminate in the feet. Padabhyanga is a Sanskrit term derived from two Sanskrit words- 'pada' meaning foot and 'abhyanga' meaning massage with medicated oils. The treatment involves massaging the feet with special medicated oils and application of definite pressure on the marma/vital points where the nerve endings corresponding to our organs lie. This therapy helps to strengthen these nerves, stimulates the nervous system and opens energy pathways that may be blocked or clogged. Massaging of these vital points also helps to restore the dosha imbalance and calms excessive vata dosha which is the root cause of all ailments. It helps to reduce anxiety, cures headaches, insomnia, sciatica and other spinal pain, improves metabolism, vision, hearing and impaired circulation and aids in the elimination of toxins.

What to expect:

Time: 45- 60 minutes

Procedure: The feet are washed and scrubbed with a special herbal scrub. The therapist may use a heated 'kansya' bowl's round surface to rub the feet briskly in a circular and lengthwise direction for three to five minutes preceding the massage. The bowl is traditionally meant to contain seven metals that relate to the various body tissues. This is followed by massaging the feet with warm medicated sesame/coconut oil/ghee by applying firm pressure to the marma points in the sole of the feet with hands or a wooden apparatus. The feet are then washed with warm water and kept soaked for five to ten minutes in warm ginger water.



Netra tarpana - the rejuvenating eye bath

The term Netra tarpana is derived from two words- ‘netra’ meaning the eye and ‘tarpana’ meaning nourishment. Thus Netra Tarpana means nourishment for the eye. The treatment involves soaking the eyes in warm medicated oil. The treatment is given after other treatments so that the body’s toxin levels are under control. It acts as both, a preventive and curative therapy for maintaining normal healthy condition of eyes. Netra Tarpana cools, lubricates and nourishes the eyes and expels impurities. It is used to treat refractive errors, cataract , glaucoma, chronic conjunctivitis, night blindness, corneal ulcers and dry eyes. It is very relaxing and improves vision and brightness of the eyes.

What to expect:

Time: 30 minutes

Procedure: the patient is made to lie down on the Ayurveda treatment table. A flour paste is used to construct a wall/embankment around the eyes. Warm medicated ghee (clarified organic butter) is then poured over the eyes. The patient is expected to keep the eyes shut during the treatment or might be guided to do some eye exercises by the therapist while keeping the lids closed. The ghee is kept at a constant temperature throughout the treatment by changing it periodically. The eyes are kept soaked for about 20 minutes after which the reservoir is softly removed and the eyes are gently wiped with warm water and cotton. The patient is advised to rest for 15 minutes after the treatment.



Gandusha - pulling out the toxins

Gandusha is a Sanskrit term that means ‘gargling’ or "holding some liquid in the mouth." In this oral therapy, prescribed oils are swished in the mouth for 20 minutes for the purpose of cleaning the mouth and for other health benefits. This therapy supports the body’s natural ability to remove toxins and also has the following benefits:

- Prevents tooth decay and gum disease
- Cures bad breath
- Boosts energy
- Removes mucous
- Clears sinuses
- Supports the immune system
- Decreases inflammation
- Reduces headaches

What to expect:

Time: 20 minutes

Procedure: The therapist puts one tablespoon of medicated sesame or coconut oil in the mouth on waking up in the morning on an empty stomach. The patient is asked to swish the oil in the mouth, moving it around both sides and through the teeth for 15–20 minutes, until the oil becomes thin and whitish in color. The patient is then asked to spit it out and rinse the mouth well with warm water. He/she can have any warm morning beverage after 10-15 minutes. Care has to be taken to avoid swallowing the oil as it is full of toxins.



Swedanam therapy - steaming out the toxins

The word Swedana is derived from the Sanskrit word- 'swed', meaning 'to sweat or to perspire'. Swedana is a practice of inducing sweat with the help of steam generated from medicated herbal decoctions. This treatment is given after the external and internal oleation (snehana) described in the previous pages. This is done to maximize the absorption and efficacy of the medicated oils. The fomentation is done by making the person to sit or lie in a chamber or wooden box where steam emanates from a boiling herbal decoction. Sweating opens the pores and rids the body of all impurities through the sweat glands. It thaws the doshas and clears the obstruction of channels of circulation, thus facilitating easy expulsion of faulty doshas. Ayurvedic fomentation is usually given after an oil massage. The treatment balances Vata and Kapha humors in the body, improves digestion, acts on fat deposits, relaxes sore muscles and relieves stress. The heat produced during this treatment also increases the 'agni' or the digestive fire which is able to eliminate the toxins more efficiently. The heat generated also reduces the heavy and sticky nature of Ama/toxins aiding their elimination.

