

AYURVEDIC

NATURAL REMEDIES



AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO AYURVEDIC HOME REMEDIES
FOR THE TREATMENT OF COMMON AILMENTS,
BALANCE AND WELL BEING

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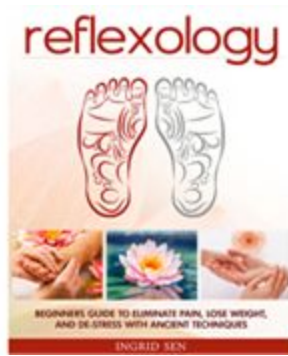
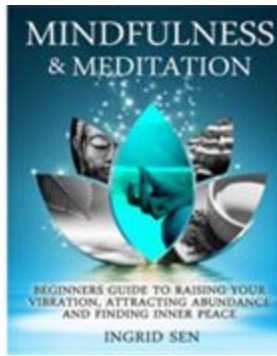


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What is Ayurveda?

Ayurvedic medicine is one of the oldest medicinal systems in the world. The holistic approach of Ayurvedic medicine was developed in India thousands of years ago, where it is still practiced heavily. In recent decades Ayurveda has made its way to the western world, and has gained popularity and respect as a natural and holistic approach to well being.

The focus of Ayurvedic medicine is to keep the body free of disease by balancing the body, mind and spirit. Anything that affects any one of these will cause your body to become out of balance. Ayurvedic belief is also that each person is born with a life force comprised of the five elements; Earth, Air, Water, Fire and Space. Each individual will possess their own unique balance of these elements. This balance of elements and energy is what is known in Ayurvedic medicine as a *Dosha*. There are three Doshas in the Ayurvedic belief system; Pitta, Vata and Kapha. Each Dosha is dominated by one or two of the five elements. An Ayurvedic practitioner will promote well being and treat disease based on an individual's Dosha.

How Can Ayurvedic Medicine Help You?

Ayurveda focuses on balance, and what can be done to restore and maintain a proper equilibrium. The holistic approach looks at the entire body, mind and spirit to determine where the root of the ailment is. Ayurvedic medicine is not about treating symptoms, it is about restoring the entire body to the original balanced state. By treating the root, rather than the symptom you will receive more complete relief with fewer relapses. The use of natural remedies and physical stimulus such as yoga and massage means that you will be exposed to fewer toxins than you would through a traditional western medicine approach. Another benefit of Ayurvedic medicine is the focus on meditation as a means of bringing peace and balance. Meditation performed as a remedy for one ailment, can have far reaching positive effects in all areas of your life.

Is Ayurvedic Medicine Safe?

As a form of medicine that has been practiced successfully for thousands of years, one can say that Ayurvedic medicine is in fact safe. However, with some remedies there are very powerful herbs and preparations that should only be used under the supervision of a trained, skilled practitioner. Some preparations are contraindications with certain conditions, such as pregnancy or hypertension. Do not take these risks on your own, and always seek the advice of a professional.

For the most part Ayurvedic medicine focuses on gentle therapies that are compatible with most people of all ages. Meditation and gentle yoga can be practiced by young and old alike. Simple teas and clean diets hold no restrictions. Practice safely and you will set yourself up to reap the most benefits.

This book is intended as an informative guide only, and not meant to diagnose, treat or cure. Always consult a practitioner before attempting to use these remedies on your own.



An Introduction to Ayurvedic Philosophies, Doshas and Treatments

Ayurvedic medicine is based on the belief that there is a very fine balance between the body, mind and spirit. Even the slightest imbalance could result in the manifestation of common ailments. By treating the specific imbalances, the body, mind and spirit are restored to their initial, healthful state. The focus lies in prevention more than on the cure. In Ayurvedic philosophy, and it makes great sense, we ask why suffer from an ailment when simple measures taken to maintain balance can prevent disease from entering the body in the first place?

According to Ayurvedic philosophy everything in the universe is interconnected, both things that are living and things that are not. Every element in the atmosphere, every molecule in space is all connected and a part of each one of us. As living beings we strive for balance and steer away from discord. When there is a disruption in the balance of the elements within our body we will feel and see the effects through the state of our own personal health.

