

Ayurveda

Lil Aafiyah

Liver Power

Strengthen Liver the Ayurveda way

Panchakarma

Detoxification at cellular level

Baby moon

Tryst with Ayurveda

Kitchen

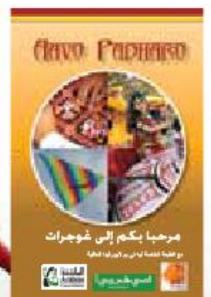
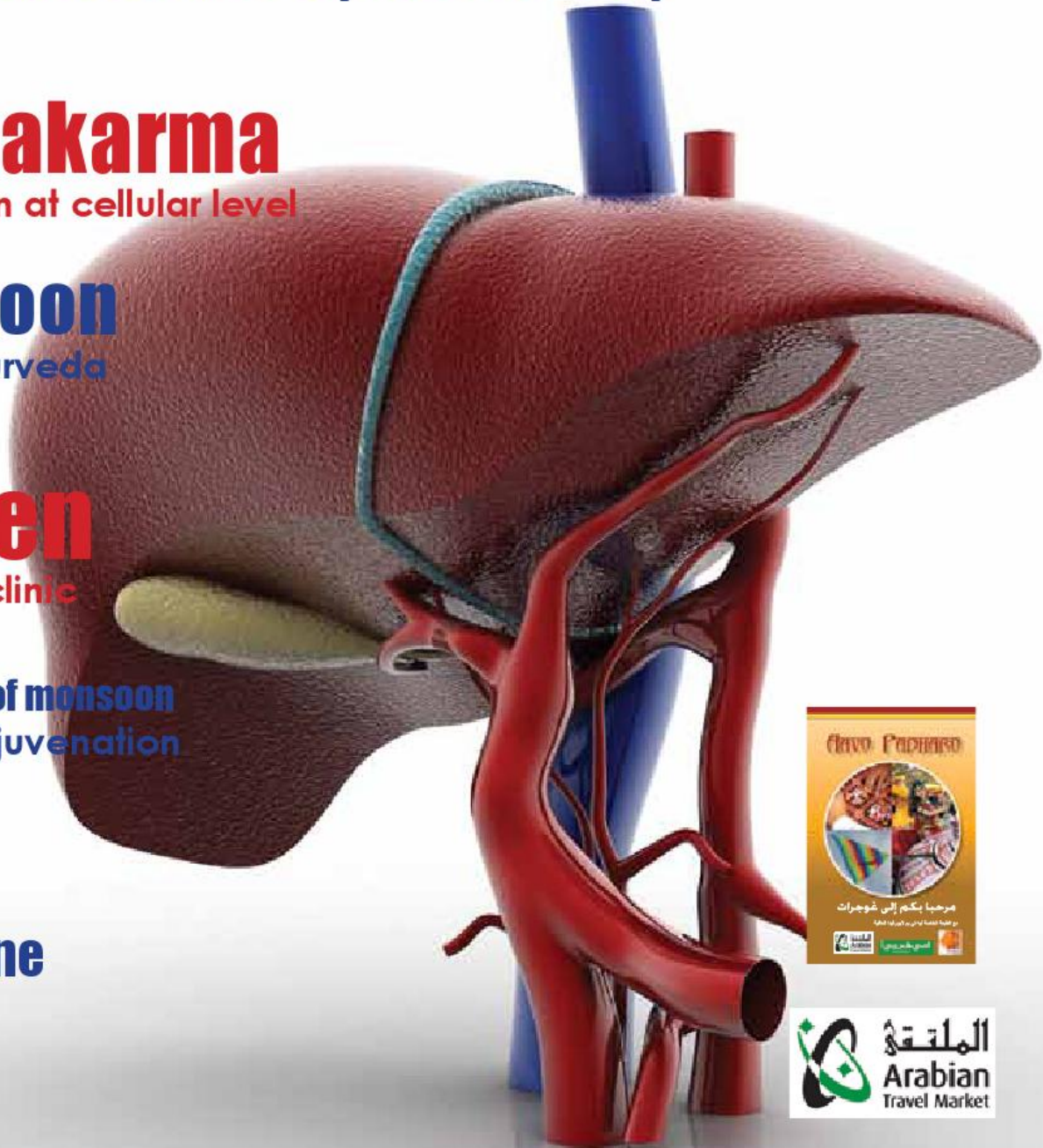
A domestic clinic

On the arrival of monsoon

Ayurvedic rejuvenation

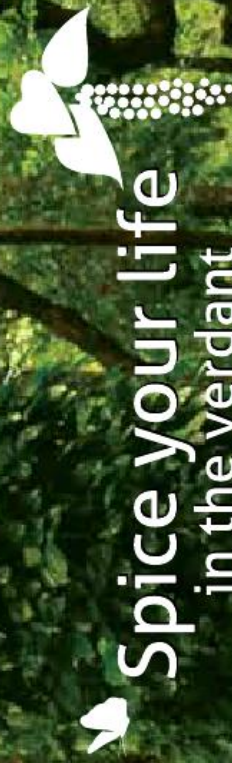
Yoga

Beauty zone



AN FM MEDIA PUBLICATION





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Beyond borders

Ayurveda has been the health-keeper of India for the last several centuries. It has brought relief to millions of people through the ages, using very reliable, but cost-effective, formulations. A lot of people from the Middle East—not only the expatriate Indians but Arab nationals themselves—travel to India to avail themselves of Ayurvedic treatment.

India and the Middle East nations share a unique relationship for several centuries. There is a history of the cultures engaging in a give-and-take relationship which helped both its people. Geography never stood in the way of goodness travelling from one part to the other.

Millions of Indians now work in the Middle East nations in a mutually-beneficial way. There will be no other part on earth where Indians engage themselves so actively with people of another region than the Middle East.

We are happy to be part of this closer relationship between the two people. Since its inception, Ayurveda For Wellness has been on a mission to propagate the goodness of Ayurveda across the globe. At present, the magazine comes out in English, Arabic, German and Russian languages.

The enthusiastic reception of all the four editions of the magazine by readers all over the world is a pointer to the increased interest people have in Ayurveda. We hope our readers and well-wishers will continue to support our efforts to carry the message of Ayurveda further.

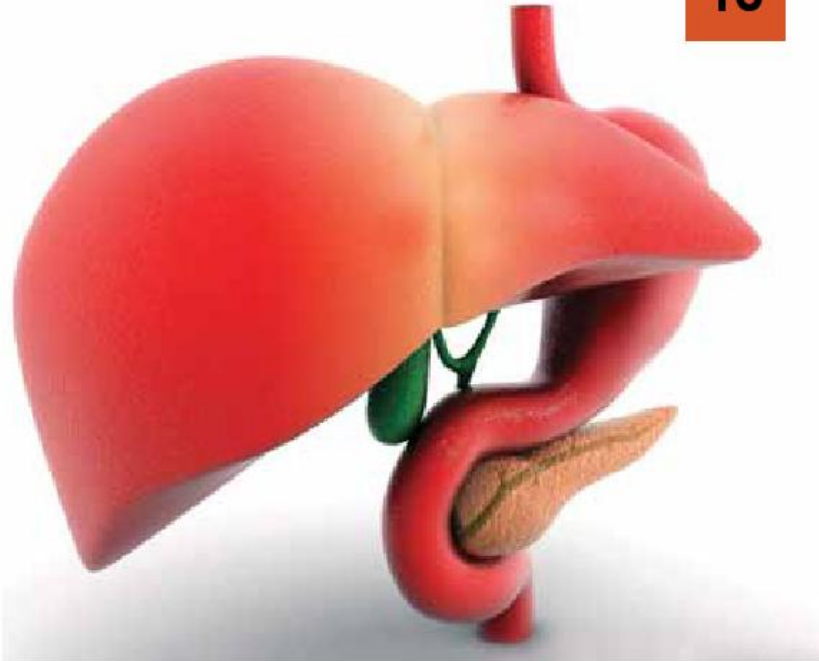
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On the arrival of monsoon

On the very onset of monsoon, Ayurvedic health resorts and clinics in Kerala are ready to pamper and heal tourists from all over the world with their special monsoon treatment packages. Monsoon period is preferred to offer Ayurvedic curative and rejuvenative treatments. Why?

Ayurveda advocates following a lifestyle in accordance with the rules of the nature. According to Ayurveda, perfect health (swāsthya) springs from total harmony between man's inner nature (including doshas) and outside Nature. When this harmony is upset, diseases set in. So, to maintain health, one should lead one's life in consonance with his inner constitution and seasonal peculiarities.

Ayurveda says human beings are the micro parts of a macro system called nature. According to Ayurveda, the changes that happen in the macro system, will visit their micro parts, that is the human body, as well. The degree of influence that each element demonstrates in nature depends on geographical location, the season, the climate and the time of day.

For a living being, 'survival' means the art and science of adapt-

ability, the ability for making intelligent adjustments to cope with surroundings. And that is the significance of dinacharya and ritucharya (seasonal regimen) elaborated in Ayurvedic texts.

Monsoon is one of the seasons which has strong characteristics, the profound one being incessant rains. It is called the Varsha ritu, which starts in the beginning of June in Kerala (and varies while we travel up north), and peaks between July 15 and August 15. This period coincides with the month of Karkidaka in Malayalam era. Ayurveda practitioners in Kerala have found through ages of experience that this is the best time to perform Ayurvedic treatments. And they have scientific reasons to back their observations.

Ayurveda on six seasons

(Extreme Winter) Śīśira, Spring (Vasantha) and Summer (Greesh-



Special rice porridge (Kazhikada Kanji)

The special rice porridge (Karkidaka kanji) has been in vogue in Kerala during the monsoon season. It's a preparation of a special variety of rice (navara) with medicinal herbs, which is easy to cook.

The pack of medicinal herbs, which will be put to the boiling rice will have the following ingredients: Cumin, fenugreek, pepper, dried ginger, Ashali, Bishop's weed and shathahum. Now a days ready-to-cook packets of the mix is available in the market.

The porridge is prepared by mixing all ingredients except the medicinal plants and boiling in water. The cloth bag of medicinal herbs would be kept in the boiling porridge so that the essence of the herbs are absorbed by the rice. Once the porridge is ready coconut milk and ghee are to be added to it and then it has to be taken as hot. This preparation should be taken for at least for 2 weeks once a day. It can be taken along with other curries and vegetables.

