Ayurveda - Definition

आयुर्वेद

- Ayuh = life, self-knowledge, self-healing.
- Veda = science, body of knowledge.
- Āyurveda = the science of life, the science of self-healing.
What Is Āyurveda

- 5,000-year-old holistic health system, but incorporates modern knowledge
- Oldest continuously practiced health system
- Influenced other forms of Asian medicine
- Influenced aspects of western medicine
- Philosophy
  - Energy and matter are related
  - Mind, body, and spirit/energetic component are related
  - Āyurveda principles can apply to any system, including social spheres
  - Holistic: healing needs to happen on all levels – body, emotions, mental, spirit.
Comprehensive – 8 Branches

- Internal medicine
- Ear, Nose Throat
- Fertility & Conception, Aphrodisiacs
- Pediatrics & Gynecology
- Psychiatry
- Rejuvenation & Longevity (Rasayana)
- Surgery
- Toxicology
- ____________________________
- Herbology / Plant Science
- Nadi [meridian] System
- Yoga
Āyurveda as Lifestyle

- Daily Routines
- Seasonal Routines
- Practices Based on Age

- Food as Medicine
  - What
  - Cooking method
  - When
  - How
  - How much
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The Doshas

दोषः
The Three Doshas

- Ayurvedic diagnosis and treatment are grounded in the concept of three doshas.
- The doshas can be seen as a way of describing qualities.
  - 5 elements/qualities combine into three doshas:
    - Space and Air $\Rightarrow$ Vāta
    - Fire (and a little liquid) $\Rightarrow$ Pitta
    - Water and Earth $\Rightarrow$ Kapha
- Doshas are responsible for physiological function but can cause disorder.
- Everyone is given a unique combination of the doshas at conception.
- The doshas can get out of balance.
- Key: determine what is out of balance and how to get it back into balance.
  - Method: Like increases like; opposites lead to balance.
# Dosha Qualities & Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vāta</th>
<th>Pitta</th>
<th>Kapha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualities</strong></td>
<td>Light, cold, dry, mobile, rough, subtle, clear, brown/gray/black</td>
<td>Hot, sharp, slightly oily, light, liquid, spreading, fleshy smell, red/yellow/orange</td>
<td>Heavy, cool, slow/dull, oily, liquid, slimy/smooth, dense, soft, sticky, cloudy, hard, gross, oily, liquid/damp, stable/static, white</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principle</strong></td>
<td><strong>Movement</strong> – controls movement, speech cognition, nervous system activity</td>
<td><strong>Transformation</strong> – controls all metabolic activity</td>
<td><strong>Structure</strong> – formation and lubrication of body tissues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Seat</strong></td>
<td>Colon</td>
<td>Small intestine</td>
<td>Stomach / lungs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vāta

- *Slim*
- Unusual proportions, irregular features, short or tall
- *Dry* hair, skin, and nails
- Dislike cold weather, especially if dry and windy
- *Cold* feet and hands
- Cracking joints; cracking, hoarse voice
- Constipation and dry stools, gas, bloating
- *Nervous system* issues
- Dislocations, misalignments, prolapses, hypermobility
- Walk and talk fast, fidget, hyperactive, jump topics
- Need less sleep than others, tend toward insomnia
- Lively, enthusiastic, easily distracted, erratic, self-discipline and routines are difficult; run late
- Creative, restless, constantly thinking, curious, spacey, intuitive, sensitive, unpredictable, moods and emotions change quickly
- Learn quickly but forget easily
- When stressed, tend toward anxiety, fear, nervousness, lack of self confidence, overreaction; cannot hide emotions; mind spins
Vāta:
Pitta

- *Medium* height and build
- Oily skin and hair with red, copper, or yellowish tones; freckles; early balding or gray hair
- Sharp, bright, penetrating eyes; sensitive to light
- *Warm* feet and hands; perspire a lot; dislike hot weather and sunshine
- Tend toward rash, acne, bruising, burning, inflammation, acidity, heartburn, loose stool, frequent stool
- *Sharp* appetite, thirst; must eat when hungry
- *Critical thinker*, determined, focused, rational, logical, problem solver, sharp, intelligent; intense, perfectionist, leader, goal oriented, ambitious, proud, not easily intimidated, assertive, dislike injustice, *competitive*
- When stressed, tend toward *anger*, frustration, jealousy, critical, irritable, *impatient*, egotistical, try to take control
- Distinct sharp memory; analytical; intelligent
- Speech is sharp, well thought out, argumentative
Kapha