In the universe there are five elements; Earth, Air, Water, Fire and Space. Each person's individual constitution, or Prakriti, is made up of these elements in a proportion that is unique to them. Human beings are predictable creatures, and even though we each possess our own unique combination, there are a resulting three Doshas that define us and the energies that lie within us. The three Doshas are Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

Vata Doshas are primarily influenced by the elements of space and air. If you are a Vata, you are characteristically always on the go. The space and air elements keep you in motion. When balanced, you are lively and energetic. Though your nature is to always be doing, take care to keep yourself in balance with adequate rest and relaxation. Do not allow yourself to get so caught up in the flurry of activity that it becomes stressful for you. The same elements that bring you joy and harmony can easily cause ailments if left to become unbalanced. Dryness is also a common trait of those with a Vata dosha. Dry skin, dry mouth, dry cough, etc. can become problematic for an unbalanced Vata. Maintain proper moisture and hydration both internally and externally. If, as a Vata, you are beginning to feel unbalanced, but not experiencing a particular ailment, there are things you can do to help restore harmony before sickness or disease occurs. Along with proper rest and hydration, Vatas should avoid cold, dry environments, and favor warming substances. Warm drinks, warm massages and the warming scents of cinnamon, clove, frankincense and vanilla are beautiful, calming ways to bring your dosha back into balance.

Pitta doshas are dominated by fire and water. The fire element makes for strong personalities in Pittas. If you are dominated by a Pitta dosha, you are likely strong willed, direct, a leader and a decision maker. Periods of imbalance find you easily agitated and angry. A body with a Pitta dosha may run an average temperature that is slightly elevated, and the skin will take on a rosy glow. Once a Pitta becomes unbalanced, and there is too much fire element present, the skin may break out, and burning disorders such as heartburn, ulcers and general inflammation may appear. To keep your Pitta in balance, you need to maintain some coolness in your life to counteract all of the heat. Spend time outside in the evening, away from the daytime sun. Allow a cool evening breeze to soothe you. Try to avoid stressful situations and argumentative people that will likely exaggerate your fiery characteristics. You may also practice peaceful daily meditation while inhaling the cooling scents of rose, mint, lavender, chamomile

or jasmine. As a luxurious way to balance Pitta, allow yourself time to relax while receiving a massage using cooling coconut oil. Once you are relaxed, spritz your skin with rosewater and rest quietly in a room surrounded by the cooler colors of the spectrum, such as blues and purples.

Kapha doshas have strong elements of water and earth. Think for a moment about the mixture of earth and water. With the right balance, this forms a strong, solid foundation. With improper balance, it becomes muddy and slimy. This is very illustrative of people with Kapha doshas. If you are dominated by Kapha you are strong and steady, thoughtful, calm and full of stamina. When out of balance, these characteristics can turn into stubbornness, a sense of being stuck, and an unwillingness to move in mind, body and spirit. To keep your dosha balanced, think of ways to counteract the muddy feeling. Keep yourself moving with gentle exercise, even when you really don't feel like it. Continually stimulate yourself with new activities and thoughts to keep your mind open and flowing. Kaphas need extra fluids to keep their energies moving smoothly. They also need to avoid cold environments. As a Kapha, you should favor warm environments. Consider decorating your home in warm and inviting colors of orange, yellow and red. These colors stimulate internal energy and are known for bringing happiness and positivity into the area. Enjoy warm scents that are also known for their stimulating and decongestant properties, such as camphor, eucalyptus, cinnamon and clove.

While each of us has a dosha that is dominant within ourselves, we must remember that all of the doshas and all of the elements are interconnected within each of us. You may be dominated by the fire and water elements of Pitta, but within you the other elements still exist and seek balance as well. The following remedies are explained based on dosha type. Look at your individual symptoms when seeking Ayurvedic care. If you are a Pitta, you may usually experience headaches in your temples. However, if you find that you

are experiencing sinus pressure instead, follow the guide for treating the earth and water imbalance of a Kapha headache.

Most importantly when practicing Ayurvedic medicine, is to move away from the idea of the instant cure that is so prevalent in western medicine. Ayurveda focuses on restoring balance, which often is not quick or easy, especially in our modern, hectic lifestyles. Begin balancing slowly, building upon it day by day until you have a comfortable ritual.

This preventative balancing will reduce the need for many of the remedies found within this book.



Remedies for Specific Conditions

Allergies

If you have ever experienced itchy, watery eyes, dry cough or nasal symptoms of seasonal allergies, then you are well aware of how uncomfortable, and at times, physically limiting they can be. Allergic responses are our body's way of defending against, and trying to eliminate foreign substances that we encounter. In Ayurvedic medicine it is believed that the health of your *agni*, or digestive fire, determines how severe of a reaction you have to common allergens. By strengthening your agni, you can reduce, or possibly eliminate the physical discomfort associated with allergies.

Vata

Vata allergy symptoms tend to be more noticeable in later fall and early spring when the air is cold and dry. There is a very strong air element to Vatas. Allergy related discomforts may include dry eyes, dry cough, headache, wheezing, sneezing and dry itchy skin.

Vata symptoms require hydration in order to be kept in proper balance. Make sure you are consuming adequate amounts of clean, pure, hydrating liquids.