This rice preparation is regarded as a great rejuvenating medicinal food. It improves the digestive fire in the body, burn the toxins and cleanses the system. It makes the person feel light.

ma) form Northern solstice (Utharāyana), the period when sun is seen traversing to north of the equator. This is known as the period of extraction (ādānakāla), as it takes away human strength day by day. During this time, the sharp, hot & dry (theekshṇa, ushṇa and rooksha) properties of the sun and earth increase, which ultimately weaken the gentle (soumya) properties of the earth.

Rainy season (Varsha), autumn (Śarath) and early winter (Hemanta) form Southern solstice (Dakṣiṇāyana), the period when sun is seen traversing to the south of equator. It is called period of discharge (Visargakāla), as it gives back vitality and strength. In other words, body gains strength during this period. Ayurveda classics suggest that during southern solstice the moon (soma) gains strength due to the predominance of gentleness (soumya bhāva), while the properties of the sun (āgneya, fiery) weaken. The cold clouds of rain

and the winds of the period cool the fiery earth and this causes unctuous (snigdha) property to gain strength. The body has maximum strength during Hemanta and Śisira, moderate strength during Vasantha and Śarath and minimal strength during Varsha and Greeshma.

Monsoon and your body

Monsoon affects each of the bodily humors (doshas) in different ways:

(1) Waste materials accumulated in the body during the summer will be aggravated by the rain; which will result in an excess of Vata. Aggravated Vata can cause many problems such as pain in the joints, muscles, lower back and neck, and also suffering from body stiffness during this season.

(2) According to Ayurveda, rain falling into the hot summer earth increases acidity (anlata) in vegetables and all food materials. Pitta aggravation is the result and it causes fevers, acidity, digestive problems and inflammations.

(3) Finally, the contaminated water, food and the cold climate altogether aggravates Kapha dosha which in turn causes cold, cough, allergies and skin diseases.

Thus, all the three doshas get aggravated in the monsoon. Curiously, this is also the best time to bring back them back to the balance. Because, the doshas are in a loosened and aggravated state, moving within the body. These can be best brought into normalcy by eliminating the impurities or the vitiated doshas from the system.

Body is more receptive during monsoon. It has also been observed that Karkidaka is the best time to perform Ayurvedic treatments as the body is more receptive to Ayurvedic medicines than at any other time of the year. In this season the body absorbs anything applied to it, quickly and efficiently. The Acharyas have, hence, suggested that preventive and curative treatments be undertaken during this season, along with special pro-

protocols for daily regimens, seasonal regimens, and rituals & costumes.

What to take care

In rainy season, the digestive power is weakened. The turbid water and weak digestive fire are responsible for vitiating humors (doshas). Hence it is advised to adopt regimens that do not vitiate doshas and those that increase digestion. Depending upon each day's weather one has to adjust diet and lifestyle.

Avoid cold drinks, day sleep, dew, river water, heavy exercise etc. On cool, windy and rainy days, sour, salty and fatty foods are advisable as they pacify Vata. One should take old barley, wheat and Šāli rice (*Oryza sativum* Linn), along with the meat of arid animals and vegetable soup to maintain normal power of digestion. Moreover, it is advised to drink mādhvika or arishta (cellared alcoholic beverages) and pure rainwater or water – boiled and cooled, mixed with a little honey.

Monsoon Treatments (Karkataka Chikitsa)

Kerala has a unique tradition in Ayurveda, which is now become a most sought after healing modality in the world. Monsoon treatment (July 15-August 15 period) lasts for 8 to 10 days in which treatment for detoxification, purification and rejuvenation are administered. This is mainly for the healthy people in order to keep fit and to improve the immune system. This protocol includes processes such as Abhyanga, Elakizhi, Podikizhi, Steam Bath, Kayadhara, Purgation, Njavarakizhi, shirodhara, Nasyam, Lepanam and matravasthy.

Panchakarma

Panchakarma is the systemic

Body is more receptive during monsoon. It has also been observed that Karkidaka is the best time to perform Ayurvedic treatments as the body is more receptive to Ayurvedic medicines than at any other time of the year.

cleansing of the body without damaging the tissues. Studies have indicated that Panchakarma treatment, particularly in monsoon season, plays a very important role in the treatment of nervous and chronic diseases, which are not cured by modern medicine or palliative and symptomatic treatments.

Duration

An elaborate full course of Panchakarma therapy takes 45 days to complete. However, these days, an abridged version lasting 15 to 21 days by eliminating certain inconsequential procedures but retaining the essential parts are also being designed.

The treatment programme is generally divided into four parts.

1. Amapachana period, in which the patient is administered internal medicines like kashyams in order to improve the digestive system.

2. Poorvakarma period, or pre-process period, in which treatments such as snehana (internal and external oleation), swedana (steam bath), bahyaasnehana (abhyanga, elakizhi, podikizhi, pizchil etc.) are performed.

3. Panchakarma in which the five purification treatments—virechana, vasthy, vamana, nasyam and rakthamoksham are performed.

4. Paschatkarma, or post-process period, which mainly consist of administering a strict diet, modification in life style, shirodhara, and

njavarakizhi.

The five procedures are: vamana, virechana, vasti, nasya and rakta mokshana.

Vamana: Therapeutic vomiting

Induction of emesis by oral administration of emetics is called as vamana. Eliminating the Kapha which produces excess mucus is the primary objective of this therapy. Once the mucus is released the patient will feel instantly relieved. It is likely that congestion, wheezing and breathlessness will be corrected, hence the sinuses will become clear.

This treatment is best for all Kapha-type disorders, headache, dizziness, epilepsy (between attacks), chronic sinus problems, and for repeated attacks of tonsillitis and nausea. Besides, it will help to release the block at the respiratory organ.

Virechana: Purgation therapy

Virechana helps relieve excess Pitha, which creates bile disturbance in the body. Normally, this treatment is done three days after vamana. If vamana therapy is not needed, virechana can be done straightaway.

Virechana cleanses the sweat glands, small intestine, colon, kidneys, stomach, liver, and spleen. A number of fine herbs are used as a laxative. These include flaxseed husk, dandelion root, psyllium seed, cow's milk, salt, castor oil, raisins and mango juice. When taking these laxatives, it is important to adhere to restricted diet.

This treatment is good for skin diseases, chronic fever, piles, abdominal tumours, worms, gout, jaundice, gastrointestinal problems, constipation, and irritable bowel

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syndrome.

Vasti: Enema therapy

Normally, this treatment is used to flush the loosened doshas out through the intestinal tract. Vasti is mainly done for Vata disorders. It involves injecting medicinal substances such as sesame oil, calamus oil, or other herbal decoctions in a liquid medium into the rectum.

It alleviates constipation, distension, chronic fever, common cold, sexual disorders, kidney stones, heart pain, vomiting, backache, neck pain and hyper acidity. Vata disorders such as arthritis, rheumatism and gout can also be treated.

Nasyam: (Nasal administration)

This therapy involves inhaling va-

pour from medicinal herbs. Mostly, it is done to eliminate Kapha-related problems, ear, eyes, and nose and throat disorders such as migraine, sinusitis and bronchitis.

Nasal administration of medicine helps to correct the disorders of breathing affecting the higher cerebral, sensory and motor functions.

It is indicated for dryness of the nose, sinus congestion, hoarseness, migraine headache, convulsions and certain eye and ear problems.

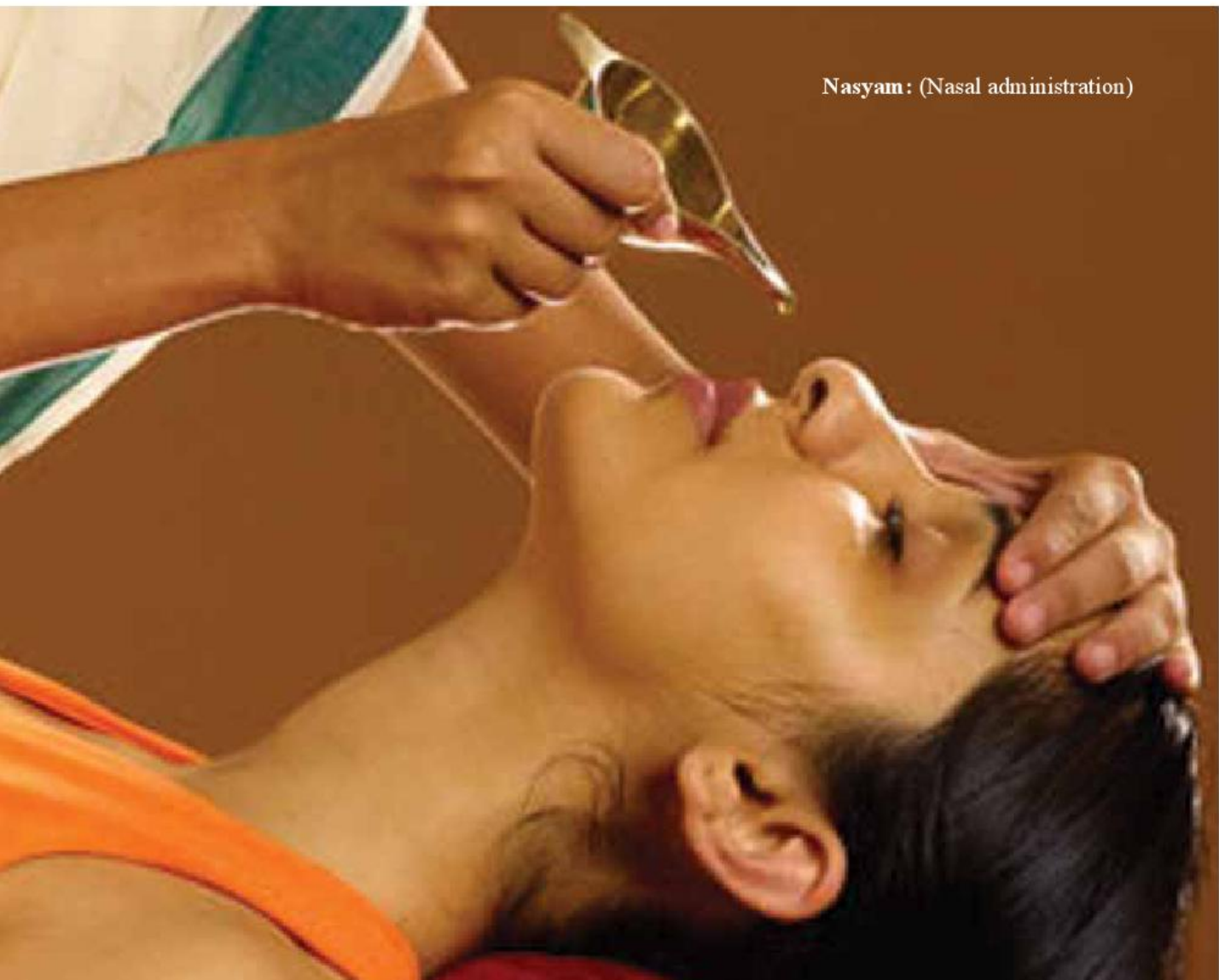
Rakta moksha: Bloodletting (detoxification of the blood)

Bloodletting is used to eliminate toxins that are absorbed into the bloodstream through the gastrointestinal tract. This process will purify blood.

