Vol.6 Issue 2 JUNE 2011

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Ayurveda & HEALTH TOURISM

AYURVEDA AND HEALTH TOURISM

AYURVEDA AND HEALTH TOURISM

BECOMING A MOTHER

Ayurveda care for pregnancy and childbirth



♦Treatment for autism ♦ Patient examination in Ayurveda

♦ West turns to East ♦ **Debate:** Unethical marketing

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First Ayurveda Hospital

"AyurVAID Hospital", receives NABH Accreditation certificate



Honourable Minister of State, (MIHFW) Shri S Gandhiselvan in the presence of Secretary Department of AYUSH, Mrs S Jalaja and Dr. Girdhar J Gyani, Secretary General, QCI gave away the accreditation certificate to Mr. Rajiv Vasudevan, CEO, AyurVAID Hospital at a function organized by the Department of AYUSH on October 26, 2010

ACCREDITATION FOR AYUSH HOSPITALS

ACCREDITATION

Accreditation is a public recognition by a National Healthcare Accreditation Body, of the achievement of accreditation quality standards by a organization.

Under this programme, Accreditation Quality Standards are released for

- Ayurveda Hospitals
- Homeopathy Hospitals
- UnaniHospitals
- Siddha Hospitals
- Yoga & Naturopathy Hospitals

BENEFITS FOR ACCREDITATION

- Stimulates continuous improvement of the organization.
- Increases visibility of the organization.
- Raises community confidence in the services provided by the organization.
- Helps people chose the right organization for taking services
- Objective system of evaluation and empanelment by Third Parties
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Dr. Bhawna Gulati, Assistant Director

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Ayurveda & HEALTH TOURISM
RNI No. KERENG/2006/20510

India: ₹100
USA:$9
UK: £5
Singapore: S$12
Canada: C$10
UAE: Dirham 23
Korea: Won 9000

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www. ayurvedicproducts-services.com

Printed, published and owned by Benny Thomas, FM Media Technologies PVt Ltd, 2B, Relcon Retreat,
Prasanthi Nagar, Edappally,
Kochi - 682024, Kerala, India.
Editor: Benny Thomas

Printed at Sterling Print House Pvt Ltd,
Door No. 49/1949, Panikkar- Chanakallur Road, Aims, Panikkar PO
Cochin-682041, Ph: 0484 2800404

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A new phase

It's quite a paradox that pregnancy and child birth, the most common events in human life, have become some of the most complex processes now. Every society lays importance in the welfare of the pregnant woman and the lactating mother as well as the infant, before and after it is born. We have come to such a pass where we measure the social development of a nation by the percentage of deliveries happening in hospitals.

No doubt, new developments in medical science have helped bring down infant and mother mortality rates considerably down. But is also a fact that indigenous and ancient branches of medical sciences also had fool-proof systems to take care of the mother and child. In fact, their prescriptions go beyond the physical well-being. They suggest a detailed menu not only for the body, but also for the mind, so that the new born is healthy—not only physically, but mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Not many believed when Ayurveda insisted that the mental make-up of the mother during pregnancy has an impact on the future path of the infant. Modern research has more than proved it.

This issue gives an elaborate description on Ayurvedic formulations for the expecting mother and the infant. We believe that some of the richness of our ancient science needs to be passed on to the young generation. These valueless prescriptions are easy to follow and more importantly, affordable also. The stories address some pertinent doubts young mothers have about the whole event. The issue also has an elaborate description on the yoga postures one can follow during pregnancy. The world over, people find yoga a very useful tool to make themselves comfortable during one of the most happening phases in their lives.

Apart from the cover story, this issue has an authentic report on Ayurvedic approach to the treatment of autism. As the number of children born with the disease increases, it is time that Ayurveda stepped in and offered comfort to the parents and children to face the debilitating disease. The Physician's Diary in the issue is on a wonderful, and proud, story of how an Ayurvedic formulation, suggested by an unknown vaidya, came handy to a group of doctors practicing holistic medicine, to come out with an effective solution to idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura. This demonstrates the inherent value of Ayurveda. It also underscores the need for all concerned to seriously work on the hidden treasures of Ayurveda for the greater common good of humanity.

We are happy to inform you that with this issue, ***Ayurveda & Health Tourism*** will come to you every two months. We have added more pages and a variety of information which will be of use to all stakeholders of Ayurveda.

We are sure that readers and the Ayureveda community will appreciate our efforts and continue to support us as you have done in the past seven years.

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Caring for the pregnant woman, or garbhini paricharya, is well-documented in Ayurveda. Most Ayurvedic texts have elaborate sections on the specific care a pregnant woman must get in each month and stage of pregnancy. Even today, this ancient wisdom is followed as traditional practices in innumerable households

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'Saffron, the world's most expensive spice, is praised by Ayurvedic texts as one which imparts fairness and glow to skin. It balances all the threedoshas viz. Vata, Pitha and Kapha'

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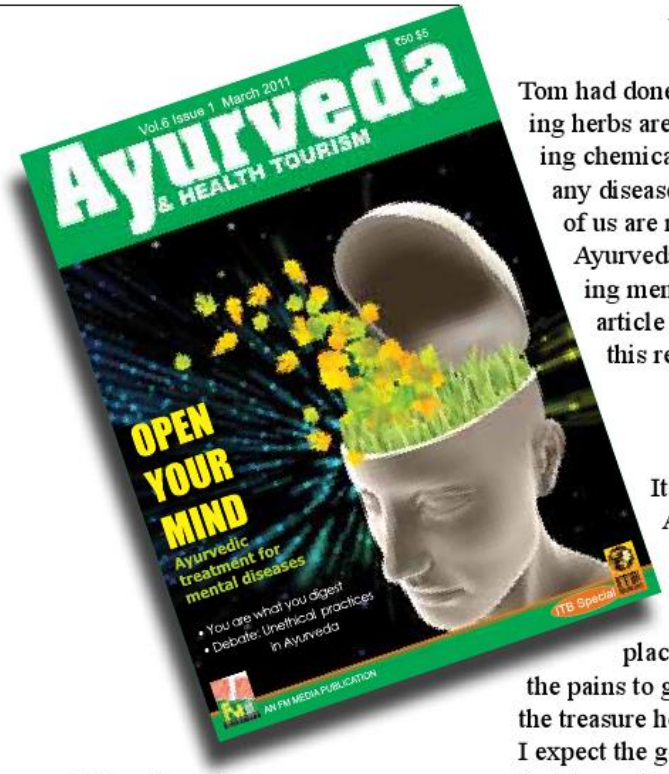
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44 Ayurevda for AUTISM
Incidence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is on the increase worldwide. Ayurevda has a systematic, scientific and effective approach to its treatment thrombocytopenic purpura