What to expect:

Time: 60 minutes

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Swedanam therapy - steaming out the toxins

Procedure: The therapists induce sweat in the following ways:

- **Sagni Sweda:** in this type sweat is induced through direct application of heat on the skin, by using steam. The therapist may use a 'nadi' or tube, through which steam from an herbal water decoction (boiling in a covered vessel) is applied on to the body parts.
- **Baspa Swedana:** In this therapy, the full body is given a medicated steam bath by making the patient sit/lie inside a steam chamber to induce sweating.
- **Tapa Sweda:** In this therapy, sweat is induced through direct application of heat. Substances such as cotton cloth, sands or bricks are heated and then applied to the body parts.
- **Upanaha Sweda:** in this hot poultices with or without oil, wet or dry, or containing substances like salt, flour, wheat, oil or herbs, are applied firmly to a particular area of the body repeatedly to induce sweating. The earlier mentioned Pizzichili treatment belongs to this category.
- **Avagaha Sweda:** In this procedure the person is made to sit in a bathtub filled with a warm medicated decoction for about 20 minutes. The level of the decoction in the tub can be up to the navel region or the neck depending upon the condition of the patient. This therapy is useful in treating many Vata disorders.

In all of the above treatments, the patient is advised rest and a hot shower after an hour or two of undergoing the treatment and advised to take light meals.



Vamana - therapeutic retching for final detox

Through Snehana and Swedana procedures, the toxins are mobilized and brought from the body tissues to the gastrointestinal tract. The patient is then made to undergo induced vomiting/vamana to finally eliminate them. This treatment is given after careful examination to ensure that the individual has the strength to undergo the regimen as it can weaken the individual temporarily. The therapists induce vomiting by making the patient ingest a combination of herbs that are carefully chosen basis the individual's dosha and prakriti type. The vomiting under strict supervision is very effective for cleansing the stomach and removing Ama (toxins) and mucus from body channels and chest. Vamana is very effective in treating asthma, lung diseases, bronchitis, mucus congestion, skin disorders, diabetes, prolonged fever, chronic indigestion, anaemia, gastritis, diarrhoea, tumours and many other ailments.

What to expect:

Time: varies from patient to patient

Procedure: Vamana is always conducted post the external and internal oleation/Snehana and sweat therapy (Swedana). The patient is given a special diet (recipes containing rice, molasses, milk and liquorice) the previous evening. On the day of the treatment the patient is given a light early morning diet of milk and ghee generally as Vamana is never done on an empty stomach. The patient is asked to clear his stomach by 8 am and some heat is applied on the chest and back for a few minutes. The patient is made to drink about two litres of liquid. After which the patient is given a medicated drink and encouraged to relax and stay calm. Once the patient begins to show signs of discomfort like appearance of perspiration on the forehead, restlessness, increased salivation, discomfort in the abdomen and nausea, he/she is encouraged to vomit until the bile comes out. If vomiting doesn't occur spontaneously, then it is induced by rubbing on the tongue. The vomit removes all the ama/toxins and mucus. The vama is stopped once the patient takes out the quantity of liquid that was administered. All this is done under strict supervision. The patient normally feels lighter and fresher and is asked to rest. He/she is not allowed to consume anything except sip warm water for 4-5 hours after which he is given light food like vegetable soup to consume. This treatment is normally seen as being revolting but its benefits outweigh the discomfort associated with it.



Virechanam - clearing the toxins through the gastro tract

Virechanam cleanses the Pitta and purifies blood by clearing the toxins from the body. The treatment concentrates on the toxins that are accumulated in the liver and gall bladder and the gastro-intestinal tract. In Virechanam, the vitiated Doshas are eliminated through the rectum. The treatment is given in the morning after the person is given the "Snehapanam" and "Swedanam" for internal lubrication. The person is then given a certain prescribed dose of herbal medicines on an empty stomach. Within 1 to 2 hours, the bowels are emptied expelling all accumulated toxins with it. Though all three excessive doshas are removed from the digestive tract, Virechana is primarily effective in removing excessive Pitta dosha.