This treatment is best for skin disorders such as urticaria, rash, eczema, acne, scabies and chronic itching. Bloodletting is not advised in cases of anaemia and edema.

Benefits

- Eliminate toxins and toxic conditions from your body and mind
- Restore your constitutional balance, improving health and well-being
- Strengthen your immune system and resist illness
- Reverse the negative effects of stress on your body and mind, thereby slowing the ageing process
- Enhance your self-reliance, strength, energy, vitality and mental clarity
- Bring about deep relaxation and sense of well-being



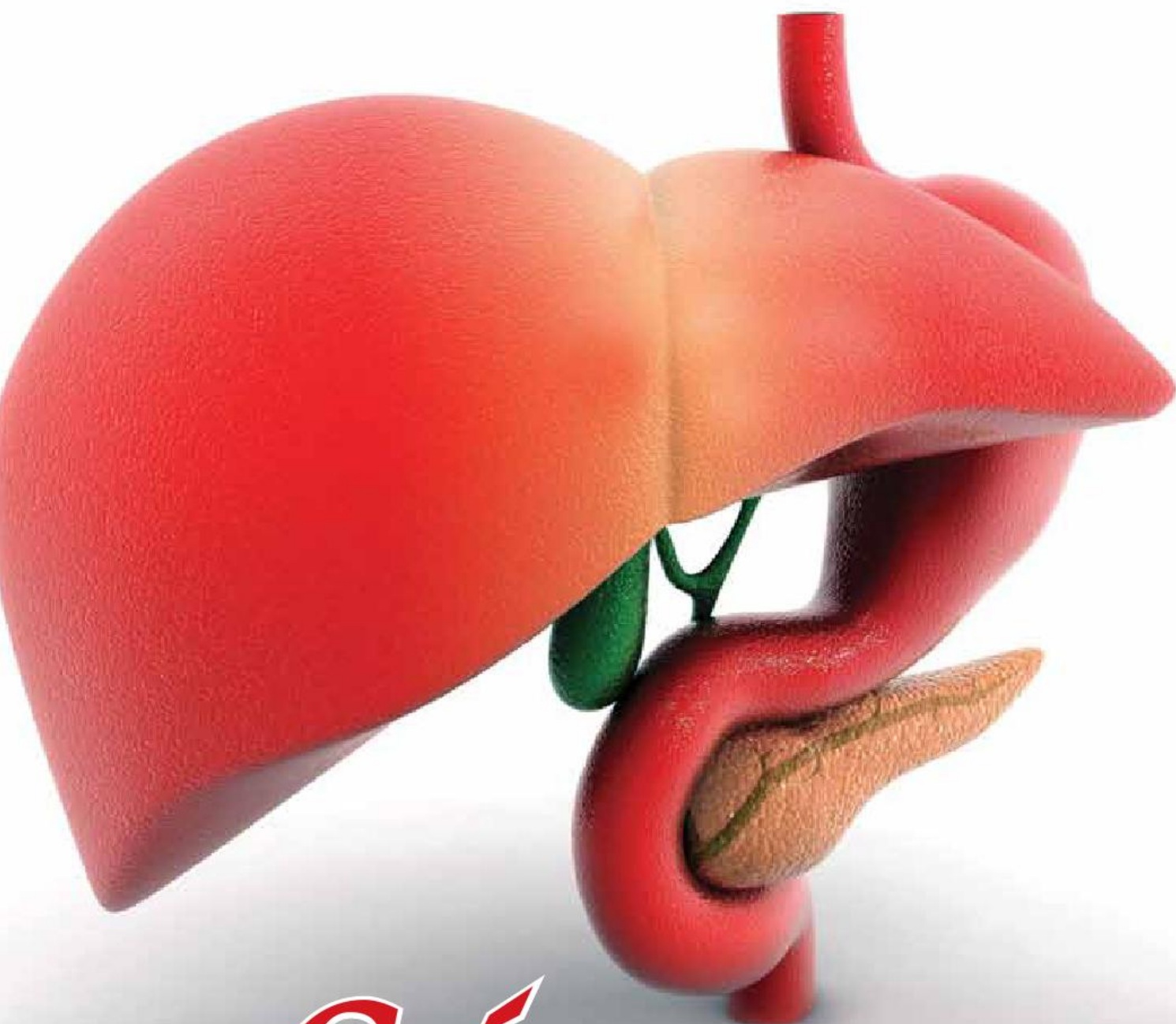
Nasyam: (Nasal administration)

In Patan there is a structure called Rani Ki Vav. An elaborate step-well. So ornate are its walls, it almost feels like one is in a temple.

I asked for the architect's name and no one seemed to know. I asked about the sculptors. Even their names were unknown. Here, art precedes the artist. The creation is above the creator!



COVER STORY



Líver

.....

If your liver is healthy, no virus or foreign body in the whole world can strike your immune system, says N.K. Padmanabhan Vaidyar, the revered Ayurvedic practitioner in Cochin.

Liver is the master organ in the body, says N.K. Padmanabhan Vaidyar, the revered Ayurvedic practitioner in Cochin who has carved a niche for himself in treatment of gastroenterological ailments and made a commercial breakthrough with Kamilari, an Ayurvedic drug for management of viral hepatitis and jaundice. "No virus or foreign body in the whole world can strike the immune system if the liver is

healthy," he asserts.

The Vaidyavachaspathi traces his ancestry to Sri Lankan immigrants who became physicians to the royal household of the Maharajah of Cochin. He learnt the traditional Indian medicine from ancient manuscripts. He claims that all liver diseases including hepatitis can be cured.

The liver is the largest glandular organ in the body and has more functions than any other human organ. It plays a pivotal role in human metabolism. Normal functions of the heart, kidney, and the brain depend on the liver. Support from the liver is needed for digestion, production of blood cells and body waste disposal. It is primarily re-



Power



He would advise a strict diet for his patients. Timely food and medicine as per prescription must be strictly followed. Stick to a bland diet, like carrot, tender coconut water, orange, grapes. Use rock salt instead of common salt.

sponsible for detoxifying the body of poisonous substances by transforming and removing toxins and wastes.

There are many sources of body toxins and wastes that the liver deals with - toxins from food, such as traces of pesticides and preservatives, and alcohol; toxins from outside, like drugs, adulterants and environmental pollutants; internally produced chemicals, such as hormones that are no longer needed, nitrogen-containing waste left over from protein re-use; and energy production. These toxins and wastes are converted into less harmful substances by the liver and eliminated from the body.

The liver produces and secretes bile, to be stored in the gallbladder until needed, and which is used to break down and digest fatty acids. It converts sugar into glycogen, which it stores until the muscles

need energy and it is secreted into the blood stream as glucose. It synthesises protein and hundreds of enzymes needed for digestion and other bodily functions. It produces prothrombin and fibrinogen, both blood-clotting factors, and heparin, a mucopolysaccharide sulfuric acid ester that helps keep blood from clotting within the circulatory system. The entire blood supply in one's body passes through the liver several times a day. It produces urea, while breaking down proteins, which it synthesises from carbon dioxide and ammonia. It is eventually excreted by the kidneys. The liver also stores critical trace elements such as iron and copper as well as vitamins A, D, and B12..

Hepatitis, portal hypertension, cirrhosis, cancer, heart disease, stones in gall-bladder and diabetes can lead to serious dysfunction of the liver. Liver diseases usually



set in gradually without much of clear symptoms. However, unusual tiredness, loss of appetite, tastelessness, vomiting, fever, headache, chills, stomach upsets, sticky feel on tongue, foul breath, bad body odour, itching, black traces below the eyes, internal pain on the side where the liver is located, paleness of skin and jumping pulse could be early indications. Later, jaundice or jaundice like symptoms (pale faeces, dark urine and yellowness in the yes) may develop.

Alcoholism, habitual intake of fatty, oily foodstuff that is mostly indigestible, too hot and spicy, acidic and salty diet, contaminated food and water, toxins accumulated in the body due to food or medication, being exposed to heat and the sun, holding back that which should be expelled from the body, restlessness, continuous state of mental agitation, and nutritional deficiencies

etc may cause liver diseases.

“Ayurveda has understood the liver, its working,” says Vaidyar who made his mark by developing Kamilari, an Ayurvedic preparation recommended as effective remedy for jaundice, acute and chronic inflammatory liver disorders, dyspepsia, loss of appetite, alcoholism etc, in various hepatocellular and hepatocanalicular conditions. The ingredients for the premium liver supplement include *Thespesia populnea*, *Elettari cardamomum*, *Zingiber officinalis*, *Glycyrrhiza glabra* and honey.

Thespesia populnea, the main component of the formulation, has been found to be endowed with hepatoprotective activity. He assures that by administering the drug “a balance is created in vata, pitta and kapha, stabilising the metabolism and rejuvenating the liver.” Vaidyar’s attention is fully focused on hepatitis. WHO puts the number of the infected in India at 46.5 million (one in twenty). Two million are dying every year from hepatitis, which is many times more virulent than HIV. Moreover, the virus lies dormant for many years and carriers may unknowingly keep transferring it to others. The virus causes jaundice, followed by cirrhosis of the liver and even liver cancer.