When the mind opens

Your cover story on Ayurveda and mental diseases was quite good. Many people don't know that Ayurveda has such a holistic approach to diseases that it can offer effective treatment for mental diseases. I request yuo to look at such areas which are seldom talked about.

Ramesh Chandran,
Thiruvanantha puram.

Ours is a society which still harbours a lot of prejudices about mental diseases. We are given to understand that modern medicine has advanced a lot and offer effective treatment in this field. But little has been said about Ayurveda. I think there must be a concerted effort from the part of all—practitioners, media and the government as well as research establishments—to rediscover the power of Ayurveda with respect to the treatment of the deranged mind.

Dr Cicily Antony,
Ernakulam

Your 'mind' story was superb. Both the doctors, Dr Parvathi and Dr Tom had done a great job. Soothing herbs are far better than killing chemicals in the treatment of any disease. Unfortunately most of us are not well aware about Ayurveda's efficacy on treating mental illnesses. Your article was an eye opener in this regard. Thanking you,

Ashraf PM,
Chennai

It is a tragedy that Ayurveda in our times is often confused with the massage offered at tourist places. Few people take the pains to go deep and explore the treasure house called Ayurveda. I expect the government to do all that is possible to promote research in Ayurveda. I am not sure about the efficacy of Ayurveda in the treatment of mental diseases, but your cover story talks about its effectiveness. I must commend you for the efforts you have taken.

P Madhava Menon,
Thrissur

Ayurevda debate

My heartfelt congratulations! I am an ardent follower of Ayurveda and I am so grateful to you for the campaign against the unethical practices in Ayurveda. A number of criminals are now trying to exploit Ayurveda for making money. Their faulty, massive advertisements about their '100 per cent Ayurvedic' OTC products are really misleading and should be banned by the authorities. The debate in the journal is an eye-opener and I hope it will become the voice of all Ayurveda lovers.

Nikesh Prasad,
Cherukunnu

I was watching your campaign against the crass commercialisation of Ayurveda. Your attempt is laudable, but I have my doubts whether you will be able to sustain the campaign for long. Going by the huge advertisement budget spurious players have to offer the media, you are also likely to come under pressure to stop it. It will be in the interest of Ayurveda that you don't give up.

K Ramesh Kumar
Kollam

Great tradition

I request you to dig up the details about the great tradition of Kerala in Ayurveda. We have heard a lot about the Ashtavaidya tradition but have very little knowledge about them. I am sure that there will be invaluable knowledge about human body that they have accumulated over generations and formulations tested for their efficacy for centuries. It will be a service to the new entrants to the field of Ayurveda if you can work on them.

N Krishna Iyer
Palakkad

Natural beauty

The articles in 'Beauty Zone' make a good reading. Ayurveda has plenty of natural methods to keep one beautiful. I wonder why much of our teens are behind the chemical products, which are obviously harmful to the body! We must inculcate the ancient wisdom of natural living into the young generation from schools itself.

P Sarala,
Ernakulam

Ayurveda education

I am a regular reader of your magazine. It will be much helpful if you can add a column on Ayurveda education in India. Information on various courses and opportunities will certainly help Ayurveda students like me.

Sandeep Nair,
Kozhikode



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Ayurveda in MBBS syllabus in Maharashtra



The Maharashtra University of Health Science (MUHS) has decided to implement the recommendation of the Department of AYUSH, government of India, to include basic Ayurveda as part of MBBS syllabus in the medical colleges in the State. According to the AYUSH recommendations, every medical college should reserve at least 20 hours to teach ayurvedic science in MBBS classes. Dr Arun Jamkar, vice-chancellor, MUHS, said the university will soon form a committee to implement the directives and to discuss the new syllabus for the medical students for the coming year. Most universities across the world have been teaching indigenous medicine of their respective cultures, he said. "For instance, modern medicine doctors in China get lessons in Chinese medicine," he said. "Finally we too are introducing the study of our ancient medicine. We are proud that ours will be the first State in the country to implement the AYUSH directives," he said.

AYUSH tightens norms for medical colleges

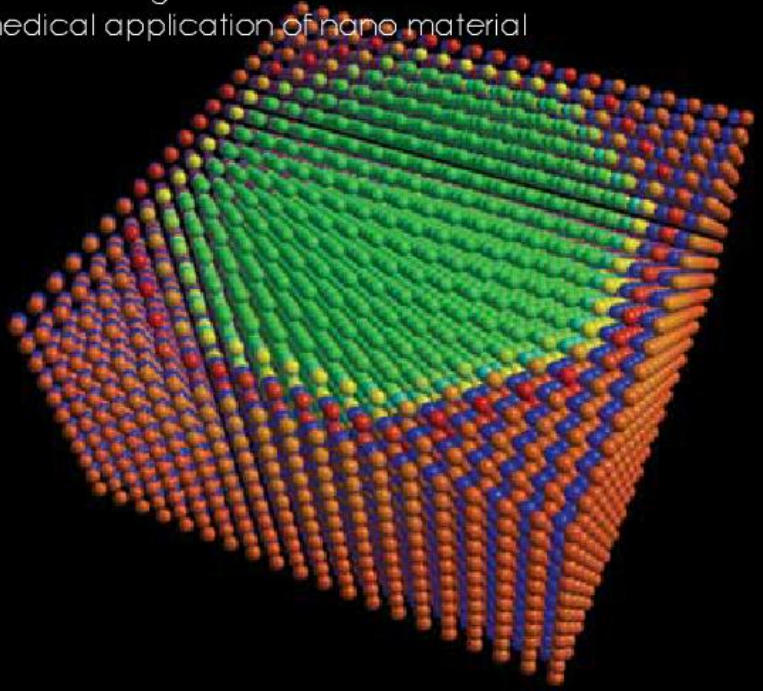
In order to ensure the quality of education to the students of Indian system of medicines and prevent mushrooming growth of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani and Homoeopathic Colleges, the Centre has issued stricter parameters for granting permission for setting up or upgrading the existing colleges. From this academic year (2011-02), the Department of AYUSH has increased the requirement of minimum availability of teachers for under graduate colleges from 28 to 32. In addition, there is now a mandatory requirement of one teacher in all the 14 departments of Ayurveda colleges, 8 departments of Unani colleges and 14 departments of Siddha colleges. India has 499 colleges teaching the Indian system of medicine — 311 colleges for Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha and 188 colleges teaching homeopathy — which will have to follow the new registration system from 2011 academic year.