Try one of the following liquid preparations to soothe Vata allergies. Ashwagandha is a wonderful, calming herb that will help bring Vata back into balance. Consume it in an infusion made in warm milk. Or try licorice and ginger root tea to help to relieve dry throats, coughs and wheezing.

Sesame oil works beautifully to balance Vata. Try giving yourself a gentle massage around the sinuses and throat area using just a touch of sesame oil.

Pitta

Those with a primary Pitta dosha are prone to inflammation. Warm weather allergies can exaggerate this inflammation to an uncomfortable level, especially in the sinuses, lungs and skin. Any of the burning sensations associated with allergies are considered to be Pitta allergy symptoms. Burning itchy eyes and a burning throat are common Pitta ailments. To help ease these symptoms you need to balance the heat and inflammation with something cooling. It is important to only apply the use of cooling oils and herbs to your regime, but also eliminate those that are heat producing. Pittas should stay away from spicy food, drink, herbs and oils while suffering from allergies.

For a cooling remedy consider the use of neem. Neem is an extremely powerful herb on its own, but it can safely be used regularly in a diluted form, such as neem oil soap. Help calm inflamed skin, and balance Pitta energy by washing with this soap regularly.



Coriander is a wonderful cooling, anti-inflammatory spice. Try a coriander tea, or add coriander to your foods. Cilantro also works

wonderfully. If you choose to add cilantro to your diet for Ayurvedic healing, make sure that you are not combining it with heat producing foods.

Pitta symptoms are also eased by the use of aloe. Either apply aloe directly in inflamed, allergic skin reactions or consume in the form of aloe juice to bring a cooling effect to the entire body.

Kapha

Kapha is the dosha associated with dominate water and earth elements. Kapha allergy symptoms tend to be more watery, such as mucus drainage and watery eyes. The strong earth presence also means that blockages are common, as is a sluggish, stuck feeling.

To help ease these symptoms and balance the Kapha dosha, a good nasal cleansing is recommended. Nasal irrigation should be done using a neti pot. This teapot like device is used to flush water through the nasal cavities and facilitate easier and faster removal of mucus and the opening of blocked passages. It is important to always use sterile water in your neti pot. You may either purchase sterile, distilled water or you may boil your own and allow it to cool to a luke warm temperature before using. You may also add a tiny bit of salt to the pot to facilitate the process.

In addition to the use of a neti pot, the use of oils that act as decongestants is recommended. Oils with decongestant properties include camphor and eucalyptus.



If you would like to use spices and herbs in your treatment, use those that produce a warming sensation that will help you become less sluggish and assist in removing blockages. Some to consider are ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, cayenne, and cardamom.

Try making yourself a nice tea using these spices in hot water, dressed with lemon and honey.

Anxiety

Anxiety is characterized by the overwhelming presence of fear and nervousness in the mind, body and spirit. In an increasingly stimulating and troubling world, we see an increase in the number of people that suffer from chronic anxiety. Anxiety can manifest itself in ways such as sleep disturbances, agitation, unceasing fear, digestive disorders and feelings of not being able to catch and hold ones breath. Anxiety has many roots; here we will look at how to approach anxiety as a symptom of dosha imbalance.

Vata

Vata personalities, in their balanced state are very happy and outgoing. Vata doshas are very connected to the element of air, are easily carried away and thrown off balance by the negative influences of anxiety. When dealing with anxiety, meditation is suggested for all three of the doshas, but it seems to be even more important to help balance Vata. Deep, mindful meditation, along with Hatha yoga and breathing exercises are recommended.

Too much activity will also cause a Vata imbalance. Again, here we encounter how the delicate, airy Vata balance is thrown off easily. Too much movement, be it constant travel, long work commutes or just a sense of always being on the go will increase anxiety symptoms in Vata doshas. Take time for quiet and stillness and participate in activities that allow you to be still, peaceful and to renew your perspective.

Vatas should avoid over stimulating substances such as caffeine and other stimulating drugs. Instead turn to warming teas of ginger, cardamom and licorice.

Finally, eat well balanced, nurturing, warming meals. Avoid fasting, as this will only contribute to the light airiness that can so easily become out of balance for the Vata dosha.

Pitta

Pitta has a strong element of fire and can be thrown off balance by too much heat. When concerning anxiety, think in terms of anger, agitation, and physical exertion. Like the other doshas, meditation is important in keeping Pitta in balance. Take time daily to reflect, and let go of the stressors that are causing an overheated reaction in you.

Refocus your energy to a more peaceful, cooling place. Pittas are more prone to inflammatory issues, including those physiologically associated with abundant stress and anxiety, such as cardiac disorders and digestive issues.