- *Large, solid*, broad chest; short or tall; large muscles, joints
- Gain *weight* easily; difficult to lose weight
- Round face; large, attractive eyes; large lips
- Moist, cool, pale skin; thick hair and nails
- Like warm, dry, sunny days, not cool, damp, cloudy
- *Slow* to get going but have the most *stamina*; slow; graceful
- Need the most sleep – 8 or more hours; no troubles sleeping
- Elimination is thick, oily, sluggish; like squeezing toothpaste
- Calm, quiet, peaceful, nurturing, patient, easy going, loyal, supportive, gentle, generous, tolerant, practical, methodical, organized, complacent, doesn’t like change, works well in a routine, sentimental, devoted to family and teachers; excellent long-term memory
- When stressed, tend toward calm and unruffled; withdrawn or reclusive; don't show emotions easily; not easily thrown off balance emotionally; tend toward sadness, longing, or depression
Kapha
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Prakṛti & Vikṛti
Prakriti

• *Nature, constitution.*

• Determined at conception, by
  • the genetics, diet, lifestyle, and emotions of the parents.
  • samskaras (mental and other tendencies) of the incarnate being.

• Everyone has all three doshas, but the proportions vary.

• Each person has a specific combination of doshas that express themselves in unique ways.

• *Prakriti never changes.*
Prakṛti – 7 General Types

• 7 types:

Vāta  Vāta-Pitta  Vāta-Pitta-Kapha
Pitta  Pitta-Kapha
Kapha  Kapha-Vāta

• Consider body, mind, emotions

• Dosha quizzes: answer questions as if they asked how you’ve been most of your life, or how you are at your most balanced.
Vikṛti

- *Current state* of the doshas
  - Dosha = that which can go out of balance

- Vikṛti = false

- Doṣha quizzes: answer questions based on how you are *now*

- Look at which dosha(s) appear to be *increased*, rather than decreased.
Vikṛti vs. Prakṛti

- Vikṛti - the state of the doshas actually present - can be different from prakṛti due to many factors.
  - Weather
  - Season
  - Time of day
  - Age
  - Food and diet
  - Daily routines (or lack of routines)
  - Fatigue
  - Stress
  - Improper use of buddhi (intelligence) – “knowing better”
  - Overuse, underuse, and misuse of the senses
  - Mental and emotional factors
  - Exercise
  - Living conditions
  - Relationships
  - Social / societal pressures and tendencies
Vikṛti, Prakṛti, and Health

- Health requires that vikṛti is the same as prakṛti.
- Having balanced doshas does not mean equal VPK except for the rare person whose constitution is equal VPK.
- Often, there is a tendency for the dosha that is dominant in prakriti to be out of balance (in excess) in vikṛti.
- But a person’s vikṛti can be anything, regardless of prakṛti.
- Doshic imbalance is the beginning of the disease process.
- Preventative care requires addressing doshic imbalance.
- Diseases have doshic qualities; treatment thus includes addressing doshic imbalances.
Balancing the Doshas - Principles

- Apply principles of duality to achieve balance.

- *Like increases like.*

- *Opposites decrease each other* and thus lead to balance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vata</th>
<th>Pitta</th>
<th>Kapha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Energize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warm</td>
<td>Cool</td>
<td>Warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lubricate</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Agni & Āma
Agni & Āma

- **Agni**: fire
  - Digestive fire:
    - Separates what is good for the body from what should be excreted
    - Digestion, absorption, assimilation
    - Digestive enzymes, digestive acids, amino acids, all metabolic activities
  - Processing sensory experience, emotions
  - Creation, maintenance, destruction of cells and tissues

- **Āma**: “toxins” that circulate in the body
  - Āma results from
    - agni not functioning properly
    - channels of elimination not functioning properly

- **Disease Process**: generally begins with poor agni
# Signs of Agni Dysfunction & Āma

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vāta</th>
<th>Pitta</th>
<th>Kapha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Constipation</td>
<td>• Diarrhea</td>
<td>• Sticky, slow elimination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gas</td>
<td>• Acidity/reflux/heartburn</td>
<td>• Mucus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flatulence</td>
<td>• Low-grade fever</td>
<td>• Congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bloating</td>
<td>• Inflammation</td>
<td>• Dull aches, pains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low belly</td>
<td>• Nausea</td>
<td>• Allergies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dry skin</td>
<td>• Acne</td>
<td>• Low energy, fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General body aches and pains</td>
<td>• Rashes</td>
<td>• Brain fog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joint pain</td>
<td>• Dark yellow or green stools, tongue coating, urine</td>
<td>• Low motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dry or astringent taste</td>
<td>• Sour or acidic odor</td>
<td>• Foul smell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Bitter, sour, or metallic taste or breath</td>
<td>• White tongue coating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Lymphatic congestion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Salty or sweet taste</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Burping
Causes of Agni Dysfunction & Āma