Delhi to host Asian herbal show

The Asian Herbal Show, organised to promote natural and herbal-based products and to provide a platform for both consumers as well as manufacturers, will be held from 25 to 27 September, 2011.

Bhasma, the blessing

Research argues that bhasma were the most ancient medical application of nano material



Ayurvdea physicians often insist on reducing the size of medicinal herbs by scraping against a hard place, instead of powdering it. 'Bhasmas' are among some of the most useful Ayurvedic formulations in the treatment of several medical conditions. They were never thought to have followed the most modern premises of chemistry. But are they, in fact, the most ancient applications of nano-medicine? Is it that Ayurveda prescriptions were trying to get to the nano particle form to be more effective?

Yes, if one were to go by the recent arguments on the study of Ayurvedic medicines, undertaken by the department of Rasa Shashtra, Faculty of Ayurveda, Banaras Hindu University. While the concept of reduction in particle size of metals is prevailing since Charaka Samhita, the oldest classical text in Ayurveda, the recent studies at the department has claimed the herbo-mineral formulations of Ayurveda con-

Herbal and Ayurveda products, Sidha & Unani drugs, healthcare and services, personal care, herbal extracts, biotechnology, herbal foods and natural medicines will be on display at the expo.

'Side effects kill, go herbal'



Latrogenic diseases, or inadvertent adverse effects or complications caused by medical treatment or advice, had been identified to be the fourth leading cause of death in the US and other developed nations, according to P. Pushpangadan, former Director, National Botanical Research Institute, Lucknow, at a meeting at Arya Vaidya Pharmacy Limited, Coimbatore, on Sunday. He said side-effects killed more Americans annually than the World War II and Vietnam War combined, he said quoting medical journals. Herbal drugs, in comparison, were safer and possessed several advantages vis-à-vis modern drugs as they did not suffer from such problems. They were best suited for primary health care, infectious diseases, degenerative and gerontological conditions and metabolic disorders.

CCRAS digitises ancient texts

The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has prepared CD and DVDs of ancient Ayurvedic texts such as Madhava Chikitsa, Vaidya Kalpalata, Vaidya Sarvaswa and Ayurveda Ratna after recovering their manuscripts from individuals and organisations from across Orissa. "Orissa has a huge collection of manuscripts on the goodness of ancient Ayurveda," said CCRAS deputy director M M Padhi. "Unfortunately, a large number of Ayurvedic texts lie unexplored and trapped in palm-leaves, which are decaying. Many unique and valuable information contained in these texts are being lost, so we decided to preserve them in CDs." CCRAS has already catalogued around 2,000 manuscripts and digitized around 1,000 among them, he said. The manuscripts had rare texts describing the treatment of arthritis, asthma, piles, chronic wound, nodal officer of the project Mr Bikartan Das said. "Vaidya Kalpalata is a rare script that describes many proven and tested treatment procedures," he said.



stituting 'bhasma' to be equivalent and in tune with nanotechnology witnessing production of nanoparticles in contemporary era.

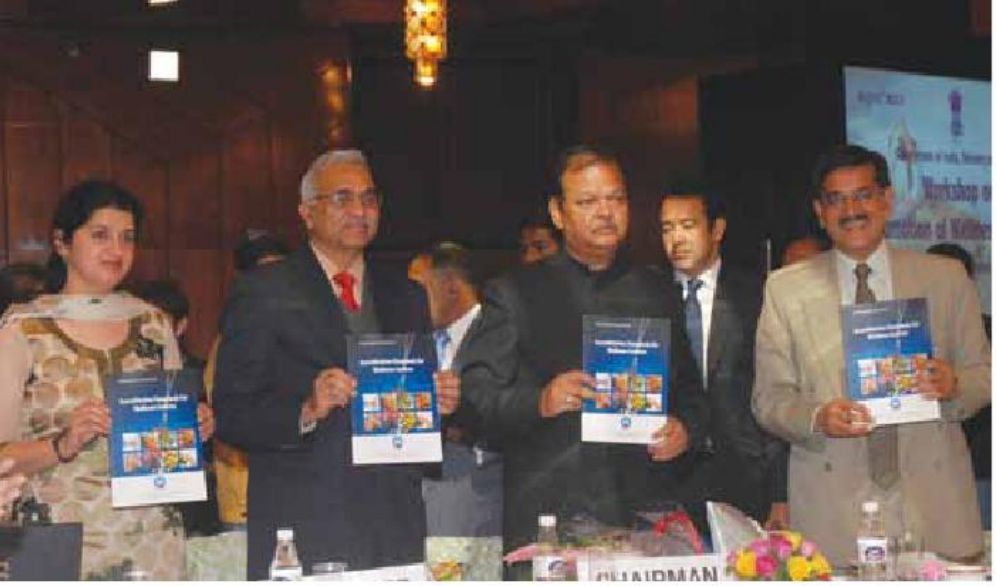
The reports of the studies have been published in the Journal of Scientific and Industrial Research and Journal of Biomedical Nanotechnology, a reputed journal in the field of nanotechnology published from the US. Similarly, the paper also attracted international attention during a recent international symposium on the safe use of nanomaterials and workshop on nanomaterial safety, status, procedure, policy and ethical concerns, organised by Indian Institute of Toxicological Research, Lucknow.