To further eliminate anxiety, Pittas should avoid hot, spicy foods, extremely hot weather and strenuous activities. Create an anxiety removing ritual of gently misting your skin with a rosewater spray, or floating calmly in cool water away from direct sunlight.

After meditation or time spent in a cool, peaceful environment continue to balance Pitta by consuming cool liquids such as aloe juice, coconut water or purified water infused with fresh sliced cucumbers.

Kapha

An out of balance Kapha can suffer from extreme anxiety and insecurity. The combined dominate water and earth elements of Kapha can produce a muddy, clay like substance that will leave a Kapha feeling stuck and insecure of what the next best move is.

Mediation is stressed as a healing tool for anxiety in all three doshas. The Kapha dosha should focus their meditation on relaxing and freeing themselves from whatever is holding them in place and encouraging anxiety.

For some people movement and exercise can increase anxiety symptoms, however this is not true for Kaphas. It is important that Kaphas keep moving to avoid getting stuck, and regular mild to moderate regular exercise is strongly encouraged.

In their diet, Kaphas need to avoid heavy and greasy foods that have the tendency to settle in the stomach and sit there, slowing digestion and further promoting the key factors that increase anxiety and stress in the Kapha body.



To promote movement and the clearing out of anxious mental energy consume teas that are gentle and warming. Use spices and herbs such as ginger, black pepper and cumin.

Common Cold

The common cold is truly one of life's annoyances. Headaches, body aches, stuffy noses and scratchy throats leave us worn down and unable to enjoy our lives fully. Most people suffer some form of the common cold at least yearly. Keeping your body, mind and spirit in balance year round along with preventative techniques such as proper hand washing and solid nutrition will go far in providing you with a defense against the common cold. All of that said, each dosha is still at risk of suffering from this all too common ailment.

Vata

When a Vata suffers a cold, chances are the symptoms will appear as a dry, scratchy throat, headaches, and sometimes a weak, scratchy voice.

Preparations of cumin and cinnamon are useful in soothing the throat tissue. Steep these spices either together or separately in hot water and add honey to help coat and lubricate a sore throat.



In India people will chew on the leaf of a Holy Basil plant to ease sore throats and scratchy voices. In the western world, it may not be so easy to find a fresh leaf to chew on. Instead go to your nearest health food store and purchase the dried leaves or powder with which to make a tea. Add lemon to accentuate the taste and provide further healing properties.

Pitta

Pitta symptoms of a cold include the sore throat that Vatas also experience, but in addition to this are the tendencies to also experience stuffed noses, thick nasal mucus and an accompanying fever.

Bishops Weed is an effective herb in to help alleviate nasal stuffiness. One common and simple way to use Bishop Weed is to simply take the seeds and make a sachet out of them. Hold the sachet close to your nose and inhale deeply. Keep the sachet with you throughout the day and inhale as needed. You may also sleep with the Bishops Weed sachet on your pillow to provide you with relief during the night.

Anutaila drops are commonly used to strengthen the areas of the ears, nose and throats. Help ease your cold symptoms by applying these drops nasally.

Kapha

Kapha doshas experience colds in the form of what we commonly call a head cold. They experience thick, heavy mucus, heavy heads and unyielding headaches. Kaphas are also prone to respiratory issues associated with the common cold.

Ginger is one of the best remedies for balancing excess Kapha in the body. Make a cold fighting juice drink using plenty of ginger and a strong, antioxidant fruit such as pineapple.



Warming remedies will help break up any congestion and soothe a troubled respiratory system. Think of ginger, cardamom and turmeric. You can make pleasant turmeric milk that is soothing to both the body and soul. Add turmeric, cinnamon, cardamom, and a touch of honey to almond milk. Heat and enjoy. It is best to avoid dairy milk while recovering from a cold, as dairy has a tendency to increase mucus.

Regardless of your dosha type it is important to respect your body and its unique balancing process by providing it with plenty of rest, healthy foods and ample fluids. Each of these will help bring your dosha back into the proper balance.

Headaches

Millions of people suffer from headaches, with an unfortunately large number suffering from migraine headaches. Headaches are so common, that many of us cope with the suffering in our daily lives, sometimes seeking relief and sometimes not. While western medicine provides us with many options for over the counter treatment of headaches, the approach is far from holistic and doesn't address the underlying cause of our headaches. Headaches affect the entire mind, body and spirit connection. By treating only the symptoms of headaches, and not the root we are risking further damage to our bodies.

Vata

Vata headaches tend to be located more towards the back of the head. These are the headaches that often result in stiff necks and shoulders, sometimes even reaching further down into the back muscles. Stress and lack of sleep are major contributors to Vata headaches.