Padmanabhan Vaidyar says that jaundice and cirrhosis have been cured with the help of about 107 herbs, liver cancer remains a big challenge. He has ample evidence to prove that Hepatitis A, B, C and E can be treated effectively. He offers palliative treatment for HIV infection, helping reduce the viral load to a great extent and allowing the patient to lead a normal active life. He points out that vaccination against hepatitis may have various side effects.

Hepatitis B is now passing a big threat in many areas in the country. Hepatitis B is seen with or without jaundice. Hepatitis B is seen

in two different ways in patients: Liver enlargement with jaundice, or asymptomatic but infected in the blood. Vaidyar would say that the treatment for Hepatitis B is similar to that of jaundice.

He claims that *Drakshadi kwatha*, *patola kadurohinyadi kashayam* and *Kamilari* can offer complete cure for 80 per cent of the Hepatitis B patients. As in the case of treatment of other chronic diseases, as per Ayurvedic treatise,

Oily foodstuff that is mostly indigestible, too hot and spicy, acidic and salty diet, contaminated food and water, toxins accumulated in the body due to food or medication, being exposed to heat and the sun, holding back that which should be expelled from the body, restlessness, continuous state of mental agitation, and nutritional deficiencies etc may cause liver diseases.



for Hepatitis B too, there are three stages: Sukhasadhyam - can be easily treated; krichrasadhyam - can be treated with difficulty, and asadhyam - cannot be treated. "Eighty per cent of cases fall into sukhasadhyam and the remaining 20 per cent fall into krichrasadhyam and asadhyam.

Hepatitis B is not a disease that kills suddenly. It takes 15 to 20 years to develop as cirrhosis or cancer and then the patient dies. Advanced (asadhyam) stage of Hepatitis B can be compared with Ayurveda's kumbha kamila, alasm and lagharakam. The 20 per cent that falls into krichrasadhyam and asadhyam can be treated effectively with certain additional medicines,

namely, Hepin, Elates Drops, Abhaya lavanam and Udaramritham kwatha. Upto 15 per cent of the 20 per cent that fall in krichrasadhyam and asadhyam can be saved. In short we can effectively treat up to 95 per cent of Hepatitis B cases."

He would advise a strict diet for his patients. Timely food and medicine as per prescription must be strictly followed. Stick to a bland diet, like carrot, tender coconut water, orange, grapes. Use rock salt instead of common salt. Oil is to be avoided. "Even if you do not take any medication, by proper recommended diet control alone, the disease can be cured," he says. Medication with a haphazard lifestyle will not give the desired result.

Padmanabhan Vaidyar claims that all current ailments are mentioned in the scriptures with their remedies. "In fact, 15,000 herbs are mentioned in the scriptures of which 850 are used commonly." Vaidyar is constantly in search of new herbs. He has found herbal remedies for all types of stones, diabetes, cholesterol and even hair fall. "Ayurveda restores or creates dharma while allopathy creates karma by supplying what is missing," he says. Take the example of pancreas. Its dharma is to produce insulin. If there's a malfunction, in allopathy insulin is administered (karma), whereas Ayurveda seeks to rejuvenate the pancreas, restoring its dharma of producing insulin.

Pancha Karma

Detoxification at cellular level



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Ayurveda which originated in ancient India, has gained worldwide recognition as an effective alternative or complementary system of healthcare. The popularity of Ayurveda has brought Panchakarma (five purificatory procedures) into prominence more than ever before. This unique therapy has a scientific basis and its principles and rationale have been well accepted.

Ayurveda is a dynamic medical system. It has a wide axiomatic frame which can accommodate both ancient and modern trends for the development of medical science. One may find roots of Vedic medicine in Ayurveda. But it has undergone a sea change over time and as a result today it has a strong basis of yukthi vyapasraya chikitsa (medical management), daiva vyapasraya (spiritual therapy) and satwavajaya (psychiatric measures).

Yukthi vyapasraya chikitsa requires strong scientific basis, demonstrable in accordance with stringent scientific norms and parameters, which have universal acceptance. It does not mean that Ayurveda should always be interpreted in terms of modern basic science. Ayurveda has its own unique fundamental theories and approaches.

A quick overview of Ayurvedic basics would be interesting. The whole universe is constituted of matter. And the term for matter in Ayurveda is Bhuta (element). Bhuta connotes that evolved through

function. Everything in the universe including animates and inanimates are constituted by the five Bhutas, five forms of matter - Ether (akash), Air (vayu), Fire (agni), water (jalam) and earth (prithvi) - each with specific properties.

'Ayu' or life is defined as a dynamic condition-a going on flux. The whole universe is always in a moving state. Everything is changing. Life is possible only when the living thing can be in tune with changing conditions of universe. Man is a microcosm of the macrocosm. Health is that condition when the organism is in harmony with the changes in the nature around and disharmony means illness.

Two opposite processes- creative and destructive -happen continuously in a living body i.e, building up and disintegration. In a dynamic state, energy is lost and so disintegration takes place. So to replenish energy we have to supply food. Body can make use of food for replenishing lost tissue and energy, if it is properly digested and assimilated.

If the jadharagni is weak or dhatwagni which promotes the transformation of digestive food to different body tissues is weak, the whole metabolism of the body is obstructed. Then 'ama'(toxin) is formed. This ama is the cause of all diseases. So in Sanskrit a disease is called 'aamaya', that originates from ama.

It is being now reported that most of the grave diseases are created by the action of free radicals

in the molecular level. As per the modern researches, free radicals are radicals set free from oxygenated substances. We want oxygen but substances with excess of oxygen radicals set them free, which in molecular level harm the molecule, and the deranged molecules create or promote diseases as Cancer, Hyper tension, Diabetes Arthritis, Ageing, Alzheimer's diseases, Parkinsonism etc. This free radical theory has very much similarity with Ayurvedic concept of ama.

This ama exerts its influence through doshas in the body. The doshas Vata, Pitha and Kapha are functional factors, which show how the body responds to the stimuli from external and internal conditions. The proper balanced state of the doshas shows a healthy state. Increased, decreased or irregularity of the state of the doshas are shown by the symptoms corresponding to each condition.

It is said that Pitha and Kapha are lame and Vata makes them move. Most of the diseases are caused either by blocking or forcefully initiating the vegas (natural urges) and here also it is Vata that is provoked.

So, all panchakarma techniques are directed at creating favourable conditions in the body for the proper Vata functioning. This is accomplished by preparatory steps such as lubricating and heating which stimulate the energies to shake and bring the morbid factors to Kosha (alimentary canal), so that such toxins can easily be purged out. This allows Vata to work properly.

Even though the imbalanced doshas are the immediate cause of the diseases, the root cause is ama. So to cure and to prevent disease ama is to be removed. For eliminating ama and for preventing the accumulation of ama, purificatory methods are to be evolved. There lies the importance of Panchakarma (five purificatory therapies).

The five therapies included in



panchakarma are

1-Vamanam (Emesis) - Induction of emesis by oral administration of emetics.

2 Virechanam (purgation) - Induction of purgation by oral administration of purgatives.

3 Vasti (Enema) - Administration of medicaments through anal rout.

4 Nasyam (Errhines) - Nasal administration of medicaments.

5 Rakthamoksham (Blood-letting) - Blood-letting using appropriate devices.

Before doing these therapies preparatory procedures are to be done. They are:

1 Snehanam (Oleation) - Intake of Ghee, sesame oil etc in a prescribed schedule.

2.Swedanam (Fomentation) - With steam or by pouring hot water boiled with herbs continuously all over body.

After completing the main procedures of panchakarma one has to come to the normal diet gradually in a specific schedule.

Apoptosis - programmed cell death - is another interesting phenomenon occurring in a living body. It helps in the maintenance of the body. Planned cellular death is a natural process where the organism itself, persuades the cell that has lost its proper tract or course to

commit suicide so as to protect the organism. It confirms the Ayurvedic concept that destruction of noxious elements by elimination is not a passive phenomenon but an active one sustained and promoted by vital energy.

Viewed from this angle, sodhana (purification) therapy is not an arbitrary step imposed by men but a well thought out process intended to enhance and support body's own effort to purify itself discouraging the undesirable elements. It represents the comprehensive purificatory treatment methodology which primarily aims at the exhaustive elimination of morbid materials accumulated in human tissues owing to varied causes.

Eradication of toxic debris is done without causing any harm to the healthy structures and functions of the body. This helps to maintain total health, making every particle of the body active to the fullest possible extent. Stated in brief, panchakarma therapy, together with its pre and post operative procedures is an effective tool for prevention of diseases and curing diseases. Detoxification at cellular level is a good remedy for chronic lifestyle related diseases rampant in modern world.

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De-stress your face

Ayurvedic facial Massage

Everyone has to face stress in one form or other in today's world. It has become an inescapable part of our everyday lives. It is one of the main causes of death and disease in the modern

world. Stress in everyday life can slowly accumulate in our bodies and cause a world of trouble. In an individual who is over stressed it can be seen in his face itself. Stress affects the facial muscles

and causes them to contract. This results in an unnatural grimace that lends a very unattractive look to the face. When these facial muscles are continuously contracted under stress, they lose their elastic-

BEAUTY ZONE

ity and wrinkles are formed. It is no wonder that people tend to look old and wrinkled at a very early age, these days.