The studies have confirmed that bhasmas, which are unique Ayurvedic metallic/mineral preparations are biologically produced nanoparticles (NPs) prescribed with several other medicines of Ayurveda, said Dr Anand Chaudhary associate professor, department of Rasa Shastra. Though herbo-mineral formulations (bhasmas of metals and minerals) are used since seventh century, it was only assumed that these medicines have superior level of efficacy in comparison to other Ayurvedic dosage forms. "Now, studies have also established that manufacturing methods of bhasma are in tune of nanotechnology of modern era and bhasmas are nearer to nanocrystalline materials, similar in physico-chemical properties," he added.

It may be mentioned here that Dr Chaudhary, along with Dr Prasanta Kumar Sarkar of department of Rasa Shashtra, JB Roy State Ayurvedic College, Kolkata have come up with research paper on Ayurvedic bhasma after a number of studies in the subject for the past two years. Dr Neetu Singh, research scholar, department of Rasa Shashtra, is also working on the potential of 'lauha bhasma' (bhasma containing traces of iron) in therapeutics, using nanomedicine.

All 'bhasmas' have some common properties like 'rasayana' (immuno-modulation and anti-ageing quality) and 'yogavahi' (ability of drug carry and targeted drug delivery). These are prescribed in very minute dose (15 to 250 mg/day) and if prepared properly they are readily absorbable, adaptable and assimilate in the body without being toxic.

"These attributes of bhasmas are comparable with the action of NPs in the body which are also biodegradable, biocompatible and non-antigenic in nature," Dr Chaudhary said while comparing their properties.



Union Tourism Minister Subodh Kant Sahay (centre) releases the norms for accreditation of wellness centres at a function held in Delhi

Quality norms for wellness centres

Government aid only for centres meeting norms prepared by NABH

With wellness tourism figuring high on the India's tourism agenda, the government has come out norms for accreditation of wellness centres in the country.

The accreditation standards are prepared by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) and the Department of AYUSH. Only accredited service providers will be eligible for any assistance from the Tourism Ministry.

The new guidelines would be looking into aspects of functioning of wellness centres such as identifying and correcting unhygienic service delivery practices and laying down a system for continuous monitoring of quality of services being provided.

Among others, the guidelines will also look into the hygienic issue to prevent catching infections from the staff or the other customers by ensuring cleaning and disinfection practices for linen and equipment.

Centres have to display services and tariff list that the spa is providing to ensure uniform pricing policy, as per the guidelines.

The government has identified Ayurveda wellness centres, spas, skincare centres, cosmetic care centres, gymnasiums, fitness centres, preventive health care centres and yoga centres as areas for the development of wellness tourism.

NABH accreditation document has 10 chapters incorporating 84 standards and 396 objective elements. It contains complete set of standards for evaluation of wellness centres for grant of accreditation. The standards focus on all aspects of service delivery like customer rights and education, infection control practices, trained and experienced staff, infrastructure, environment safety, processes and controls among many others, statutory and regulatory compliances.

The Accreditation Standards for Wellness Centres provide framework for quality of care for customers and quality improvement for wellness centres. The standards help to build a quality culture at all level and across all the functions of the centres.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Girdhar Gyani, secretary-general, Quality Council of India, said though the Accreditation Program for Wellness Centres is a voluntary programme, it would go a long way in enhancing the growth and credibility of the wellness industry in India and also build consumer trust in a wellness brand.

Dr Bhawna Gulati, assistant director, NABH, said accreditation serves as an assurance of quality services from a reliable, safe and quality conscious operator to the consumer desiring the best. Dr Gulati said this standard is applicable to all organisations providing wellness services. In addition to implementing the specified applicable clauses of the standard, the organisation maintaining accreditation will maintain highest degree of cleanliness, customer friendly approach, transparency and professionalism in its dealings with respect to the provided services and the projection of the same. Explaining the process of accrediting the centres she said that the performance of the applicant organisations would be assessed on the basis of implementation of these standards in their organisations. Renewal of accreditation has to be done every 3 years.

NABH is currently offering accreditation in the areas of hospitals, small health care organisations, AYUSH hospitals, blood banks and transfusion services, primary health care centres/community healthcare centres, wellness centres, dental centres and medical imaging services.

The government has identified Ayurveda wellness centres, spas, skincare centres, cosmetic care centres, gymnasiums, fitness centres, preventive health care centres and yoga centres as areas for the development of wellness tourism

Ayurveda goes modern

Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine to work for integration with modern science



The institute offers highly-specialised, short-term and long-term courses to help the students practice in accordance with the demands of modern healthcare delivery systems, besides advanced research and post-doctoral programmes

The apparent disconnect with the advances of modern science has robbed Ayurveda its rightful place among the branches of medical science. That Ayurveda seldom bothered to align itself to the modern practices of research and communication, with very less stress on documentation, ensured that the ancient Indian system remained very traditional and local. It affected both Ayurveda and the people it was supposed to serve.

The newly-launched Institute of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine (IAIM), set up by the Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FLRHT) and the Tata group in Bangalore, seeks to remedy this situation.

Designed by FRLHT on the lines of Indian Institutes of Management and Indian Institutes of Science, the IAIM will act as India's premier finishing school for qualified Ayurvedic doctors, post-graduates, physiotherapists and Yoga experts. The institute offers highly-specialised, short-term and long-term courses to help the students practice in accordance with the demands of modern healthcare delivery systems, besides advanced research and post-doctoral programmes.