- Eating foods that you can’t digest
- Poor eating habits
  - Foods that aggravate doshas
  - Grazing, irregular meals, eating too soon after prior meal
  - Excessive fasting or overeating
  - Heavy, cold, stale, spoiled, canned food
  - Overly processed foods, additives, preservatives, stabilizers
  - Eating when stressed
  - Poor food combining
  - Too much liquid during or immediately after meals
  - Napping after meals
- Poor lifestyle habits
  - Includes habits that aggravate doshas
- Stress, repressed emotions
- Intestinal parasites / imbalance in the gut flora
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Concepts of Health
Definition of Health

• Digestion is proper.
• The doshas are balanced.
• The body and its tissues (dhatu) are strong and well-nourished.
• The senses are strong, healthy, and function normally.
• Wastes are formed properly and in proper amounts.
• Channels of the body are open (srotansis [physiological systems] and nadis [energy channels, like meridians]).
• Mental function is clear.
• The person experiences bliss, peace.
Digestion Is Proper

Digestion is proper:
- Digestion is the root of health
- Healing starts with digestion
- Prevention starts with digestion
- “Let your food be your medicine and your medicine be your food.” -- Hippocrates
- When diet is wrong, medicine is of no use. When diet is correct, medicine is of no need. -- Āyurveda
- If properly prepared and administered, every substance can be a medicine. -- Āyurveda
- Note the word is digestion – it’s not just what you eat, but what you can digest, that counts
- Digestion includes digestion of emotions and mental impressions, as well as food
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Diagnosis and Toolkit
Diagnostic Methods

• Inspection
  • Face lines
  • Hair
  • Nails
  • Tongue
  • Nails
  • Eyes
• Pulse (qualities in addition to rate)
• Waste
• Speech
• Palpation
• Physical form, appearance
• Questioning
Āyurveda Toolkit

- Diet & nutrition
- Dinacharya (daily routine)
- Ritucharya (seasonal routine)
- Herbs, medicated oils
- Pancha Karma (cleansing)
- Marma (acupressure)
- Ayurvedic massage (abhyanga oil application and more), shirodhara (streaming oil on forehead), external basti (oil)
- Aroma therapy
- Jyotish (Vedic astrology)
- Gems
- Color
- Vastu shastra (architecture)

Yoga

- Yama & niyama (ethics, restraints)
- Prāṇāyāma (breathing practices)
- Āsana (physical poses)
- Meditation
- Reflection (vichara)
- Philosophy
- Mantra (repeating sound, phrase)
- Deep relaxation
- Yoga Nidra (relaxation + intention)
- Mudra (seals – hand positions)
- Bandha (locks)
- Shat Karma (cleansing)
- Bhakti yoga practices (devotion)
### 6 Tastes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taste (Rasa)</th>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Heat/Cool</th>
<th>Dry/Moist</th>
<th>Dosha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td>Water &amp; Earth</td>
<td>Cooling</td>
<td>Moistening</td>
<td>V-, P-, K+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sour</td>
<td>Fire &amp; Earth</td>
<td>Heating</td>
<td>Moistening</td>
<td>V-, P+, K+</td>
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<td>Pungent</td>
<td>Fire &amp; Air</td>
<td>Heating</td>
<td>Drying</td>
<td>V+, P+, K-</td>
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<td>Astringent</td>
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<td>Drying</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Eat to Support Agni & Balance Doshas

• Eat foods to counter any doshic imbalances and to maintain your prakṛti.
• Have all 6 tastes at each meal.
• But adjust the proportions of each taste for your doshas.
• Use appropriate cooking methods to make foods more easily digestible and appropriate for your vikṛti and prakṛti.
  • Vāta: sauté, steam, soup, braise, saucy, plenty of healthy oils
  • Pitta: not hot, not too oily
  • Kapha: dry roast, toast, grill, less oil
• Use appropriate spices for your doshas.
What to Eat

• Don't eat anything you can't digest
  • E.g., results in gas, belching, hyperacidity, diarrhea, constipation, feelings of heaviness or lethargy, undigested food particles in stool.

• Eat whole foods, minimally processed.
  • Organic: at a minimum, the “dirty dozen.”

• Don't boil, bake, or cook honey.
  • For cooking, use jaggery, Sucanat, coconut sugar, or maple syrup instead.
  • Stirring honey into warm tea is okay.

• Milk can be taken only with sweet foods.
  • This does not apply to cultured dairy.
  • At meals, use cultured products (sour cream, yogurt, buttermilk).

• For some, fruit should be combined only with fruit.

• For most, veggies should be cooked.

• Avoid cold food or drink.
How Much to Eat

• At breakfast, avoid kapha-increasing food (cold, damp, heavy, bland).
  • Lighter in summer; heavier in winter when agni is stronger.
  • Kaphas often can skip breakfast.