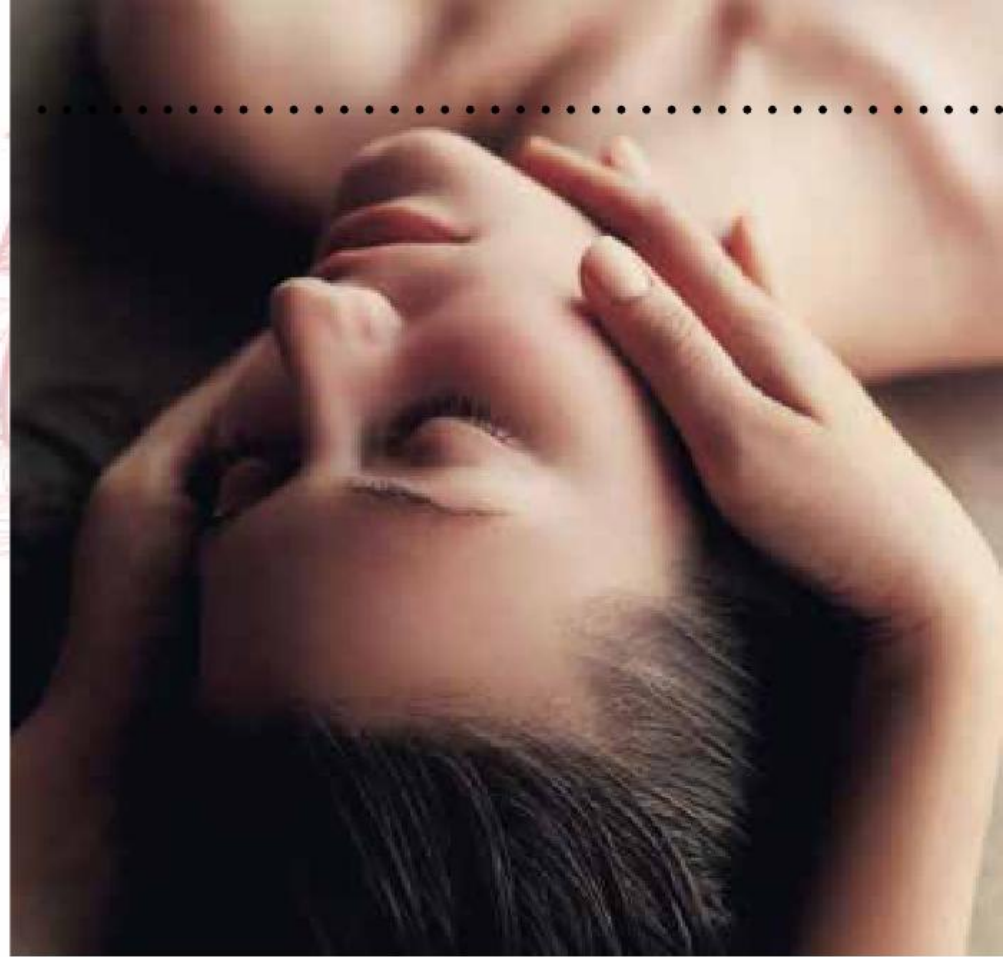
Ayurvedic face massage aims at freeing such constrictions within the facial muscles and connective tissue. The massage is carried out by application of massage oil and pressure along specific pressure points on the face. This helps to release all the stress-induced toxins from face and restore it to its natural balance.

Ayurvedic face massage helps detoxify facial muscles. It removes any stress induced blockages that are present in the muscles. It rejuvenates your face. Regular massage can make frown lines disappear and make your skin appear healthy and toned. It also stimulates lymphatic drainage and the circulation of blood.

Ayurvedic Facial Massage: Technique

At home, you can seek help from your kins to get a good massage. You can give massage to others also. When you massage the skin, keep in mind that smooth strokes release subtle tension under the skin and pressure points work on the deeper tissues and their related organ systems.

1. Apply warm oil to both palms and begin to massage the face with smooth strokes. Begin at the mid-line of the chin and work outward and upward.
2. Place your fingers under the jaw and rest the thumbs on the jaw line. Ask the person to open his/her mouth slightly and manipulate the chin and jaw area by pressing up and releasing gently.
3. Place thumbs on the jaw at the chin with index and third finger underneath the jaw line. Apply pressure to the top & inner part of the jaw bone. Lightly make small clockwise circles at the temples. The point at the temple is Shankha Marma. Repeat the procedure



Stress in everyday life can slowly accumulate in our bodies and cause a world of trouble. In an individual who is over stressed it can be seen in his face itself. Stress affects the facial muscles and causes them to contract

twice.

4. Place index finger between lower lip and tip of the chin. Ask the person to open his/her mouth slightly. Make small clock wise circles at this point. Continue this type of clock wise massage from cheeks to the temples. Repeat twice.

5. Place the tips of index fingers between the nose and the middle of the upper lip. This is called as Ushtra Marma. Press gently. Then stroke from this point out on both sides up to the corners of the mouth, then under the cheek bones, to the top of the ear, over the ear, to the base of the ear where it touches the head, to the bony bump (Mastoid) behind the ear lobe. Repeat this twice.

6. Hold the left side of the head with left hand. Place right index finger just above the base of the nostril. This point is known as Nasa

Marma. Give small circular massage from this point up to the bony prominence behind the ear lobe, but from over the ear. Repeat twice.

7. Here direction of massage is same as before. But start massaging from Ganda Marma i.e. mid way between the eyes and the tip of the nostrils.

8. Starting at the inner end of the eye brow, pinch along the eye brow to its outer edge with the help of index finger and thumb.

9. Stroke from the tip of the nose to the area of third eye, which is slightly above the mid-point between the eye brows. This is Ajna Marma. Massage this area in gentle clockwise motion for two minutes.

10. Massage the fore head. Make zigzag motions from one side of the fore head to the other. Repeat this from right to left and then from left to right.



Kitchen: A Domestic Clinic

Kitchen can become your domestic clinic. Use your kitchen and its resources to create herbal remedies for specific healthcare needs of your family

Kitchen Pharmacy is gaining wide popularity in our stress-filled life today. The focus is on the role played by nutrition in the maintenance of good health. Ayurveda considers food as the best medicine. This life science provides specific dietary guidelines for diseases like diabetes mellitus based on the individual's constitution and doshic imbalance. Based on certain elements of classical Ayurvedic dietary formulations and some common recipes, we can come up with a diet pattern best

suited for contemporary lifestyle. The pharmacology of Ayurveda is a vast science that includes thousands of medicines, many of them herbal preparations. In addition to these herbal cures, remedies such as the use of the healing properties of gems, metals and colours are recommended. Classic Ayurvedic texts state that all the substances found in nature have medicinal value when used in a proper manner. The purpose of these remedies is not to suppress the effects of illness as is often the case in western

medicine, but rather to bring the out-of-balance factors in the body into harmony once more, thereby eliminating the cause of the disease. The purpose of Ayurvedic remedies is to eradicate the disease itself, not just the symptoms of illness.

Ayurveda is a very practical science and the advice that follows, suggesting simple treatments for minor ailments and utilizing herbs commonly found in the kitchen, is straightforward and effective. At least 80 per cent of all diseases are

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self-limiting, that is, if nothing is done to alter the disease process, the body's own mechanism will eventually restore the nervous system to a state of health. Here, specific methods are indicated to support the body in its natural process of balancing the internal and external environments, thus promoting healing.

The Kitchen can become your domestic clinic. You can use your kitchen and its resources to create herbal remedies that would heal your family. The following are commonly available substances that are used at home.

Asafoetida: This aromatic substance, which is a gum extraction from a tree, is a stimulant. It also relieves spasm. It is a good expectorant, digestive, antacid and natural laxative. A pinch of asafoetida cooked with lentils helps digestion. It enkindles jataragni, removes toxins and relieves pain. It also relieves gas in the large intestine. If there is pain in the ear, a little asafoetida wrapped in cotton may be placed in the ear for relief. Recent studies have shown that asafoetida oil has antibiotic properties and inhibits growth of microbes.

Aniseed (*Pimpinella anisum*) is favoured in medicine for its properties to relieve flatulence and to remove catarrhal matter and phlegm from the bronchial tube. These properties are due to the presence of its essential oil. The seed induces perspiration and increases urine flow.

The leaves of the plant are useful in relieving gas and strengthening the stomach. Aniseed is mostly used as a flavouring agent for curries, sweet, cakes, cookies and



biscuits. Aniseed oil is used in medicine as an aromatic carminative to relieve flatulence. It is a popular flavouring agent for dental preparations and mouthwashes.

Baking Soda: When cooked with black beans or green gram baking soda makes them lighter and facilitates the cooking process. It is also an antacid. A pinchful with one cup of warm water and the juice of one-half lemon relieves acidity, gas and indigestion. Half a cup of baking soda in the bath helps circulation and makes the skin soft. Baking soda relieves skin infections, hives and rash and maintains the health and hygiene of the skin.

Caraway (*Carvum curvi*) is a biennial aromatic plant. It has usually a fleshy root which tastes somewhat like carrots and is yellowish on the outside and whitish on the inside. Caraway seeds, leaves and roots are considered useful in activating the glands besides increasing the action of kidneys. The seed is considered as an excellent house cleaner for the body. The seeds, whole or ground, help in the assimilation of starchy food such as pastries, breads, biscuits and certain vegetables such as cabbage, cucumber and onion which tend to produce flatulence. Caraway oil is used in medicine to relieve flatulence. It is also

used to correct the nauseating and gripping effects of some medicines. The long tender roots are sometimes boiled as vegetables and the leaves are sometimes used in salads, cream soups, and dishes of cabbage, cauliflower and potato.

Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*): The aroma and therapeutic properties of cardamom are due to its volatile oil. Tinctures of

cardamom are also made. They are used chiefly for strengthening the stomach. Cardamom is used for flavouring curries, cakes, coffee, meat etc. Cardamom is slightly astringent, sweet and a little pungent. It should be used only in small quantities sprinkled in tea or on vegetables. It also relieves gas. It is a pain reliever and it freshens the breath.

Chillies: Capsicum is the dried ripe fruit of genus capsicum.

Chillies are pungent and hot. Taken in moderation, they are useful as a decongestant and digestive.

They strengthen the blood-cot dissolving system, open up sinuses and air passages, break up mucus in the lungs, act as an expectorant or decongestant and help prevent bronchitis. Capsicum is also a potent painkiller, alleviating headaches when inhaled. It also has antibacterial and antioxidant activity. Putting hot chilli sauce on food speeds up metabolism, burning off calories. Raw green chillies are used in the preparation of curries and pickles and they impart flavour. They are also used in vegetable salads.

Castor oil: This is a laxative that is safe enough to use even in treating small babies. To treat an infant, the mother should dip her little finger into the oil and let the baby suck on it. For chronic constipation, one tablespoon of castor oil should be taken with a cup of ginger tea. This tonic will neutralise toxins and relieve gas and constipation. Castor oil is also anti-rheumatic because it is a



natural pain reliever and laxative. The castor root is used in treating many vata disorders such as arthritis, sciatica, chronic backache and muscle spasms. It is also effective in the treatment of gout.