The Institute also embodies the interest and confidence the Tata group, India's premier business conglomerate, has in Ayurveda. The Tata Group's Sir Dorabji Tata Trust spent ₹34 crore for setting up the IAIM and a 100-bed Ayurveda and Yoga hospital at Yelahanka. The rest of the ₹64 crore project came



Mr Sam Pitroda, chairman of FRLHT, said taking healthcare to the masses will be India's biggest challenge in the next two decades, and Ayurveda is the only reliable way of doing so

from Department of Science and Technology, government of India.

Inaugurating the Institute, Mr Ratan Tata said the fusion of Ayurvedic medicine with its strong tradition and modern medicine with its scientific approach would help break boundaries of medical treatment in India. "There is a general perception that traditional medicine is witch doctor's medicine and there are several questions on how it works and even whether it works," he said. "But in India, Ayurvedic medicine has had a very rich tradition which most of us are unaware of."

He stressed on the integration of traditional Indian medicine with the western system. "This will enable better diagnosis and treatment of ailments," he said.

Mr Sam Pitroda, chairman of FRLHT, said taking healthcare to the masses will be India's biggest challenge in the next two decades, and Ayurveda is the only reliable way of doing so. Pitroda, who is adviser to the Prime Minister, said, "We can't adopt the western model - the five-star culture of health delivery system. Health care has to reach the masses."

Pitroda also said the integration of modern medicine and traditional health sciences was the best way to deal with challenges that lie ahead.

Darshan Shankar, who along with Pitroda had floated the foundation 17 years ago, said the healthcare centre aspires to be a modern Nalanda University for traditional health sciences.

"I-AIM already has research centres in several disciplines including conservation of medicinal plants, pharmacognosy, pharmacology and pharmaceutics, community health, clinical medicine, botany, medical manuscripts. It plans to establish a museum on the contemporary history of India's medical heritage," Shankar said.

The Institute identified certain areas in which it will concentrate. They include:

- Contributing to the self-reliance and health security of millions of rural and urban households and communities through green health.
- Original contributions to the world of medicine from its rich materia-medica, pharmacy, pharmacology, clinical practice and basic concepts of health and disease.
- Conservation of threatened natural resources in use by Indian Systems of Medicine
- Generate well trained human resources with knowledge and skills to disseminate the traditional health sciences both in India and globally.
- Creation of traditional knowledge inspired enterprises to provide goods and services to the community, that benefit in holistic ways

I-AIM is recognized by Department of Scientific & Industrial Research (DSIR) as a Scientific & Industrial Research Organisation (SIRO). The Ministry of Science & Technology has recognised the institute as a scientific and industrial research organisation. The Ministry of Environment and Forests and the Ministry of Health have designated it as a National Centre of Excellence for medicinal plants and Ayurveda, respectively.

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Ratan Tata stressed on the integration of traditional Indian medicine with the western system. "This will enable better diagnosis and treatment of ailments," he said

Back to health

Democratisation and concerted efforts by governments helped Ayurveda return to its path of glory after a decline



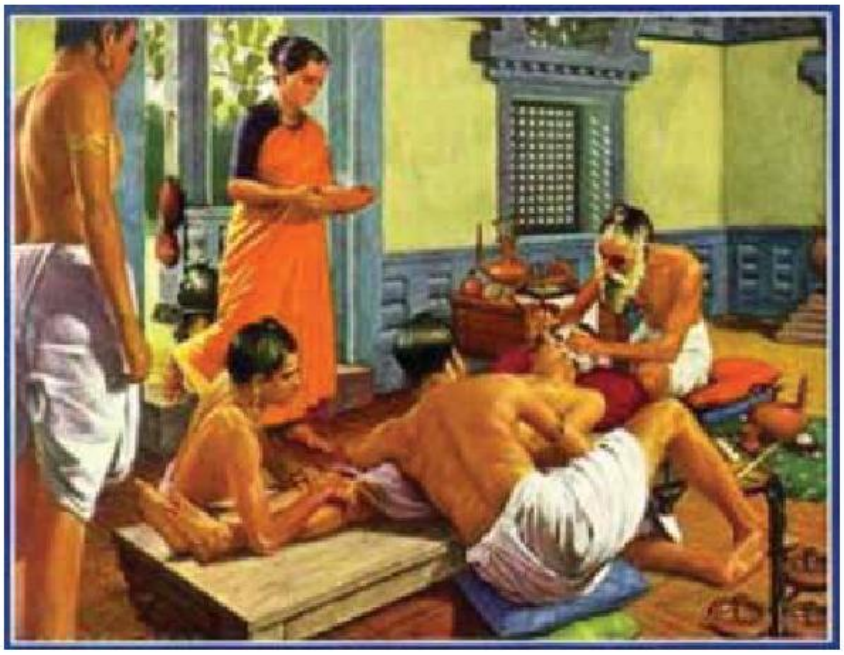
Dr K G Paulose

Ayurevda, which had been the science of health through the ages, went into a phase of decline in the 18th and 19th centuries, before making a comeback in the 20th century. What led to the loss of sheen for Ayurveda? There are three reasons.

1. Possession of knowledge

From ancient times onwards, across the cultures worldwide, there has been a tendency to possess and hide knowledge, without sharing. People who had custody of knowledge in a particular field always kept it as their secret possession and exposed that knowledge only to limited hands, mostly of the same clan. This mystification of knowledge was in vogue in India also.

The old Indian system of education—the Gurukula tradition—was a face-to-face transmission of knowledge, and this individuality was its main characteristic. But this method had certain limitations. On due course of time, it became just repetitions or re-distribution of same old information. Research, an important facet in the process of knowledge creation, is found missing here. All ancient Indian sciences, including Ayurveda, faced this saturation point. This means, knowledge, possessed by a certain group, had to face a declension in growth in due course of time.



Painting of Susrutha, the patron saint of surgeons, performs a surgery.

2. Lack of well trained physicians

Only a limited percentage of students were lucky enough to get proper, complete training in the Gurukula tradition due to several reasons. This limited number of experts could not cover the healthcare problems of all members of society. This resulted in the entry of a number of non-experts in the field, which adversely affected the quality of treatments. This problem became severe when the British rulers of India brought a rule which insisted on the arbitrary registration of all traditional healthcare professionals. The presence of non-experts was a reason for Ayurveda's decline.