• Lunch should be the biggest meal.

• Make dinners light, e.g. soup or salad.

• Stomach should be filled ½ with food, ¼ with liquid, ¼ empty.
  • Enough liquid and space for stomach to work on digesting the food, and not so much liquid that enzymes and acids are overly diluted.

• Eat enough to make it to the next meal without a snack, and not so much that you lack an appetite at the next meal.
When to Eat

- Don’t shower or bathe after a meal.
- Breakfast by 8:00.
- Lunch should be between 10:00 and 2:00.
- An early dinner is best.
- Finish dinner at least 2 to 3 hours before bed.
- Try for consistent meal times.
- Don't mix undigested food with partially digested food in your stomach.
- Therefore, after eating solid food, wait at least 3 hours before eating solid food again.
- This also means avoid snacking.
  - If you snack, prefer something liquid (it can have protein and calories) over something solid; e.g., chai tea with milk.
  - If you have something solid, fresh fruit (e.g., an apple) is the next choice, then a few seeds or nuts.
What & When to Drink

• Start the day with 1 to 2 cups of hot water, especially with constipation. Ok to add lemon or lime (best for pitta).
• Avoid cold or iced drinks (including ice water), cold milk, ice cream, and cold foods, except on very hot days away from mealtimes.
• During meals, sip some water.
  • Not too little or too much - about ½ to 1 cup
  • Warm or room temperature (not cold).
• Do not drink water or anything else immediately before or after a meal.
• Don't combine milk with foods other than sweets, grains, and sweet fruits.
  • This rule about mixing milk and other foods does not apply to cultured dairy products such as yogurt, buttermilk, kefir, or cheese.
• Lassi after a meal can aid the digestion.
Dinacharya (Daily Routine)

• **Morning**
  - Wake up before 6:00 (preferably before sunrise; vatas can wake up around sunrise)
  - Express gratitude or say a prayer before getting out of bed
  - Evacuation
  - Swish and rinse mouth with water
  - Splash eyes with cool water, gently rub eyelids, blink, rotate eyes in all directions
  - Kapala shodana (skull cleansing): rub forehead with palm; rub indent between forehead and nose with thumb
  - Examine and scrape tongue
  - Drink a cup of warm or hot water, or lemon water.
  - **Neti pot**
  - Brush teeth
  - **Oil swishing**, followed by rinsing with water
  - Prāṇayama (breathwork), meditation
  - Garshana (dry brushing)
  - **Self-abhyanga** (self massage)
  - Oil in ears
  - Nasya
  - Yoga / exercise (1/2 capacity)
  - Shower
  - Breakfast by 8:00, or skip it.
Daily Routine

• Midday
  • Lunch between 10:00 and 2:00, during pitta time when agni is high
• Evening
  • Light dinner
  • Quiet activity
  • In bed by 10:00 p.m.
    • Digestive agni (liver) detoxes all systems in the pitta time from 10:00 to 2:00 am – but only if you are asleep
• For sleep:
  • Calming pranayama (e.g., belly breath)
  • Evening meditation and/or yoga nidra
  • Restorative yoga, especially forward folds, legs-up-the-wall
  • Foot massage with oil, and scalp as well
  • Lavender or nutmeg essential oil on pillow
  • Warm milk with nutmeg (and ghee)
  • Spiritual reading. No page-turners. For many people: no news past 5 pm
Pancha Karma (Cleansing) Preparation

- Improve agni (digestion)
- Decrease āma

Pancha Karma (5 Actions)

- Vamana (emesis)
- Virechan (purgation)
- Basti (*not a colonic*)
  - Niruha basti (water enema)
  - Anuvasan basti (oil enema)
  - Netra basti (eyes)
- Nasya (nasal passages – water or oil based)
- Traditional: rakta moksha (bloodletting)

Rasayana (Rejuvenation)

- Diet
- Herbs
- External oiling
  - Ingesting ghee or other oil
  - Steam
- Routine
Resources

Susan Bernhardt, Essence Ayurveda & Yoga Therapy
- Ayurveda consultations; Yoga Therapy; Tibetan Cranial; Reiki; Thai Massage
- www.essenceayurveda.com
- 303.523.5289
- susan@essenceayurveda.com

General Information, Herbs, Other Supplies
- www.banyanbotanicals.com

Ayurvedic / Indian Cookbook
- Usha Lad & Dr. Vasant Lad, Ayurvedic Cooking for Self-Healing.

Ayurveda Books
- Acharya Shunya, Ayurveda Lifestyle Wisdom. Good amount of theory and practical information, including recipes and instructions for daily routines, along with references to studies.
- Vasant Lad, Ayurvedic Home Remedies. Introduction to Ayurveda theory and many remedies for a wide variety of conditions.