What to expect:

Time: varies from patient to patient

Procedure: The patient is asked to eat a light diet a day before the treatment. The patient is given laxative herbs (depending on their medical condition/dosha type and body constitution/ prakriti) to cleanse the small intestine. These promote bowel movements, dispel constipation and help eliminate accumulated ama/toxins and stale food from the intestines. The effects of these herbs may be weak or strong. The strength/dosage of the laxatives is very carefully prescribed by the therapist and normally administered the night before the stomach cleansing ritual or on an empty stomach the same morning. At the end of the Virechana process, Kapha (mucus) should be seen in the stool. The patient may be given warm water with rock salt to sip after every bowel cleansing. The treatment also removes excess vata/gas and the patient feels rejuvenated and healthy. The patient is advised rest and warm liquid diet for one or two days post treatment.



Nasyam - detox through the nasal doorway to the brain

Nasyam is a very important treatment for any discomfort in the head region. Nostrils are considered the doorway to the brain. In this therapeutic treatment medicated oil, medicated powder or herbal juices are administered through the nose for a prescribed duration. This removes the excess humors accumulated in the different sinus cavities and throat and is very effective for treating migraine, hormonal imbalances, paralysis, mental disorders, premature graying of hair, loss of smell and taste and even can add clarity to the voice. It cleanses the different cavities, increases oxygenation and improves brain functioning. There are different kinds of Nasyams based on the type of medicines and oils used. Nasyam not only helps in removing toxins from the head, neck, brain, eyes, ear, nose and throat region, it also gives immunity and strengthens their functioning. It nourishes the nerve endings in the nose that terminate in the limbic area of the brain which is associated with our emotions. Soothing these nerves help in treating emotional problems and bringing mental clarity. The therapy is very useful in treating chronic migraine, insomnia, premature greying of hair, cervical spondylosis and paralysis.

What to expect:

Time: variable

Procedure: Patient is asked to lie down on the Ayurveda treatment bed in a room with no incoming breeze. The legs are slightly raised and the head kept slightly hanging to allow nasal administration. The therapist administers medicated oils, herbal powders or a combination of both into the nasal passage with a special instrument. Dry powders are blown into the nose with a tube that is about 15 cms long. The (metal, wooden or paper) tube is filled with the medicinal powder. One end of this tube is inserted into the nostril. Then, the Ayurveda practitioner blows at the other end with force, so that the powder can enter nose. The treatment is given during the day or early evening and the patient is advised rest.

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Nasyam - detox through the nasal doorway to the brain

Nasyas are classified into three types according to the action of the medicine administered:

- **Virechana Nasyam:** In this type of Nasyam, strong medicines are used to expel out the doshas instantaneously from the head region.
- **Brimhana Nasyam:** This Nasyam treatment nourishes and strengthens the head region, senses and intellectual functions. Ghee medicated with herbs are used as medicines. It is ideal for vata dosha.
- **Samana Nasyam:** this is both calming and nourishing. It uses ghee and sweet herbs. It is very effective for Pitta dominated disorders. It however, only manages the symptoms but does not cure.

Nasyas are also classified basis the substance administered:

- **Navana Nasya:** this is done using medicated oils.
- **Vapeda Nasya:** it uses ingredients other than oil, like herbal decoctions, fruit juices or herbal powders.
- **Dhmapana Nasya:** in this type, medicine is administered by using a tube.
- **Dhooma Nasya:** it is a therapeutic smoke inhalation.
- **Pratimarsha Nasya:** in this type, oils or herbs are inserted with fingertip.



Snehavasti - the master cleanser

Snehavasti is one among the five classical detoxification programmes (Panchakarma) and specially recommended for Vata disorders. Medicated oils or ghritams are used to administer an oil enema, which nourishes and lubricates the body. The main seat of Vata dosha is the Pakwashaya (large intestine); therefore Vasti, the medicated oil enema, is the main therapy for all Vata disorders such as constipation, neurological ailments, paralysis, flatulence, lower backache, gout and rheumatism.