In the beginning, Ayurveda vaidyas neglected 'English' medicine and they were not ready to accept it as something worth in healthcare. But it was too late when they could understand that they were losing the soil under their feet so fast

3. Foreign rule

The main factor which catalysed the downfall of Ayurveda in 19th

Today, Ayurveda in India is a business with an annual turnover of around ₹4,000 crore with about 9000 Ayurvedic pharmacies, 22,000 dispensaries, 2,500 hospitals and 4.4 lakh of Ayurveda doctors



century was the introduction of the allopathic system of medicine to India. Foreign rulers brought this system and practitioners to India for their own healthcare, but it spread fast in society and took the prime position with the whole-hearted support of the rulers. In the beginning, Ayurveda vaidyas neglected 'English' medicine and they were not ready to accept it as something worth in healthcare. But it was too late when they could understand that they were losing the soil under their feet so fast. By this time, the rulers could conduct a good campaign against Ayurveda and its efficacy. They spread the message that Ayurveda is unscientific and it is just a tribal/folk subject. Not only Ayurveda, but also its practitioners, became disrespected in society.

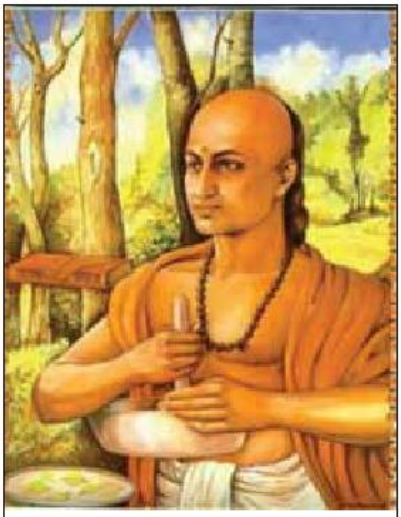


Image of Charaka, the first physician

A new integration

Ayurveda entered a phase of rejuvenation in the 20th century in the background. The reforms occurred in two areas. The first was the removal of the weaknesses entered into Ayurveda and to strengthen it from within. The second was to make it capable of standing in its own feet, in par with allopathy.

In order to strengthen Ayurveda, the new government in independent India promoted scientific restructuring of Ayurvedic education. Instead of individual gurukulas, governments started academic institutions which opened the horizons of Ayurveda to all. It really became as asset for all. This was also the starting point of a number of institutions and research centers in the field of Aurveda.

At present, there are more than 250 Ayurveda colleges in India which produce more than 9000 Ayurveda graduates every year. More than 60 colleges have post-graduate programmes and approximately 1000 post-graduates pass out a year.

Till the last century Ayurvedic treatment was limited to the relation between the physician and the patient. It was the physician who visited the patient at his home, and not the other way as is practised now. He will examine the patient thoroughly and give a detailed prescription or list of herbs out of which he can make the medicine at home. Occasionally patient may visit the physician also.

During the effort to compete with the western medicine, many other elements replaced the very simple 'physician-patient' relationship. New companies which manufactured medicine in huge quantities, hospitals with inpatient facilities, modern diagnostic methods-all these helped popularising Ayurveda. Today, Ayurveda in India is a business with an annual turnover of around ₹4,000 crore with about 9000 Ayurvedic pharmacies, 22,000 dispensaries, 2,500 hospitals and 4.4 lakh of Ayurveda doctors!

At a glance this may be counted as a huge development. But the reality is different. If we take the healthcare industry as a whole, the role of Ayurveda in it is very less. It was not so in centuries back. Ayurveda



Vaidyasala practises Ayurveda only in group hotels



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Instead of individual gurukulas, governments started academic institutions which opened the horizons of Ayurveda to all. It really became as asset for all. This was also the starting point of a number of institutions and research centers in the field of Aurveda

was the healthcare system of the total society. In that sense, the current status indicates not a growth, but a slight relief from the decline it had faced.

The global scenario

It is just recently that Ayurveda gained global acceptance. And this popularity is not older than two decades. The first official discussion on Ayurveda in a foreign country was held in 1984 in Indonesia. It was a meeting of the world wide traditional medical practitioners. That meeting was focused on studying various traditional medical practices in Asia. And Italy hosted the first such meeting held outside of Asia, in 1985. Representatives from various countries took part in that conference.

But most of the participants in that meet were not really aware of Ayurveda and its legacy. But that global meet witnessed the formation of a worldwide holistic society. Several such meets were conducted later in various countries. Altogether, through those conferences Ayurveda got more popularised and a number of doubts regarding the efficacy and genuineness of Ayurveda had been cleared. Till that time, Ayurveda was considered something like a folk medicine. It was not known to much of them that Ayurveda was backed up by a proven, written knowledge store of more than 3000 years. Through those conferences, the Western world was convinced that Ayurvedic wisdom is formed through centuries of research and is being enriched by a number of basic texts and their interpretations. Now no foreigner would dare say that Ayurveda is not a scientific system.

Another such incident which helped to popularise Ayurveda in the West was the well known Alma Ata declaration from Russia. The International Conference on Primary Health Care, held under the auspices of the World Health Organisation, in the declaration, said: "Globally, 80 per cent health care issues are being taken care by the traditional treatment modalities and the modern medicine covers only the remaining 20 percentage's healthcare requirements. Hence all traditional medical systems should be recognised and supported with due importance." After the Alma Ata declaration, traditional methods like Ayurveda were entitled as 'Alternative 'or 'Complementary'. All the above said factors helped Ayurveda's global acceptance today.

Future

In fact, it is not fair to say that Ayurveda has got global acceptance. Most of the foreign countries have not officially recognised Ayurvedic healthcare system. Ayurvedic medicines, mostly, are being exported to other countries in the label of 'food supplements'. The countries which officially accept Ayurveda as a treatment system are Srilanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, Mauritius, South Africa, Thailand and Pakistan. Ayurvedic centres are functioning as an alternative system in the US, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Australia, Japan, Holland, Brazil, UAE and Canada.

