

ONEWORLD

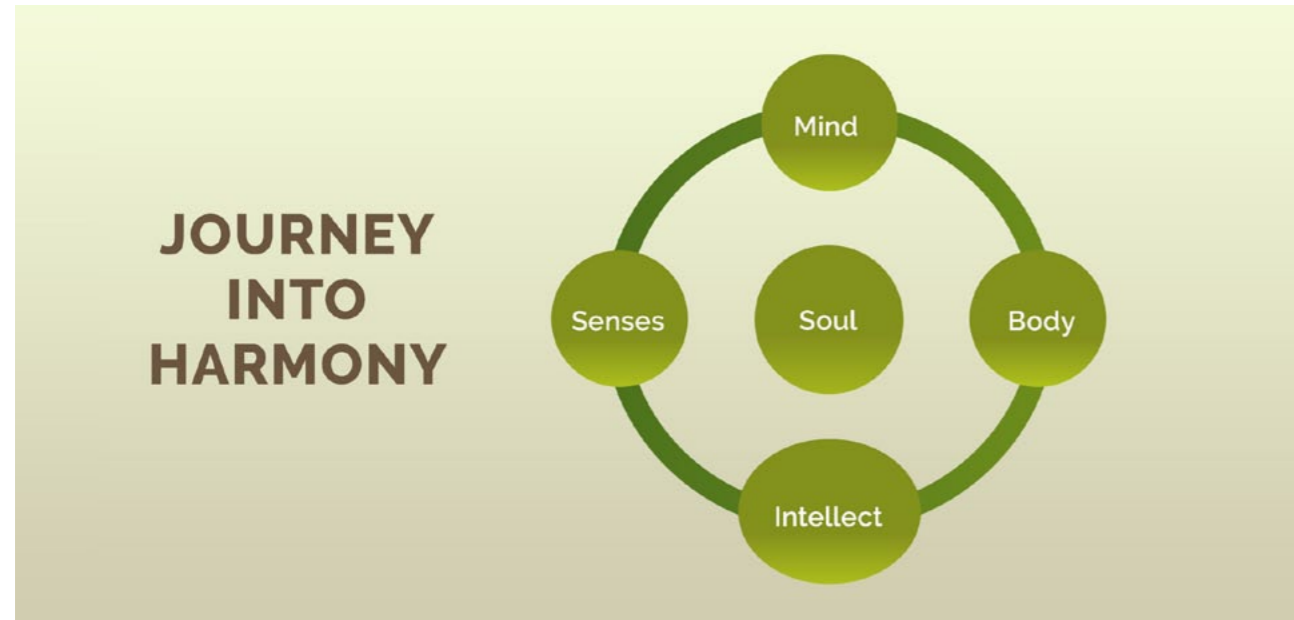
ayurveda



Ayurveda 101

AYURVEDA - THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

Ayurveda is the time-tested, natural, prevention-oriented and holistic health care system of ancient India. This over 5000 year-old science, considered the mother of healing, defines health as the balance of **Body**, happiness of **Mind**, clarity of **Intellect**, feverishness free **Senses** and a pleasant **Soul**. Ayurveda advocates that living in harmony with nature and maintaining harmony between body, mind and spirit contribute to a long and healthy life. Any imbalance in this harmony results in disease.



The focus of Ayurveda is on preventive and curative aspects as well as a holistic approach to treatment. In the past 20 years, Ayurveda has undergone a resurgence. It is now practiced all over the world and often works in harmony with a more modern approach, having been recognized by the World Health Organization.

THE MAHA GUNAS, FIVE ELEMENTS AND THE DOSHAS

Maha Gunas are mental/spiritual energies, or intrinsic qualities which are inherent in the universe. These energies are called Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

Sattva is a state of equilibrium and balance. It imparts love, compassion, peace and positivity, freshness, alertness, awareness, luster, wisdom, happiness and joy. Predominantly sattvic people are calm, spiritually-minded, quiet, intelligent and health-conscious.

Rajas is best described as kinetic energy that results in activity. It imparts ego, aggression, over-ambitiousness, pride, competitiveness, tendency to control others, over-attachment to power, prestige, awareness of position, fear of failure, tendency to be angry and jealous. A predominantly rajasic person is ambitious, driven, egotistical and perfectionist.

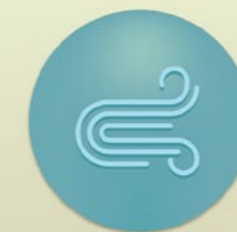
Tamas is darkness, inertia, heaviness, and the tendency towards materialism. Excess tamas results in depression, laziness, over-indulgence in sleep, addictions and sex as well as in greed, attachment and lack of care towards others.

When all three psychic energies are in balance, the Sattvic mind lends itself toward calm, clear, creative thinking that allows one to easily find effective solutions to life's problems. Then, we need the lesser qualities of Rajas to implement these solutions and Tamas to help bring these activities to completion.

Everything in the universe is created from a certain ratio of these elements - Ether, Air, Fire, Water and Earth - and they condense to form three bio-energies (doshas) in the body. Tridosha defines the three fundamental energies or principles which govern the function of our bodies on the physical and emotional level. These three energies are known as **Vata**, **Pitta** and **Kapha**. Each individual has a unique balance of all these energies. Some people are predominantly one, while others are a mixture of two or more.