Cinnamon (Cinnamom Zeylanicum) is aromatic and is a stimulant with antiseptic and refreshing properties. The taste is slightly pungent and astringent. It is a good detoxifying herb. It creates freshness and strengthens and energises the tissues. Cinnamon also acts as a pain reliever. It relieves vata and kapha disorders and can also be used in pitta ailments, if taken in small quantities. Cinnamon enkindles agni, promotes digestion and has a natural cleansing action. It stimulates sweating. It is good for the relief of colds, congestion and cough. Cinnamon, cardamom, ginger and clove are used together to relieve cough and congestion and to promote digestion. It controls sugar in diabetes and prevents stomach ulcers, wards off urinary tract infection, fights tooth decay and gum diseases. Cinnamon improves complexion and memory.



Clove (Syzygium Aromaticum) is an aromatic herbal substance. It is hot, pungent, oily and sharp. Therefore it aggravates pitta. Clove will help control vata and kapha. Clove is a natural pain reliever. Oil of clove is used to relieve toothache. For this treatment, a small piece of cotton is dipped in to the oil and inserted in to the cavity of the tooth. Clove alleviates coughs, congestion, colds and sinus problems. A few drops of clove oil may be added to boiling water and the fumes may then be inhaled as a decongestant.

This will relieve nasal obstruction and congestion. Clove oil is stimulant, carminative, antiseptic, anti-spasmodic and expectorant. It also stimulates sluggish circulation and thereby promotes digestion and metabolism. Clove oil contains ingredients that help stabilise blood circulation and regulate body temperature. Clove is used as a table spice and is mixed with chillies, cinnamon, turmeric and other spices in the preparation of curry powder.

Coriander: There are two forms of coriander. One is the fresh greens of the plant. These are called cilantro. The other is the dry seed. This is an aromatic and stimulating substance



that aids digestion. It also has a cooling property. Coriander is a natural diuretic and it may be taken when one feels a burning sensation while passing urine. For this treatment, prepare a tea from the seeds and pour hot water over a strainer in the water to make an infusion. This tea makes the urine more alkaline. It is also useful for gas, indigestion, nausea and vomiting. Fresh coriander pulp may be applied to the skin to relieve burning sensation. It also helps to purify the blood. The entire coriander plant, when young, is used for preparing chutneys and sauces. The fresh leaves are used for flavouring curries and soups. Coriander seeds are carminative, aromatic, anti-spasmodic and stimulant. They reduce feverishness and promote a feeling of coolness. The leaves of coriander strengthen the stomach. They relieve flatulence, increase

secretion and discharge of urine and reduce fever.

Cumin seeds are extensively used in mixed spices and for flavouring curries, soups, sausages, breads and cakes. It is a stimulant. It increases the secretion and discharge of urine and relieves flatulence. It also strengthens the stomach and arrests bleeding. It helps to contract the uterus so that the impurities can be expelled after delivery by using cumin seeds in medicinal form. In medicine, cumin oil is used as a carminative. It also aids the secretion of digestive juices. Roasted cumin powder is effectively used in intestinal disorders such as diarrhoea or dysentery. For such ailments a pinch of cumin powder is taken with freshly prepared buttermilk. Cumin seed also relieves pain and cramps in the abdomen.

Fenugreek (Trigonella foenum graecum): The seeds of the plant are the best cleansers within the body, highly mucus solvent and soothing agent. They have antibiotic power and they help control blood sugar in diabetes. The seeds are also anti-diarrhoeal, anti-ulcer and anti-cancer food. They tend to lower blood pressure and help prevent intestinal gas. The seeds can be used to remove dandruff by using as a paste applied over the head.

Garlic (Allium sativum): Garlic has been held in high esteem for its health-building qualities for centuries all over the world. It is a proven broad-spectrum antibiotic that combats bacteria, intestinal parasites and viruses. Garlic lowers blood pressure and blood cholesterol, discourages dangerous blood clotting and helps prevent cancer and heart attack. It acts as a



decongestant, expectorant, anti-spasmodic and anti-inflammatory agent. It boosts immune system, relieves gas and possesses anti-diarrhoeal, oestrogenic and diuretic properties. Garlic is used for centuries in the preparation of curries, chutneys, pickles, vegetables, gravies and tomato ketchup. Garlic relieves aggravated vata and alleviates gas. It is good for digestion and absorption and is also a good rejuvenating herb. Since it has a warming effect, it is helpful during rainy season and winter. It also relieves pain in the joints. This herb is anti-rheumatic and may be used for dry cough or congestion. It is very effective for sinus headaches and pain or tingling in the ears. For ear problems pour three to four drops of garlic oil in the ear. If the ear is filled with this oil at night and sealed with cotton, by morning the pain will have disappeared. Garlic also relieves toothache. Some people say that garlic is rajas and should not be taken by spiritual practitioners. Garlic stimulates sexual energy and is therefore not recommended for those who practise celibacy. Fresh garlic may be used for cooking. It makes the food more palatable and easier to absorb and it enkindles agni.

Ghee is a product made from unsalted butter. It is an excellent appetiser, enkindling agni and it enhances flavour of foods. It helps digestion as it stimulates the secretion of digestive juices. It also helps to enhance intelligence, understanding, memory and ojus. It relieves constipation, if taken

with warm milk. When used with various herbs, ghee carries the medicinal properties to the tissues. Ghee relieves chronic fever, anaemia and blood disorders and is useful for detoxification. It does not increase cholesterol and it has anti-vata, anti-pitta and anti-kapha properties. Ghee promotes the healing of wounds and alleviates peptic ulcer and colitis. Generally it is good for the eyes, skin and nose.

Ginger has been used in India from Vedic period and is called maha aushadhi, meaning the great medicine. It is used to treat a



variety of diseases like nausea, vomiting, headache, chest congestion, cholera, cold, diarrhoea, stomach ache, rheumatism and nervous diseases. British herbal compendium indicates ginger for atonic dyspepsia, colic prophylaxis, travel sickness and vomiting during pregnancy. It is also used for anorexia, bronchitis and rheumatic complaints. Ginger ranks high in antioxidant and anti-cancer activity. This herb is used fresh and dried. Both forms of the herb are aromatic and pungent. Ginger is a stimulant and carminative. Fresh ginger contains more water and is milder, the powdered form is stronger and has more penetrating action. Dry ginger being highly concentrated and strong is good for kapha prominent people. Ginger causes sweating, enkindles agni, neutralises toxins and helps digestion, absorption and assimilation of food. Ginger alleviates inflammation of the throat, the common cold, congestion and sinus problems. Grated fresh ginger with

a little garlic can be eaten to counteract low agni. This will increase the capacity of agni and improve appetite. A pinch of salt added to one half teaspoonful of grated fresh ginger can act as an excellent appetiser. Ginger is the best domestic remedy for kapha problems such as cough, running nose, congestion and throat congestion. To alleviate headaches, prepare a paste of one-half spoonful of ginger powder mixed with water, heat it and apply to the forehead. This paste will create a slight burning sensation but will not burn the skin and it will relieve headache. Ginger will aid in cleansing the intestines and will promote healthy bowel movements. For painful joints and muscles, apply ginger externally. It helps the circulation and relieves pain. For body aches a ginger bath is recommended. As the taste of ginger is not very good, it is mostly not used in cooked vegetables. It is a common constituent of curry powders.

Mustard (Brassica Juncea) is a well-known oil seed. Mustard seed is antibacterial and decongestant. It revs up metabolism, burning off extra calories. Mustard is used all over the world as an appetiser, a flavouring agent and a food preservative. The whole mustard seed is used



in pickles and chutneys. The oil extracted from the seeds is used in north India as hair oil, oil for frying and other cooking purposes. It is also used in pickles and salads. In some regions, the leaves are used as vegetable. Mustard seed is used as a domestic spice. Mustard acts as an analgesic and it reduces muscular pain. It is carminative

and also relieves congestion. Mustard powder mixed with water may be used as poultice. The paste should be applied to a cloth and the cloth placed next to the skin for the relief of pain in the joints or chest. Mustard may be used as a fomentation to relieve muscle spasm. Tie the mustard seeds in a small cloth and place the cloth in hot water, then immerse the hands and feet in the water for relief of joint pain or muscle soreness. Mustard seeds mixed with water relax muscles. Mustard may be used in cooking and frying. Heat sesame oil in a pan, when the oil is hot fry approximately two pinches of mustard seed with onion, garlic and vegetables. The vegetables then become very light and easy to digest. Mustard may be used for digestion, distension of abdomen and discomfort caused by improper digestion.

Onion (*Allium Cepa*) is a strong



irritant and is pungent and aromatic. It is one of the most important vegetables and a condiment crop grown all over India. Onion is a stimulant, diuretic, expectorant and rubefacient. Onion should be taken with meals, preferably raw, as fried or cooked onions are comparatively difficult to digest. Onion is exceptionally full of numerous anti-cancer compounds and a strong antioxidant. It has been specifically linked to inhibit human stomach cancer. It thins the blood, lowers cholesterol, raises good-type HDL cholesterol, wards off blood clots

and fights asthma, chronic bronchitis, diabetes, atherosclerosis and infections. The leaves of the plant are diuretic, tonic carminative, digestive, expectorant antispasmodic, mild laxative and aphrodisiac. Onion can be used in innumerable ways. The immature and mature bulbs are eaten raw or they may be cooked and eaten as vegetable. It can be fried. When onion is applied as poultice to a skin boil, the boil will burst. High fever and resultant convulsions may be relieved by applying a grated raw onion wrapped in a piece of cloth to either the forehead or abdomen. Onion stimulates the senses, so if one feels faint or dizzy, an onion broken into pieces and inhaled will bring relief. Onion can relieve acute epileptic seizures if applied as a nasal inhalant or as eye-drops. It is a good heart tonic. Onions help reduce the heart rate. One-half cup of fresh onion juice with two teaspoons of honey taken internally relieves asthma, cough, spasms, nausea and vomiting. It also will destroy intestinal worms. A grated onion with one half teaspoonful of turmeric and one half spoonful of curry powder will relieve pain in the joints when applied as a paste to the affected area.