Because of the major muscle connection to Vata headaches, a massage using Mahanarayan oil is recommended. Mahanarayan oil is a warming blend based in sesame oil that is used for its ability to reduce tension, as well as to loosen muscles and frozen joints.

It is important to keep the body lubricated to prevent Vata headaches. To keep the Vata in balance and to help ease headaches, consume warm teas made with Haritaki, which will promote the elimination of toxins or Triphala, which is an herbal blend that is known for its lubricating properties. Triphala will also help with the elimination of the bowels, the backup of which is another symptom of Vata headaches.

In line with keeping the body lubricated, make a nightly ritual of placing a small amount of sesame oil in each nostril at bedtime.

Make sure to keep your body in a position so that it doesn't leak out for several minutes after application.

Pitta

Pitta headaches are usually focused on the temple areas and the front of the head. There is often an associated sensitivity to light, sharp pains and sometimes dizziness or nausea. Most migraines are considered to be Pitta type headaches.

To help balance Pitta, one should avoid excessive heat and sunlight. To counter the heat that has already accumulated in the body, try a soothing light massage. Coconut oil works great as a cooling medium for massage. Start by gently rubbing the coconut oil into your temples, under your eyes and down around your neck. If you are able, continue with a full body massage. If time or circumstances do not allow for a full massage then at least treat yourself to ten minutes in a cool, dimly lit space. Apply coconut oil to the soles of your feet and massage. Do not rush this process, and allow your body to relax, cool and realign its elements.

Since Pitta headaches often stem from digestive issues, take care of your diet and focus on calming, cooling foods, especially if you are suffering from a severe headache. Consume aloe gel daily and add foods such as cucumbers and cilantro to your diet. Making a refreshing drink infused with the cucumber and cilantro is one way to help balance Pitta without putting additional stress on the digestive system.

Kapha

Kapha headaches are characterized by pressure and stuffiness. Seasonal headaches that lead to dull sinus pressure in the front of the face are Kapha headaches. In severe cases these headaches can affect the entire front of the head and face, sometimes radiating around the sides.

The pressure of Kapha headaches is caused from an excessive build up of mucus and inflamed sinuses. To bring around balance, the focus needs to be on clearing these passages of mucus, and the toxins that it contains. The use of a neti pot will help facilitate the movement of mucus out of the body. Add a small amount of salt to your neti pot and make sure to always use purified water. This can be water that you yourself have boiled and allowed to cool to a lukewarm temperature, or purified distilled water that you have purchased.



Use strong cleansing herbs such as eucalyptus will help eliminate mucus. Place a sprig of Eucalyptus in your shower, and turn on the hot water. You may either enjoy the shower, or sit outside of the shower in a closed bathroom to reap the benefits of the eucalyptus steam.

Consume teas that are aromatic and cleansing to the nostrils as well. Ginger, cinnamon and cloves are excellent and promote decongestion. Sweeten with a little honey and lemon to make the tea easier to drink if you are sensitive to strong flavors.

Hypertension

Hypertension is a major health issue worldwide. Hypertension often resides quietly in the body until the point that it begins to cause severe health complications, such as heart attack, stroke and organ failure. Maintaining proper medical care throughout your life is important in preventing the disabling effects of this awful condition. Thankfully, with a holistic approach, hypertension can be controlled. All three doshas can work on reducing stress, and bring mindfulness back into their lives. Getting adequate sleep, not over exerting yourself with work or stressful situations, participating in activities that bring you joy and happiness along with concentrated mindful meditation are ways in which to begin the healing process and reducing hypertension regardless of dosha type.

Vata

Vata hypertension will present itself in irregular patterns of blood pressure and the pulse. Most often associated with nervous disorders, those with Vata hypertension will find they are more prone to anxiety and worry as hypertension peaks. Along with the common activities that all doshas should participate in to reduce hypertension, Vatas will benefit from tonification therapy, which is gentle acupuncture technique that adds strength to the body overall.



Garlic contains a component called allicin. Allicin is believed to have properties that allow it to lower lipids and inhibit blood coagulation. People with Vata hypertension can benefit from consuming raw

garlic on a regular basis. The suggested amount to consume is one crushed clove once or twice a week. To make the fresh, crushed garlic easier on the palate, add a little bit of honey and fresh ginger before consuming.

Ashwagandha is also a useful Vata remedies. Preparations of such can be taken alone or in conjunction with other herbs such as Valerian root and Gotu kola. If there is an Ayurvedic practitioner in your area contact them for specific formulas.