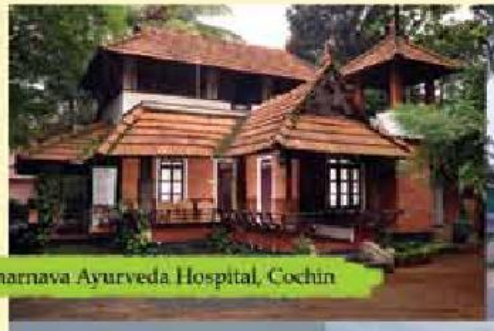
But a number of patients from abroad visit India every year for Ayurvedic treatments. Last year people from around 45 countries had visited Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala, the pioneer in Kerala's Ayurveda. More than official recognition, their own experience drives western people to seek the help of Ayurveda.

This is quite a favourable and positive development for Ayurveda and its practitioners. Unfortunately, some narrow minded business men are trying to exploit this situation. Massage parlors are sprouting everywhere like mushrooms. It is a must that followers of authentic Ayurveda should be more and more vigilant against these negative minds. It is the only way to protect the purity of this age-old science of natural healing.

The author, a Sanskrit scholar and former vice-chancellor of Kerala Kalamandalam, can be contacted at kgpaulose@gmail.com



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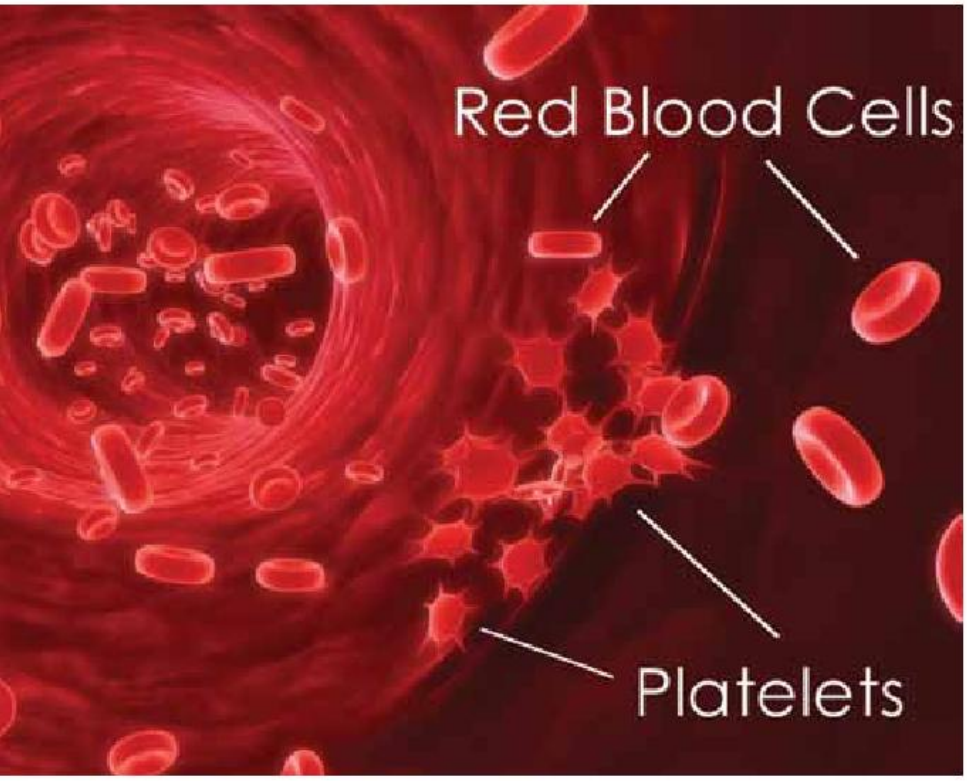
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The hidden treasure

How the holistic medicine department came across an effective formulation to treat idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura



Dr C. Ravindranatha Kamath, BAM, MBBS, FPN

The initial treatment for acute and chronic ITP is similar. A variety of agents are used, including oral steroids, infusions of immunoglobulin or more rarely anti-D

Idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP) is an abnormal disease that affects the platelet count (thrombocytopenia). There has not been any known cause for it and hence is termed idiopathic. It is known, however, that in people suffering from ITP, the immune system malfunctions, and attacks platelets as if they were foreign substances.

Most incidents of ITP appear to be related to the production of antibodies against platelets in blood. Platelets are one of the components of the blood along with white and red blood cells. Platelets play an important role in clotting and bleeding. Like white blood cells and red blood cells, platelets are made in the bone marrow.

ITP is often asymptomatic. Sometimes a very low platelet count can lead to visible symptoms. Visible symptoms of ITP include the spontaneous formation of bruises (purpura) and petechiae (tiny bruises), especially on the extremities, bleeding from the nostrils, bleeding at the gums and menorrhagia (excessive menstrual bleeding). Any of these may occur if the platelet count is below 20,000 per µl.

A normal platelet count is considered to be in the range of 150,000–450,000 per microlitre (µl) of blood for most healthy individuals. A count below 10,000 per µl is potentially a medical emergency as the individual may be vulnerable to subarachnoid or intracerebral hemorrhage as a result of moderate head trauma.

The function of platelets is very important in the clotting system. They circulate in the blood vessels and become activated if there is any bleeding or injury in the body. Certain chemicals are released from the injured blood vessels or other structures that signal platelets to become activated and join the

Last year, when the patient came for review the count, it seemed to have jumped to normal. She was found to have tried some ayuurvedic standard traditional formulations for the last few months, as per the advice of an ayurvedic physician

other components of the system to stop bleeding. When activated, the platelets become sticky and adhere to one another and to the blood vessel wall at the site of the injury to slow down and stop the bleeding by plugging up the damaged blood vessel or tissue (hemostasis).

ITP is usually chronic in adults and the probability of durable remission is 20–40 per cent. The mortality rate due to chronic ITP varies but tends to be higher relative to the general population for any age range.