Pepper (*Piper Nigrum*) is one of the oldest and most popular of all spices. Black pepper is a stimulant, pungent, aromatic, digestive and nervine tonic. It is also useful in relieving flatulence. It is used in pickles, ketchup and sauces. Pepper helps to stimulate digestive ca-



capacity. It increases the secretions of digestive juices and improves the taste of foods. It is used to alleviate constipation, dry hemorrhoids, gas and loss of appetite. This herb also may be taken with a little honey to combat worms in the large intestine. Black pepper helps to relieve swelling. As an antidote to hives, a pinch of black pepper powder with ghee is applied externally.

Salt is used simply to improve the



taste of food. However, it also has medicinal properties. Salt contains water and is a byproduct of the sea. It aggravates pitta and kapha because it contains jala and agni of pancha bhootas (five elements). Only a small amount should be used in cooking. For hypertension cases it is advised to choose foods low in salt. The World Health Organisation recommends a daily salt intake of no more than 5gm. Many packaged and processed foods contain added salt. Salt relieves gas and distension of abdomen. It cleanses the mouth, stimulates secretions in the digestive canal and aids digestion. Salt may be used to relieve external swellings. Salt should be heated in a pan and placed in a cloth bag, it may then be applied externally. Salt is also a natural pain reliever and may be used externally as a local application. It helps to increase drainage, put a few drops of concentrated salt solution in to the nose to cleanse kapha and relieve nasal blockage.

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Tamarind (*Tamarindus Indica*) is very popular as a condiment



and a souring substance. It is an ornamental tree with longevity of 120 years. The leaves and bark of the tree as well as pulp of the fruits and seeds have medicinal values. The leaves are stimulant, cooling and anti-bilious. They also increase the secretion and discharge of urine. The bark is an astringent and a tonic and it reduces fever. The pulp of fruit is digestive, anti-flatulent, cooling, laxative and antiseptic. The seeds are astringent. The ripe fruit or tamarind pulp is used in jam and jelly industry. Excessive use of tamarind is not advisable as it may cause hyper acidity, cough and sexual weakness. The cover of the seed is widely used for eliminating urinary stones.

Turmeric (*Curcuma Longa*) is a



versatile natural plant. It combines the properties of a flavouring spice, a brilliant yellow dye, a natural beauty aid and an effective household remedy for several diseases. Turmeric is a drug that strengthens the stomach and promotes its action and also is a good blood purifier. It is also used externally in skin disorders. Turmeric is aromatic, stimulant and a tonic. It corrects disordered processes of nutrition and restores the normal

function of the system. Turmeric is also carminative, antiseptic, anti-flatulent, blood purifier and expectorant. Turmeric is an indispensable ingredient of the curry powder. It gives a musky flavour and yellow colour to curries. Curry powder usually contains 24 per cent of turmeric powder. Turmeric is extensively used for its flavour and colour in butter, cheese, pickles and other foodstuff. It has a soothing action on respiratory ailments such as cough and asthma. It is also anti-arthritis and acts as a natural anti-bacterial. Turmeric may be added to high protein food to assist digestion and prevent the formation of gas. It is effectively used to maintain the flora of the large intestine. To relieve inflammation of tonsils and congestion in the throat, turmeric may be used as a gargle. For this, mix two pinches of turmeric and two pinches of salt in a glass of hot water. Turmeric also has anti-inflammatory properties. For an abrasion, bruise or traumatic swelling, turmeric paste may be applied locally, and the swelling will be quickly relieved. For the treatment of diabetes, turmeric is also useful. Take turmeric after each meal to help return blood sugar level to normal.

Curry leaves (*Murraya Koenigi*) possess the quality of herbal tonic. They strengthen the functions of the stomach and promote its action. They are also used as a mild laxative. The leaves may be taken mixed with other mild tasting herbs. The juice extracted from 15gms of leaves may be taken with



butter milk. Curry leaves have been used for centuries as a natural flavouring agent in sambar, rasam and curries. Chutney can be made by mixing the leaves with coriander leaves, coconut scrapings and tomatoes. The leaves, bark and the root of the curry plant are used in indigenous medicine.

Nutmeg: This is aromatic and stimulating. It is used to improve



the taste of teas and milk. When taken with milk it serves as a tonic for heart and brain. It is also used to alleviate sexual debility. Nutmeg also is effective in treating lack of control over urination, general weakness, diarrhoea, gas and dull aching pain in the abdomen as well as loss of appetite and liver and spleen disorders. Nutmeg is relaxant and induces natural sleep. Thus it is helpful for insomnia. It should be taken sparingly and only by adults because of its strong action. It is very good for vata, pitta people. For people of pitta one pinchful at a time can be taken. Nutmeg may be used in smaller doses. Of course, if the ailment or disease does not subside after application of these methods, a physician should be consulted. At times symptoms that appear minor may have serious repercussions.

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Yoga

Art of standing

Yoga postures help align the body the way it was designed

Jayadevan AP

Yoga has been used for centuries for therapeutic purposes. It can heal the body, mind and soul. Physically, yoga helps the body become more limber, more balanced. It adds to one's sense of awareness about oneself through better understanding of the body.

Normally, people are not conscious about their postures in daily life activities. For example, most of people do not pay much attention how they stand. In most cases, it is like standing with the body weight thrown only on one leg or one leg turned completely sideways.

Some bear all the weight on the heels, or on the inner or outer edges of the feet. Watch the shoe's sole to find where it wears out first. By faulty standing and uneven distribution of body weight on the heels, what we are doing is nothing but just hampering our spine's elasticity. This could gradually lead to deformities.

Body weight on one heel essentially changes the centre of gravity. Then the hips become loose, abdomen protrudes and as a result, body hangs back and the spine has to suffer much strain. Many times, we have backaches because the core of our body is out of shape. Our

faulty postures and lack of exercise are the main reasons.

Many people who are overweight experience back pain. As you put on additional pounds, the spine begins to distort and to compress, causing pain. It can also have an effect on the pelvis, tilting it forward and perhaps causing it to pinch the sciatic nerve. That is one of the main reasons why people who are overweight tend to have problems with their lower back, either because of sciatica or because of the distortion of the spinal column.

Spine is the main supporter of the body. And it protects the central nervous system. According to yogic science, spine is the pathway of subtle, divine life force. A healthy, strong and flexible spine makes one healthy and even ensures longevity!



There are a number of different yogic postures which can help the back in amazing ways. Even persons having back injuries can do yoga with the help of an experienced yoga therapist. A little bit of yoga can go a long way in helping one to be more comfortable and even to overcome the back problem. Besides, one will experience a number of other benefits from doing these simple stretching exercises.

Some poses are briefly described below. Those with severe back/spine problems are strictly advised not to practise them without proper guidance. It is of great importance that one should not try therapeutic yoga without the presence of an experienced yoga therapist.

Mountain Pose (Tadasana)

This is the basic standing pose. In Mountain Pose, the body is aligned the way it was designed.

Method:

- Stand straight, with the feet together, heels and big toes touching

By faulty standing and uneven distribution of body weight on the heels, what we are doing is nothing but just hampering our spine's elasticity. This could gradually lead to deformities

each other. If placing feet together is not comfortable, place the feet three or four inches apart, toes pointing straight ahead. (Line up the ankles so they're right under the hip bones).

- Now rock back and forth a bit until you feel the weight evenly distributed in both feet.
- Next, bend the knees a bit so the backs of your legs aren't locked out. Try to keep the knees lined up over the ankles.
- Tighten the knees and pull the knee caps up. Contract the hips, activate the thighs and feel that you are pressing off the ground.
- Make sure that the hips bones are pointing straight ahead. Avoid letting the pelvis tip up or down.
- Draw the belly button gently in, lengthen the spine, open the chest (gently squeeze the shoulder blades together) and keep the neck straight. Keep the chin parallel to the ground.
- Keep the arms parallel to the body, by the side of the thighs, fingers together and pointing downwards.
- Now breathe normally. Be relaxed; try to release tension, if any,

in the body. Close the eyes, focus on the position and allow the alignment to be absorbed and integrated at a cellular level. Let this position feel natural, effortless, yet conscious.

