

Ayurvedic Health Perspectives

Ayurveda is the traditional natural medicine system of India, that has been practiced successfully for over 5000 years.

It is a holistic mind/body/spirit/medicine, with an emphasis on treating the person, not just the disease.

According to Ayurveda, pure Spirit manifested into the diversity of forms that we see in the world so that it had a way of having experience and knowing itself. This manifestation took place through the use of the 5 elements:

- **Ether**-space/connectedness
- **Air**-movement
- **Fire**-metabolism/transformation
- **Water**-fluidity
- **Earth**-solidity

These 5 elements combine to create the 3 doshas, or mind/body constitutional types:

- **Vata**-air and ether
This is the wind constitution and displays characteristics of being variable/erratic, mobile, cold, light, and dry.
Vata disorders involve pain, wasting, dryness, anxiety, and fatigue.
- **Pitta**-fire and water
This is the fire type with characteristics of being hot, light, oily, and penetrating.
Pitta disorders involve inflammation, infection, anger, judgement, and intensity.
- **Kapha**-earth and water
This is the water constitution with characteristics of being cool, heavy, moist, stable.
Kapha disorders involve congestion, depression, stagnation, and heaviness.

Each of us is born with a unique balance of the doshas according to our parents state at the time of conception. It is our genetic code. Remaining healthy is a matter of maintaining the balance of the doshas that is natural for us.

We experience symptoms or ill health when our current state has deviated from our natural state. In other words, when our natural balance of the doshas has undergone change. This happens due to faulty diet or lifestyle, thoughts/feelings/emotions, stress patterns, change of season, climate factors, and age.

According to Ayurveda, the root cause of disease is that we have forgotten our true nature as spirit. In doing so, we become overly identified with the body and mind. This causes us to make choices based on the desires of our senses, fail to listen to our inner wisdom, and have difficulty establishing a proper pace of living and thinking.

The goal of Ayurveda is to bring us back to that natural state of balance that is unique for each of us by teaching us how to make choices that support that balance.

This is done through proper diet, the use of herbs, body therapies, breathing exercises, lifestyle practices, yoga or proper exercise, and meditation or stillness practices, and healthy daily and seasonal routines.

Goals of Ayurvedic Treatment:

- Balance the **3 doshas** as they were at the time of conception.
- Reduce **Ama**-toxicity or poorly digested by-products of food accumulated in the system. This coats the channels and tissues of the body and contributes to most disease states. There is also a mental ama that is born of undigested thoughts, feelings, emotions.
- Build **Ojas**-the subtle energy behind the immune system which gives us energy, resilience, and balance of mind. It is built through proper digestion and nutrition, and stillness practices.
- Balance **Agni**-the digestive capacity. If it is too high (Pitta) we are burning ourselves up, If it is too low (Kapha) we don't digest well and are building excess tissue. If it is variable (Vata) we are not digesting or absorbing nutrients and we experience deficiency . This affects all cells of the body.
If agni is not balanced, ama is likely to accumulate.
The state of agni also has a profound effect on the mind.
Ayurveda states that most disease originates in the digestive system or the mind, so great attention is given to these areas.
- Develop **Sattva**. According to Ayurveda, there are 3 mental energies of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. Rajas is turbulence or activity, Tamas is inertia or dullness, and Sattva is clarity. We all naturally move through all three of these states daily.
The goal of Ayurvedic treatment is to calm and clear the mind and increase Sattva through proper diet and lifestyle choices.

An Ayurvedic treatment plan is best implemented slowly over time with patience and persistence.

It is most successful when only a few changes are implemented at once, until they become a habit.

The purpose of Ayurveda is to create a state of vitality, clarity, and longevity, so that we may experience our true selves and be of greater service in our lives.