What to expect:

Time: variable (1-2 hours generally)

Procedure: This treatment is normally given in the afternoon one or two hours after lunch. The patient is advised to take a light meal. The therapists give the patient a light massage and make the patient lie comfortably on the treatment table on his/her left side with left leg extended and right leg flexed at the knee joint. Then, a vasti yantra (enema apparatus) is inserted into the rectum precisely with medicated oils. After that, the patient is made to sit up and if there is no urgency to defecate, the therapists will keep massaging the hands and feet softly. Once the patient eliminates all ama/toxins and clears his/her intestines completely, the patient is advised rest. Normally the patient is advised to avoid food post treatment and asked to have a light breakfast the following day.



Kashayavasti - the herbal cleanser

Normally, Kashaya Vasti is done after Sneha Vasti. It is a purging and a therapeutic enema using an herbal decoction made of honey, rock salt, medicated oil and herbs. The treatment is administered as per prescribed dosage under supervision. The body dispels all toxins with the fecal matter. This treatment is particularly helpful in curing gastric, spinal and neurological disorders, acidity, flatulence, acute and chronic aches, headaches, migraines and other degenerative disorders.

What to expect:

Time: variable (general between 1-2 hours)

Procedure: This treatment is normally given in the daytime generally on an empty stomach or one or two hours after a very light breakfast. The therapists give the patient a light massage and make the patient lie comfortably on the Ayurveda treatment table – droni, on his/her left side with left leg extended and right leg flexed at the knee joint. A massage with warm herbal oils is given before the treatment. The therapists prepare a homogenous mixture of Ayurvedic oils, rock-salt, honey and fill it in a sac made of calf leather. This leather sac's pout is connected to the vasti yantra or enema apparatus and administered into the patient's rectum. After the entire mix is administered, the patient is asked to relax and lie down and the therapists lightly massage the abdomen of the patient till he feels the compulsion to use the loo. The patient passes stool easily and removes all the ama/toxins stuck in the intestines. The patient is asked to take a hot shower post treatment and is fed a warm soup after an hour. He/she is asked to take rest and consume very light and warm food for the next two days.



Anuvasana Basti - the nourishing enema

Anuvasana in Sanskrit means to ‘stay in’. In this type of basti/enema the medicated fats are administered in small doses and retained in the body for 3-4 hours. The principal objective of this nourishing vasti is to improve the intestinal flora after the cleansing enemas described in the previous pages are administered. The medicated fats nourish and strengthen the tissues and the digestive system. They improve intestinal health and strengthen the mucus membranes and lining of the intestines. This is specifically prescribed for vata disorders. It is a very effective ‘add on’ for therapies used to treat digestive, liver and neurological disorders such as facial paralysis, sciatica, hemiplegia, paraplegia, poliomyelitis and other such conditions.

What to expect:

Time: 3-4 hours

Procedure: This basti is always given post a good nourishing meal so that the medicines administered do not travel beyond the digestive system. The therapists apply warm sesame oil to the abdomen and lumbar region and given mild fomentation locally. The patient is made to lie on the Ayurveda treatment table - Droni, comfortably on their left side with left leg extended and right leg flexed at the knee joint. The therapist administers a small quantity of specifically prescribed medicated oils through a special enema /basti apparatus. The patient is advised rest. The therapists may massage the feet and the head in the rest period. This treatment may be repeated several times on successive days in case the vata is disproportionately excessive. The patient is advised rest and asked to eat very light meals for the rest of the day and the following one.



Kati vasti - soaking the lower back to good health

The term Kati Vasti comes from the Sanskrit word- ‘kati’ meaning lower back or waist and ‘vasti’ which means to hold. Kati Vasti involves retention of warm thick medicated oil over the lower back or other parts of the spine for a specific period of time. The medicated oils are absorbed by the skin and nourish the underlying tissue, nerves and muscles. The therapy increases circulation, eases inflammation and provides nourishment to the spinal cord. It is very useful for treating lower back ailments like lumbar spondylosis, inter vertebral disc prolapses, lumbago (low back ache) and sciatica. It also helps in providing pain relief associated with fracture, dislocation, spinal tuberculosis and tumours.