Pitta

Those with Pitta doshas will experience hypertension as heated symptoms. The sufferer may have a face that reddens easily as blood pressure rises. Anger, irritability and sudden outburst are also symptoms on unbalanced Pitta hypertension. Pittas are also at risk of organ failure due to the intense internal heat that the imbalance causes. To regain health, the Pitta dosha must use calming and cooling remedies.

A preparation of Gotu kola should be used. Gotu kola is an herb that promotes circulation and addresses the venous insufficiency associated with increased heat in the body.

Participating in a stronger detoxification of the body through purgation may be necessary to return the Pitta to balance. When purgation is chosen as a remedy for hypertension it should be done using substances that are bitter in nature, such as Senna or Rhubarb Root.

Kapha

Kapha hypertension is likely to include ailments such as edema, high triglycerides, obesity and blood pressure that remains elevated and is difficult to treat. The watery aspect of Kapha contributes to these conditions.



One herb to approach with caution is licorice. You may hear that licorice can be used as a mild diuretic, which is beneficial to Kapha doshas. However, licorice has also been shown to increase blood pressure in users. If you choose to use licorice, do so only under the careful care of an Ayurvedic practitioner.

Trikatu is an Indian preparation made up of the three pungents. These pungents are black pepper, Indian long pepper and ginger. This formula may help lower LDLs, as well as triglycerides. It also has an anti-inflammatory property. This preparation is beneficial to those suffering from Kapha based hypertension.

Kaphas who suffer from hypertension also need to take special care with their diets. Eat clean, natural foods and eliminate heavy, oily foods as well as dairy during the healing period.

Indigestion

Indigestion is a common ailment that presents itself in various forms including heartburn, stomach aches, flatulence, constipation and change in appetite. Not only are these conditions uncomfortable, but leaving them untreated is harmful to your overall health as your nutrition becomes compromised. Indigestion is mainly considered a Pitta ailment due to its fiery nature. We will discuss ways in which the balance of all the doshas can assist in relieving indigestion, but the primary treatment involves balancing Pitta.

Vata

Vata indigestion is most often felt as extremely uncomfortable cramping in the abdominal area. Vatas who are out of balance and experiencing indigestion should adhere to a vegetarian diet as much as possible. Heavier animal products put more stress on the digestive system and can cause greater cramping.

If you are comfortable enough to be able to move your body, try some gentle stretching yoga poses. This will help relax the intestinal muscles and bring about more balance.

A nice Ayurvedic remedy for Vata induced indigestion is an herbal infusion containing ginger, aniseed and pepper. Prepare the infusion in boiling water, and allow cooling to a comfortable temperature before consuming. You may also add cumin to the infusion if your indigestion is intense.

Pitta

Most often it is a Pitta imbalance that is to blame for digestive issues. The fire element when out of balance will cause ailments such as heartburn, ulcers and inflammation along the gastrointestinal tract. If you are experiencing any of these conditions it is time to look at how to balance the Pitta within your own body.



Begin by consuming ample liquid at the start of each day. Upon waking drink several glasses of filtered water. This water may be infused with cucumber to facilitate the cooling properties. Coconut water with its seemingly endless benefits is also an excellent tonic for calming indigestion.

You may also choose to add Indian Gooseberry powder to your water once a day, as it reduces acidity in the digestive system.

Keep your meals light, with several hours between them. You may even consider replacing a meal with vegetable juice made from carrots, cucumber and cabbage, all of which have healing and cooling properties for Pitta indigestion.

Kapha

Kapha based indigestion is usually the result of a slow or sluggish digestive system. Once again we see how the muddy affects of earth and water can cause problems in the body when out of balance. To help ease Kapha indigestion, eat small amounts of easily digestible food and avoid heavy, greasy foods. Consider consuming gentle soups flavored with ginger and keeping plenty of fluids in your diet to keep nourishment moving through the digestive system.

It is also important for Kaphas to participate in regular gentle exercise. Leisurely walking, or light swimming is beneficial to Kapha related indigestion.



If you find that you are suffering from constipation, or a stagnant bloated feeling apply a light circular massage to the abdominal area to facilitate movement. Be gentle, you do not want to apply too much pressure or cause additional discomfort. Also, add a gentle tea of chicory root to your daily routine. Chicory root is a natural gentle laxative that will also help alleviate Kapha indigestion.

Premenstrual Syndrome

Premenstrual syndrome is the shift in balance of the mind, body and spirit that occurs in the two weeks before a woman's menstrual period. Symptoms range from irritability, hunger, water retention, weight fluctuations, skin and additional mood irritations. It is estimated that a potential three quarters of menstruating women suffer in some degree. While all three doshas may experience any of the symptoms, each dosha has its own significant signs of imbalance.