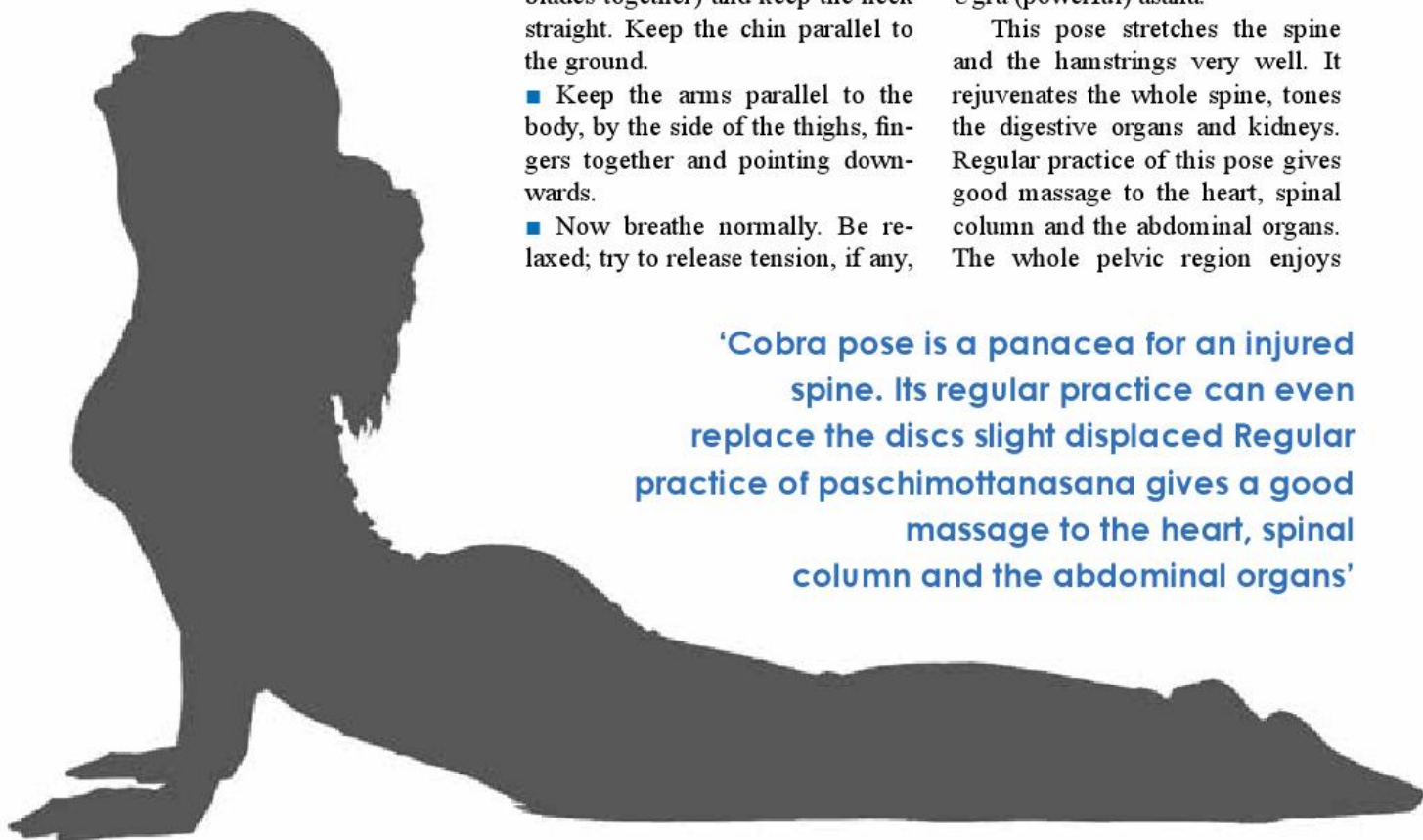
Mastering Mountain Pose means mastering the art of correct standing. This pose frees up the ribcage to open the lungs for better breathing. Not only this pose helps to strengthen and protect the back, but it will give you more energy as well, since you'll be breathing more freely!

Seated forward fold (Paschimottanasana)

In Sanskrit, paschima means west. Here, it indicates the back of the body from head to toes. In this pose, the whole back is intensely stretched. This pose is also called Ugra (powerful) asana.

This pose stretches the spine and the hamstrings very well. It rejuvenates the whole spine, tones the digestive organs and kidneys. Regular practice of this pose gives good massage to the heart, spinal column and the abdominal organs. The whole pelvic region enjoys

'Cobra pose is a panacea for an injured spine. Its regular practice can even replace the discs slight displaced Regular practice of paschimottanasana gives a good massage to the heart, spinal column and the abdominal organs'





more blood circulation and this increases vitality.

Method

- Sit on a mat with the legs together extended in front, heels slightly flexed and bellybutton pulled to the spine for support.

- Inhale, sit tall and raise the arms in the air.

- Exhale, lean forward and reach for the toes (If possible hold each big toes with thumb and the index and middle fingers). Extend the spine and try to keep the back in a concave position.

- Now, pull the trunk forward and let the forehead rest on your knees. Allow the arms to rest on the thighs, shins or at the ankles. Allow the upper body to relax.

- With each inhalation, feel the spine growing longer and with each inhalation, allow the body to sink lower (the chest is getting closer to the floor). Gradually, with regular practice, you will be able to stretch the spine more forward; you can grip the sole and rest the chin on the shins, beyond the knees!

- Stay in this position from 1 to 5 minutes, breath evenly. Then slowly raise the head up and come back to first position and relax.

Tip: Can't reach your toes? Wrap a towel around the feet and grab either end with the hands to improvise a yoga strap. If your hamstrings are tight, you can bend your legs.

Cobra pose (Bhujangasana)

World renowned Yoga acharya BKS Iyengar wrote about this pose in his famous book *The Illustrated Light on Yoga* thus: "This posture is a panacea for an injured spine and in cases of slight displacement of spinal discs the practice of this pose replaces the discs in their original position. The spinal region is toned and the chest fully expanded."

- Lie down on the floor on the stomach; stretch the legs keeping feet together, keep the toes pointing and the knees tightened.

- Place the palms near the shoulder, fingers together. (The palm position can be changed from near pelvic re-

gion to a position above the shoulders. It is up to the ability and comfort of a beginner.) Keep the elbows closer to the body.

- With inhalation, lift the front half of the body off the floor until the pubis is in contact with the floor. Tense the legs and buttocks. Now the body weight is on the palms and legs. (Some schools tend to do this pose without assistance from the hands pushing on the floor. This is likely to be more effective at strengthening the back).

- Hold this position for about 15-20 seconds with normal breathing.

- Exhale, gently flex the elbows, come back to the first position. Repeat this pose two or three times. Rest a while with your head turned to one side and the arms to your side, legs relaxed, before getting up.

There are a number of Yoga postures to help one keep healthy. The entire body is toned through controlled and precise breathing, stretching, and endurance building exercises. Regular practice of Yoga assures a healthy mind and body.



Baby moon: Tryst with Ayurveda

Baby mooning stands a notch high in heartwarming romance when compared to the giddy, surging, swept-off-the-feet feel of honeymooning. Baby moon has come to mean the holiday break that the expectant couple take together before the arrival of the baby.


Travel and health tourism industry all over the world is cashing in on this enticing segment of antenatal packages specially designed for the pregnant woman and her partner. It is considered a great time for bonding, the adorable couple looking at each other in awe at the miracle of a new life and family that they are creating together. The vacation allows them to enjoy an unforgettable trip together before the many sleepless nights that usually accompany a newborn baby.

Enhancing the holiday experience with some exotic therapeutic procedures, a select class of Ayurvedic resorts and spas in Kerala are leading the way in promoting baby mooning with a classical Prasuti tantra touch.

Prasuti tantra is the branch of Ayurveda that deals with obstetrics and gynaecology. Ayurveda, the holistic science of life, lays down a large body of medical principles and lifestyle advice for the mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing of the mother-to-be during the course of pregnancy and towards a smooth delivery. It also has much in store for the father-to-be in preparing him to support and assist his partner in the process of childbearing. The traditional healthcare system is very concerned about the post-natal period too for special

care of the mother and child.

Charaka Samhitha, the classical text of Ayurveda, states that if a pregnant woman is taken care of as advised, she will give birth to a child who will be free from diseases, physically strong, radiant and well nourished. Ayurveda spells out many dos and don'ts during pregnancy with regard to nutrition (ahara), lifestyle (vihara) and the thought processes (vichara) of a mother-to-be. Nutrition, lifestyle and thoughts directly affect the development of the fetus. Ayurveda specifies certain medications to be followed during the time of pregnancy. The fetus is considered as a seed and the mother as the soil for it to grow. So special attention is to be paid to the nutrition and protection of the woman to keep her healthy and clean. The

A stylized illustration of a pregnant woman with long brown hair, wearing a pink long-sleeved dress. She is standing in a green field filled with yellow and white daisies under a blue sky with soft white clouds. She is gently holding her pregnant belly with both hands.

pregnant woman is compared to a vessel filled with oil right up to the brim. The Ayurveda physician takes great care in each step not to spill the oil from the vessel till the childbirth.

Ashtanga Hridaya, the major Sanskrit treatise on Ayurveda, prescribes various lepanas (herbal packs) and udwarthanans (powder massages) using different herbal mixtures and oils to prevent the formation of stretch marks on the breasts and abdomen during pregnancy. Baths with medicated decoctions can also be utilised to minimise the vata imbalance which is common during the pregnancy period.

Consuming the monthly medicated milk can be continued as per the advice of an Ayurvedic expert for the proper development of the fetus. At this time the expecting mother has to use more of milk and ghee along with the food or as a medicine. Along with these an Ayurvedic expert can give much guidance and advise to follow for a normal and natural delivery and for child care. Along with the expecting mother, her partner is also provided with certain relaxation

The best time to go for a baby moon before child birth will be during the second trimester - from the fourth to sixth month.



When is the best time for Ayurvedic baby moon? The general rule is to take greater care during the first three months of pregnancy and after the completion of the seventh month.

and rejuvenation treatments. When is the best time for Ayurvedic baby moon? The general rule is to take greater care during the first three months of pregnancy and after the completion of the seventh month. The best time to go for a baby moon before child birth will be during the second trimester - from the fourth to sixth month. This is a period by which the difficulties of morning sickness, nausea etc will be gone. Ayurveda has many recommendations for this period of pregnancy. During this trimester it is advised to start regular oil massages with suitable medicated sesame oils. This will prevent the tell-tale muscle cramps, water retention on the extremities and varicose veins on the lower limbs. The general principle behind the baby moon treatment is that during the period of pregnancy, the mother-to-be needs great care and attention in terms of emotional support. The treatment regimen is augmented by modern understand-

ing of the physio-pathological processes and the advancement of allied sciences. The main treatments given are uzhichil, sirodhara, thalapothichil, face pack, face massage etc. Along with these medicines for better digestion and medicine to prevent uneasiness and breathlessness are also will be given as directed by the physician. Yoga, meditation, a well-balanced diet and advices on daily routine are also the integral parts of the treatments. Uzhichil, a gentle oil massage followed by a warm bath in medicated decoctions helps to pacify the vata and eases the muscular and nervous weakness common after childbirth. It improves blood circulation and provides relaxation. Podikizhi to relieve the strain in the muscles and joints and to improve blood circulation. It helps reduce water retention. Navarakizhi, relaxing and soothing for the muscles and nerves. It improves the skin tone and softness too.

Lepanam to relieve water retention especially over the feet, and for low back pain common after childbirth. Face massage and face pack, specially for rejuvenating face skin. Head massage and thalapothichil: Relaxing and cooling to the head, this relieves hair loss due to hormonal changes which is common after childbirth. Foot massage is for relaxing and easing the aches over the feet. It reduces water retention by improving the blood circulation and gives good sleep. The health tourism sector in Kerala has taken note of the large potential and wide scope for developing the baby moon concept under the larger canopy of Ayurvedic health-care and hospitality industry. With proper travel facilities and logistical support, the south coast could attract more and more women in various stages of pregnancy accompanied by their partners for a much cherished baby moon holiday.