What to expect:

Time taken: 60 minutes

Procedure: The patient is made to lie face down on the treatment table (droni). Warm oil is poured and massaged gently into the lumbo-sacral region. Then, a leak proof reservoir made of black gram dough is built on the area. The therapists pour warm medicated oil into this reservoir. The oil is retained within this ring shaped reservoir at a specific temperature for a definite time. This helps the oil to penetrate deeper into the tissues, softening the stiff and tight muscles. Since the oil is to be kept a particular temperature, the therapists keep reheating and changing the oil. The oil is kept on the back for 30-40 minutes. The reservoir is then gently removed and excessive oil wiped. The therapists massage and apply therapeutic pressure to the vital marma points around the affected area to repair ligaments and tendons. This is followed by a gentle massage and herbal steaming of the area for 10-15 minutes to facilitate better absorption of the medicine.



Greva Vasti - expunging neck pain

The term Greva vasti comes from the Sanskrit word- ‘greva’ meaning neck and ‘vasti’ which means to hold. Neck is almost 90% muscle on the rear side. The spinal vertebrae in this area are very delicate and need constant nourishment. Excessive dryness of the intervertebral fluids and strain cause degeneration of these discs and cause stiffness and pain. The treatment involves the retention of warm medicated oil over the nape for a stipulated period of time. The medicated oils are carefully chosen basis the person’s basic dosha type and prakriti /constitution type. The medicated oils are absorbed by the skin and nourish the underlying tissue, nerves and muscles. The therapy increases circulation, eases inflammation and provides nourishment to the spinal cord. It lubricates the cervical joints and eases movement. The treatment is very effective in easing neck pain and stiffness and is recommended in the treatment of cervical spondylosis, spondylitis and migraine, weakness of the limbs, upper back pain and numbness.

What to expect:

Time: 60 minutes

Procedure: The patient is made to lie face down on the ayurvedic treatment table (Droni). The neck area is gently massaged with warm oil and then a leak proof reservoir of black gram and flour is built over the nape. The therapist pours warm medicated oil into the reservoir. The oil is retained within this ring shaped reservoir at a specific temperature for a definite time. This helps the oil to penetrate deeper into the tissues, softening the stiff and tight muscles. Since the oil is to be kept at a particular temperature, the therapists keep reheating and changing the oil. The oil is kept on the nape for 30-40 minutes. The oil in the reservoir is removed by absorbing it in cotton and the reservoir is then gently removed and excessive oil wiped. The therapists end the treatment with a gentle massage and apply therapeutic pressure to the vital marma points around the affected area. The patient is advised rest post treatment and asked to take a hot shower after a three hour gap.



Urovasti - soaking the heart to good health

The term Uro Vasti is derived from two Sanskrit words 'Uro' meaning chest and 'Vasti' which means retaining something inside. It is also called 'Hridaya Vasti' derived from the word 'hridaya' meaning heart as it's used to strengthen the heart. In this therapy, medicated oil is retained on the chest wall to strengthen and cleanse the heart chakra and the muscles around it. It is very useful in treating coronary heart diseases and other respiratory disorders. It rejuvenates the heart and improves circulation and breathing functions. It also provides relief in chronic stress and anxiety.

What to expect:

Time : 60 minutes

Procedure: The patient is made to lie down comfortably on the treatment table (droni). Warm oil is poured and massaged gently into the chest region. Then a leak proof reservoir made of black gram dough is built on the chest area. The therapists pour warm medicated oil into this reservoir. The oil is retained within this ring shaped reservoir at a specific temperature for a definite time. This helps the oil to penetrate deeper into the tissues, softening the stiff and tight muscles. Since the oil is to be kept at a particular temperature, the therapists keep reheating and changing the oil. The oil is kept on the back for 30-40 minutes. The reservoir is then gently removed and excessive oil wiped. The therapists then massage and apply therapeutic pressure to the vital marma points around the affected area to repair ligaments and tendons. This is followed by a gentle massage and herbal steaming of the area for 10-15 minutes to facilitate better absorption of the medicine. Patient is advised rest and a hot shower 1-2 hours post treatment.