Vata

Mood swings, headaches, sleep disorders, anxiety and worry are premenstrual symptoms associated with a Vata imbalance. When Vata is out of balance a woman can expect her menstrual flow to be irregular as well as irregularity of the bowels.

To help ease the mind effects of a Vata imbalance daily meditation is suggested. Make daily meditation a routine for you throughout your cycle, not just during the two weeks before menstruation is expected. Take care to not become stressed and avoid overstimulation, especially during this point in your cycle.

Keep foods warm and flowing to promote a regular menstrual flow and regulation of the bowels. Warm, soothing vegetable soups are ideal nutrient sources.



Pamper yourself with a gentle warming massage, using a natural oil such as almond. Gently caress your abdomen in smooth flowing movement to stimulate circulation and the proper function of the bowels and reproductive organs.

Pitta

Pitta imbalance can cause premenstrual symptoms such as extreme moodiness and irritability, complexion issues and lower abdominal cramping. The ill effects of an imbalance seem to be harsher on Pitta doshas, and it is even more important for them to maintain a balance in the body, mind and spirit.

Set a routine that allows you to properly cherish your body. Allow time for daily meditation, and consumption of foods that nourish you wholly. Cool, sweet foods will help counter the effects of the imbalance. Eat ample fruits, including thick, juicy fruits such as mangoes, pears, peaches and sweet melons.

Coconut oil has cooling properties, and regular massage with it will help to keep your dosha in balance.

Motherwort is an herb that helps ease anxiety and worry, as well as possessing diuretic properties. For this reason, Motherwort is suggested as a treatment for women with Pitta influenced premenstrual syndrome.

Kapha

Symptoms associated with water such as bloating, weight gain, sluggishness and depressive moods are said to be due to a Kapha imbalance.

It is important for Kaphas to keep moving. This will help balance the appetite, reduce fluid buildup and improve overall mood. Exercise does not have to be strenuous. Anything that gets your body moving

in continuous fluid movements is recommended. Consider yoga or walking for a low impact option.

Keep meals light to avoid a heavy feeling. Focus primarily on vegetables and fruits, which are eaten warm or at least at room temperature.

Myrrh is an anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic herb that also eliminates stress and fatigue. Kaphas may find it useful in the balancing of their dosha. In some cases, premenstrual symptoms mimic those of early pregnancy. If you believe there is any chance that you may be pregnant, you should not use Myrrh as it can have adverse effects on pregnancy.

Skin Care

Our skin is our largest and most beautiful organ. When we look at our skin it is almost as if we are looking into a mirror of our spiritual, mindful and bodily health. Often the skin will be the first to show the signs of distress and imbalance. Dosha imbalance can show up through our skin in the form of rashes, blemishes, dryness, eczema, pigmentation issues, slow healing of abrasions and premature aging.

Vata

Vata doshas tend to have dry skin with small, tight pores. Their skin has less elasticity and is prone to early aging. When Vata is out of balance dry patches, cracked and chapped skin may appear.

If you are a Vata and are experiencing problems with your skin, the first thing you must do is stay hydrated inside and out. If you are familiar with the term “sucking the life out of you”, then you can relate to how stress and worry will affect a Vata’s skin. These negative emotions will deplete the moisture from your skin. Drink adequate amounts of fluids, at least eight full glasses a day, and use meditation as a way to reduce the stress levels in your life.

Use a gentle Ayurvedic oil to massage into your skin daily. Using just the pads of your fingertips, apply gentle pressure as you massage the oil into your skin. The oil will not only moisturize, but provide a protective barrier against moisture zapping agents.

Consuming teas specially formulated for Vata doshas will help nourish the skin and keep it replenished with moisture. After steeping your tea to drink, remove the bag or crushed herbs and let them cool. Once they have cooled, you may apply them to troubled areas on your skin for additional relief.

Pitta

Pitta imbalances will show in the skin as rashes, warm irritations, rosacea and acne. Pittas are also more sensitive to the sun than other doshas, and may burn easily. The ideal for a Pitta is to return a balance that has their skin looking smooth, soft, warm and glowing.

Pitta skin care has more to do with what to avoid. As was already mentioned, avoid excessive exposure to the sun, and always wear an adequate sunscreen when you find yourself outdoors. Avoid tanning beds and other forms of UV light. These will only serve to exaggerate the heat and redness in Pitta skin.

Pitta skin must be treated with the gentlest of care. Avoid any chemicals that are too harsh, and instead opt for cooling natural topical. Rosewater makes for a moisturizing toner, as does a cucumber infused purified water. For skin abrasions and irritations choose a natural remedy such as aloe or chamomile in place of over the counter topical applications.