Your constitution (dosha) is evaluated from three different aspects; physical type, physiological traits and psychological characteristics. Ayurveda is based on knowledge of your constitution – of your unique body-mind condition (prakriti) with which you are born. Ayurveda sees illness as a product of your unappreciable lifestyle along with invasion by an outside force, and different constitutions depend on different approaches to maintain a healthy balance. The dosha types are:
VATA - kinetic energy or movement
PITTA - thermal energy/bio-chemical energy or heat
KAPHA - potential energy/bio-cohesive force or structure

THE THREE DOSHAS



Vata
Air and Space



Pitta
Fire and Water



Kapha
Water and Earth

VATA

Vata is composed of the elements Air and Space and governs breathing, blinking of the eyelids, movements in the muscles and tissues, pulsations in the heart, all expansion and contraction, the movements of cytoplasm and the cell membranes, and the movement of the single impulses in nerve cells. It also governs feelings and sensations like freshness, nervousness, fear, anxiety, pain, tremors, spasms and touch. The primary seat or location of Vata in the body is the colon but it also resides in the hips, thighs, ears, bones, large intestine, pelvic cavity and skin.

PITTA

Pitta is composed of the elements Fire and Water. It governs digestion, absorption, assimilation, nutrition, metabolism, body temperature, skin coloration, luster of the eyes, intelligence, and understanding. Psychologically, Pitta arouses anger, hatred and jealousy. The small intestine, stomach, sweat glands, blood, fat, eyes, and skin are the seats of Pitta.

KAPHA

Kapha is composed of the elements of Water and Earth. It cements the elements in the body, providing the material for physical structure and maintaining body resistance. Water is the main constituent of Kapha, and this bodily water is responsible physiologically for biological strength and natural tissue resistance. Kapha lubricates the joints and provides moisture to the skin, helps to heal wounds, fills the spaces in the body, gives biological strength, vigor and stability, supports memory retention, gives energy to the heart and lungs, and maintains immunity. Kapha is present in the chest, throat, head, sinuses, nose, mouth, stomach, joints, cytoplasm, plasma, and in the liquid secretions of the body such as mucus. Psychologically, Kapha is responsible for the emotions of attachment, greed, and long-standing envy. It is also expressed in tendencies toward calmness, forgiveness and love. The chest is the seat of Kapha.

HEALTH AND DISEASE IN AYURVEDA

According to Ayurveda, health is harmony, a state of normality and well-being, being free of disease and discomfort.

Balance = Health | Imbalance = Disease

Balance

When the Tridoshas are balanced, the individual experiences health on all levels - mental, physical and spiritual. This is much more than just the mere absence of disease. Balance in the following areas is included in what Ayurveda considers as health.

- Happiness - sense of well-being
- Emotions - evenly balanced emotional state
- Mental functions - good memory, comprehension, intelligence and reasoning
- Senses - proper functioning of vision, hearing, smell, taste and touch
- Energy - abundant mental and physical energy for life
- Digestion - easy digestion of food and drink
- Elimination - normal elimination of wastes: sweat, urine, feces and others
- Physical body - healthy bodily tissues, organs and systems



PROGRESS OF DISEASE

Vata dosha is known as the controller in Ayurveda, the other two doshas depend on it. That is why so much of Ayurvedic treatment is dedicated to working with Vata dosha. One of its common and most important effects when not in balance is to diminish the digestive processes and your body's ability to produce new tissue. When your tissues do not get enough nutrition, Ama, undigested matter, forms and deposits itself especially in the places of your body that have already been weakened. It finally manifests itself as disease. Ama is a toxic by-product of poor Agni (digestive fire) juices. This is why Ayurvedic doctors often focus on digestion. In general, disease happens slowly. The strength of Ayurveda lies in the fact that it can address an illness at any stage.

Shamana and Shodhana are the two concepts of disease management in Ayurveda. Shamana means alleviation and the methods to mitigate the disease with the help of herbal medicines such as jams, oils, powders, decoctions and tablets. Shodhana means elimination, aiming at the elimination of the basic cause of disease.

HOW TO APPLY AYURVEDIC WISDOM IN YOUR DAILY LIFE

Diet and lifestyle are the main components of how and whether disease gets a chance to spread and with your choices you can either balance or excite your doshas. The doshic imbalance is what leaves you vulnerable to a disease. When you live a balanced, sattvic life, you are better able to maintain your health. Here are some tips:

DIGESTIVE FIRE (Agni) is the energy behind all the metabolic processes. Look after it and it will look after you. Proper Agni equals proper nutrition, health and happiness, imbalance results in disease.



DINACHARYA/DAILY REGIMEN creates much needed harmony in your life. It encourages a sense of consistency in our rhythms and routines, fostering a certain stability that is not only grounding, but also deeply reassuring to the nervous system. Ayurveda advocates a synchronized practice for physical, mental and spiritual well-being. It follows the circadian – daily - rhythm of tridoshic harmony with both the internal and external environment.



YOGA


In Ayurveda, yoga is an important part of ensuring good health. When practiced properly, yoga has great potential to calm the mind and manage stress. It can support your healing process, soothe your nervous system, balance your hormones, support digestion and lead to greater self-awareness and peace of mind.



AYURVEDA DIETETICS

In Ayurveda, Ahara (food) is the best medicine. Pray before eating. This calms the mind and body and gives direction for use of the food. Eat in a settled atmosphere to promote parasympathetic nervous system functioning. Eat only when you are hungry. Choose organic and locally grown products and grains whenever available.

Ayurveda is the tested, holistic health care system of ancient India. Ayurveda advocates that maintaining harmony between body, mind and spirit contribute to a long and healthy life, any imbalance in this harmony results in disease. Ayurveda therapy is based on knowledge of your constitution or dosha which is determined from your physical type, physiological traits and psychological characteristics. The dosha types are: Vata, Pitta and Kapha. To learn more about doshas and determine your constitution, take the quiz below.



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