Staying healthy long term

Panchakarma is a very effective detox treatment. It makes the patient feel healthier, lighter and more energetic. The mind become sharper and calm and the digestive system functions more efficiently. It's a great feeling. However attention must also be paid to planning the post - detox phase to reap long term benefits of this wonderful therapy. Jumping back to an erratic life style and an unhealthy and irregular diet is counterproductive. Thus it is good to follow the following everyday detox tips:

- Drink 8-10 glasses of water daily to flush toxins out of the body.
- Chew slowly as digestion begins in the mouth.
- Avoid overeating and eating junk and fatty foods.
- Take a good probiotic to keep the gut healthy.
- Incorporate fresh organic fruits and vegetables in your diet.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Exercise regularly
- Meditate to stay calm
- Get plenty of sleep as the body rejuvenates while you sleep.

Ayurveda practitioners advise patients to incorporate the following regimens (in the pages to follow) to cleanse the body regularly and keep it detoxed.



Marma massage - stimulating the vital life force

'Marma' is a Sanskrit word meaning hidden or secret. A Marma point is defined as an anatomical site where flesh, veins, arteries, tendons, bones and joints meet. In Ayurveda, Marma points are treated as points of vital life force. When imbalances block the movement of free-flowing energy in the body, the resulting stagnation leads to physical and mental discomfort and disease. A professional therapist isolates the Marma points and cleans them out by increasing the blood flow to the affected part of the neuro-muscular junction stimulating the body's biochemistry to produce neurochemicals and hormones that heal. Marma massage involves a full body massage with warm medicated oil, stimulating or massaging the Marma points on the body. It nourishes and revitalizes internal organs, strengthens muscles and bones, helps remove toxins, balances the doshas and encourages good sleep.



Yoga - for a long term healthy lifestyle

A consistent Yoga practice is a great way to detoxify and keep the body stress free on a regular basis. Yoga helps individuals in reconnecting to their own body which is the first step towards keeping it healthy. Yoga revitalizes the circulatory, lymphatic and digestive system thus building and enhancing our body's abilities to continue to eliminate toxins on their own, long after the treatments are done. In a well-rounded yoga regimen, every part of the body is pulled, twisted and massaged internally thus toning the internal organs and tissues and aiding them to function optimally. Yoga also activates the thyroid gland which controls metabolism. It is a well-known fact that an active and high metabolism helps in burning fat from the body at a faster pace and the fat wastes are eliminated faster when they are broken down more ably. Yoga asanas help in maintaining the pH of the body at a safe alkaline level which keeps the body clean. A body that has an acidic pH has the tendency to store fat in order to protect itself from the acids. And this mechanism leads to the deposition of visceral fat that accumulates inside the organs and blood vessels. This hardened fat becomes toxic at a later stage.

Specific yoga poses focus on clearing the mind of all negative thoughts and stress. If the mind is stressed, the effectiveness of the Ayurveda and other treatments is reduced and one is not able to see visible improvement in the long run. Yoga is a brilliant tool for effective stress management and increased body awareness. Stress reduction and mindfulness associated with yoga leads to improved sleep, better eating habits and increased self-awareness, which in turn keep the body healthy. Once the mind is at peace, the rest of the organs function more proficiently and keep the body and mind in good shape.



Pranayama - the time honored art of breathing

Developed over 5,000 years ago, pranayama (Sanskrit for 'vital energy') is an integral aspect of yogic practice. Pranayama are a series of specific yogic breathing techniques and exercises which help us detoxify, burn fat and increase metabolism. The breathing regimen clears out the stale, residual air in the lungs and saturates the cells with oxygen and prana/life force energy. Exhalation releases large amounts of carbon dioxide and toxins, thereby purifying the body. With the basic act of bringing in more oxygen, vitamins and minerals are more easily absorbed, white blood cells multiply and the lymphatic system is enhanced. Pranayama removes toxins from the bloodstream, which revitalizes the organs and clarifies the intellect, calms emotions, oxygenates the blood, builds internal body heat and strengthens the nervous system. It improves the metabolic activity of the body and improves its overall functioning.