Kapha

People with Kapha doshas have a tendency toward oily skin, with large open pores. While prone to break outs like Pittas, a Kapha may suffer more from large, painful cystic type of acne. When in perfect balance, Kapha skin is smooth, thick and perfectly moisturized.

It is best for Kaphas to eliminate toxins from their diet, and detoxify on a regular basis if necessary. Sweet, juicy fruits will have a calming effect on Kapha skin, especially if eaten after sundown. Detoxifying herbs that are especially useful in balancing Kapha are fennel, coriander and turmeric. They are digestive stimulants and will detoxify the skin.



Avoid foods that add to Kapha's natural tendency toward oiliness, such as foods with high fat and grease contents. When using oils in cooking, make sure you are using a light, easily digested and beneficial oil such as olive oil.

Weight Loss

Many people struggle with weight issues throughout their lives. We constantly diet, and physically exert ourselves in an effort to achieve what we believe to be our physical ideal. It is incredibly frustrating to put that amount of effort into transforming your body, only to see little or no results long term. A shift in perspective might lead us to see that the problem is not that we are consuming too much, or moving too little, but instead suffering from an imbalance in our dosha that is presenting itself in the form of digestive and metabolism disorders.

Vata

People with Vata doshas are often slim, and sometimes underweight. The air and space elements keep them constantly moving, and not consuming adequate calories for proper nutrition. Even though naturally slim, Vatas are just as prone to excess weight when out of balance as the other doshas. Vatas tend to overindulge on sweets and processed foods when unbalanced. To help restore balance and achieve a healthy weight it is recommended that Vatas counteract the chemical sweetness they crave with bitter and pungent foods. To add a bit of sweetness, consume them with dried fruits. The delicate nervous system of the Vata dosha can easily become disharmonious, causing problems with metabolism. To comfort the nervous spirit of Vata, choose beautiful, warm floral scents to apply to yourself or use in a diffuser in your room. Scents to consider are jasmine, rose and orange.

Pitta

Pitta doshas are prone to obesity when their fire element is out of balance and causes burning intestinal disorders such as heartburn and ulcers. Oftentimes, rather than eating for nutrition, the sufferer will eat for comfort, digesting whatever can be consumed without fear or pain. The metabolic issues that Pitta suffers can slow the digestion and absorption of nutrients down to the point that the lack of proper digestion leads to weight gain. As with Vatas, Pittas are also advised to eat bitter, pungent foods to influence proper

metabolic balance. Consider adding bitter melon, dark bitter leafy greens and tart fruits to your diet. To balance the fire element, Pittas need their surroundings to be cool, and somewhat sweet in aroma. You may try painting your kitchen blue or purple to cool your appetite. The scents of mint, honeysuckle and jasmine will assist in balancing this dosha.

Kapha

People with a dominant Kapha dosha are the most prone to obesity of all the dosha types. When out of balance, the water and earth elements can become thick, lumpy and heavy. Like the other doshas, bitter and pungent foods are recommended to balance metabolism and digestion. These foods can be combined with certain sweet foods to make them more pleasant on the palate, and to satisfy cravings for sweets. While Vatas may consume theirs with dried fruit, it is recommended that a Kapha consume their bitter foods with something sweet and juicy, like pineapple. In fact, one common remedy for adjusting Kapha balance is a beverage made from the juice of pineapple and spicy, pungent peppers and herbs. Kaphas need movement and warmth to stimulate metabolism to burn excess fat. Consider meditating on the color red, and using oils that stimulate and decongest, such as camphor, eucalyptus and sage. Finally, if as a Kapha you are prone to fatty deposits on the body, give yourself a dry massage daily and focus on vigorously rubbing the deposit areas in order to loosen them up and facilitate movement and elimination of the fat cells.

Conclusion

While I hope that you have found this book helpful and enlightening, it is near impossible to include every possible ailment and every possible Ayurvedic remedy. The practice of Ayurvedic medicine has a history thousands of years old and cannot be respectfully conveyed within the confines of this text. If you have enjoyed what you have read here, and found it helpful, I would suggest taking a broader approach to your education of Ayurvedic medicine, and contacting many of the organizations, professionals and schools that teach and heal using these methods.

As it has been stressed repeated, Ayurveda is about balance. Keep balance in all of your actions and decisions, and you will have begun practicing Ayurvedic medicine for yourself. If you are feeling hot physically or emotionally, do something to cool yourself off. If you are feeling congested or stuck, think to yourself what methods or treatment would help to loosen and move your energy. Take special care and precautions when using any herbs or oils, as they are often very powerful and can sometimes have negative side effects when used improperly or in the wrong amounts. However, more than anything, strive to find peace within you and continually seek the beauty of a perfectly balanced mind, body and soul.