Reiki - channelizing and activating the body's natural healing abilities

Reiki is a healing technique based on the principle that the therapist can channel energy into the patient by means of touch to activate the natural healing processes of the patient's body and restore physical and emotional well-being. One of the greatest healing health benefits of this therapy is stress reduction, relaxation and internal cleansing. The process aids in the repair of body tissues, removes toxins and impurities and restores balance and health by cleansing the body. Reiki is a specific type of subtle energy process in which healing is performed by the touch of the hands, allowing the flow of the energy from a limitless source (God Force) to the patient via the Reiki practitioner. It is extremely powerful, wherein energy can be channeled by intention alone. Reiki is excellent for healing and cleansing any physical, mental, emotional and spiritual issues of any kind.



Pranic Healing - the 'no touch' energy healing

Pranic healing is a simple yet powerful and effective system of 'no-touch' energy healing. Pranic healing focuses on cleansing and energizing. Cleansing means removal of the diseased energy from the health aura and energizing means adding 'prana' or life energy to the affected area. It is based on the fundamental principles that the body is a self-repairing living entity that possesses the ability to heal itself and that the healing process is accelerated by increasing this life force that is readily available from the sun, air and ground within the recipient's body to address physical and emotional imbalances. Pranic experts focus on cleansing the Aura to achieve inner stillness and calm in those who are suffering from acute mental stress and depression.



Acupressure - clearing meridians for waste removal

Acupressure is based on the concept that life energy flows through ‘meridians’ in the body and that clearing blockages in these meridians with physical pressure can help clear the accumulated toxins from the body and restore the ability of our organs to function optimally. Acupressure is a good supplementary treatment to regulate and tone the liver and the kidneys (major detoxifying organs). It stimulates elimination and release of toxins through the bowels, improves the digestive system, relieves general fatigue and confusion and helps fortify the immune system.



Hydrotherapy - using the detoxifying powers of water

Hydrotherapy is a time-honored technique that uses water of varying temperature and pressure to stimulate healing and to cleanse toxins. There are many different types of hydrotherapies including saunas, colonics and simple hot and cold showers. Hydrotherapy increases the circulation of blood and lymph, which increases waste elimination and replenishment of nutrients. It helps in flushing out the toxins and increasing oxygen in the body. Alternating temperatures for example, using the cold plunge after the sauna or steam room mechanically squeezes the toxins out of the body, bringing in vital nutrients and oxygen. Using hydrotherapy in a number of ways can increase the circulation and clearance of our main organs of detoxification: the skin, kidneys, colon, lymphatic system and the liver.



A healthy and flavorsome diet

No treatment can have long term benefits unless we follow a healthy diet pattern. Undergoing Panchakarma also introduces the individual to seasoned practitioners and doctors who can help the individual gain a better understanding of their prakriti or basic body constitution and dosha type. Now it is up to the individual to ensure that they avoid food and drinks that aggravate the dosha imbalance and go against their basic constitution. If the doshas are pushed to an imbalanced state there is very little that anyone can do to help. Thus, the detox treatments have to be supplemented with a revised diet plan to increase their efficacy. The detoxification process works on cellular regeneration and internal cleansing of the body and hence it is important that we provide our body some respite and much needed rest during and immediately after the treatments. The digestive system cannot be overloaded with greasy and heavy foods which are difficult to digest and the focus is on foods that are healthy, organic and easy to digest. Ayurveda practitioners advise eating to suit your dosha type.



Detox Tea - the natural effective cleanser

Detoxification has to be an ongoing process. Detox herbal teas are useful to keep the system clean and to flush out toxins on a regular basis. These teas help in flushing out toxins/ama from the body and contain antioxidants that may fight and prevent cancer. They have a visible invigorating effect and are a great way to start one's day.

These specially brewed teas are infused with herbs like clove, lemon grass, peppermint leaves, cinnamon, licorice, coriander, fennel/ cumin and carom seeds, ginger root, black pepper, turmeric, dandelion, jasmine, cardamom, asafetida, rock salt etc. These herbs have anti-microbial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and are very effective for controlling gut candida and gas and reducing stomach acidity. They are known to improve liver function, lower blood sugar and are useful for controlling diabetes. These teas also aid weight reduction, reduce the risks of various cardiovascular diseases, reduce blood pressure, strengthen the bones and help maintain a healthy and youthful skin.









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