According to modern medicine, the diagnosis of ITP is a process of exclusion. First, the clinician has to determine that there are no blood abnormalities other than low platelet count, and no physical signs except for signs of bleeding. Then, the secondary causes should be excluded. Secondary causes could be leukemia, medications (e.g., quinine, heparin), lupus erythematosus, cirrhosis, HIV, hepatitis C, congenital causes, antiphospholipid syndrome, von Willebrand factor deficiency, onyalai and others.

The initial treatment for acute and chronic ITP is similar. A variety of agents are used, including oral steroids, infusions of immunoglobulin or more rarely anti-D.

In Amrita hospital, we have an integrated approach to all medical treatments. Irrespective of being western or eastern, faculties from various branches of health care are working together for the total benefit of our patients.

Last year, the holistic medicine department got a message from the oncology department saying they had discovered a noticeable improvement of one of their patients, a young female, who has been a regular visitor in their OP section for the last few years for the treatment of chronic idiopathic thrombocytopenia.

The symptoms were heavy bleeding during periods, spontaneous blemishes in the skin, bleeding under the skin and bleeding minor cuts. As there is no specific treatment for this problem, she was on oral steroids and occasional platelet transfusion for the last few years. But her platelet count never came to normal.

Last year, when the patient came for review the count, surprisingly it seemed to have jumped to normal. She was found to have tried some ayuurvedic standard traditional formulations for the last few months, as per the advice of an ayurvedic physician. The oncologist noticed this and forwarded the information to us.

After a conversation with her, I understood that she was taking Drakshadi Kashayam, Karimbirumbadi Kashayam and Mahatiktaka Ghritam. And the dosage was 15 ml. each of the Kashayams half an hour before food every day and 10 ml. of the Ghritam as night dose.

As it is seen, these medicines could bring her platelet count to a normal state. So we decided to do more research on this. In Ayurvedic point of view, ITP can be compared with 'rakta pitha' (vitiation of Pitha dosha). And the above said medicines are all effective in treating this.

After getting a positive result, the oncology department referred two more patients to us, who were having the same problem. After referring the basic texts, we had prepared a detailed list of all raw drugs included in the preparation of the said medications. We also gave them elaborate instructions on how to procure the raw drugs correctly and how to prepare the medicines at home. This was to make sure that they are taking the medicines in the most genuine way.

Their results are also highly promising. The platelet count increase from 38,000-56,000 range to 1,45,000 after a month's treatment during their three-month course. As there was no any specific treatment or medicine which can cure ITP in a safe way, we are planning to conduct specific research in this area in order to find an Ayurvedic solution which may help a number of people suffering from this disease for long. The department has already started preliminary work on the topic. We hope we can narrow down which medication or combination is more helpful in this regard.

Even though we tried, we could not contact the physician who first suggested the formulation. We would not like to make a claim that we found a medicine to cure ITP. We gratefully followed a prescription from an unknown vaidya which worked well in this case. Fortunately we could start more research on that.

Ayurveda is vast like a sea. We cannot measure it or find out all the treasure hidden in its deep regions. Still, if we try, we may get some precious pearls.

The writer is head, department of holistic medicine, Amrita Institute of Medical Sciences, Kochi. He can be contacted at crkamath@aims.amrita.edu

We gratefully followed a prescription from an unknown vaidya which worked well in this case. Fortunately we could start more research on that



Some medicines are said to give one the strength and potency of a horse and enhance erection for a longer duration

In the name of Ayurveda



Dr P K Lathika

One can see a slow but progressive decay of character in many members of the medical profession. Some practitioners forget its glory and responsibility

Since the days of Charaka and Susruta, India has been blessed with a glorious code on medical ethics. An Ayurvedic master and his student were always being reminded that their profession aims only at the welfare of the patient. At the same time, fair compensation was not frowned upon.

Acharyas said thus: "Patients trust their physicians implicitly to the extent of placing their lives unhesitatingly under his care. This is true even of patients who have no trust in their own relations, parents and sons. Hence a physician should take as much care of each and every patient as he would of his own family."

There were some basic principles followed by all who had chosen their profession as a 'vaidya'. A passage in the *Charaka Samhita* sums up the ethical injunctions of that time: "He who practises medicine out of compassion for all creatures rather than for gain or for gratification of the senses surpasses all."

But now, in this modern period, one can see a slow but progressive decay of character in many members of the medical profession. Some are forgetting its glory and responsibility.

Indian Medical Council Regulations (Professional Conduct, Etiquette and Ethics) states: 'The prime object of the medical profession is to render service to humanity; reward or financial gain is a subordinate consideration. Who-so-ever chooses his profession assumes the obligation to conduct himself in accordance with its ideals.'

The relevant rules bans advertisements of all kinds. Unfortunately, very often advertisements which are quite against the above said norms appear. It can be said as clearly against the medical ethics. Though being given in the name of 'authentic Ayurveda', some of the advertisements are really confusing and are even against the fundamental principles of Ayurveda!

Some of them argue that the regular usage of certain products for a particular problem (sometimes single product for a number of problems) will cure you easily. They sell the product in the name of Ayurveda, and they don't want to know the patient, his body constitution, digestive capacity etc.! The basic diagnostic method of Ayurveda is simply being ignored, and still they all claim them as '100 per cent Ayurveda'.

Treatment in Ayurveda is a positive, long-lasting relationship between the patient and the physician. For any problem, the physician has to see the patient and through proper diagnostic methods, he understands the patient's problem and helps him cure that with proper lifestyle and medications. The term Ayurvedic cure never means 'over the counter cure'.

Some advertisements are being decorated with a photograph of certain *'vaidya'* who claims generations of Ayurvedic treatment and 'research' experience, though, in fact, there would be none. These kinds of advertisements are smearing the pristine purity of Ayurveda with faulty, misleading claims. All those money motivated individuals and companies, who are playing behind these kind of negative trends, should step back from their activities which are harmful to authentic Ayurveda.

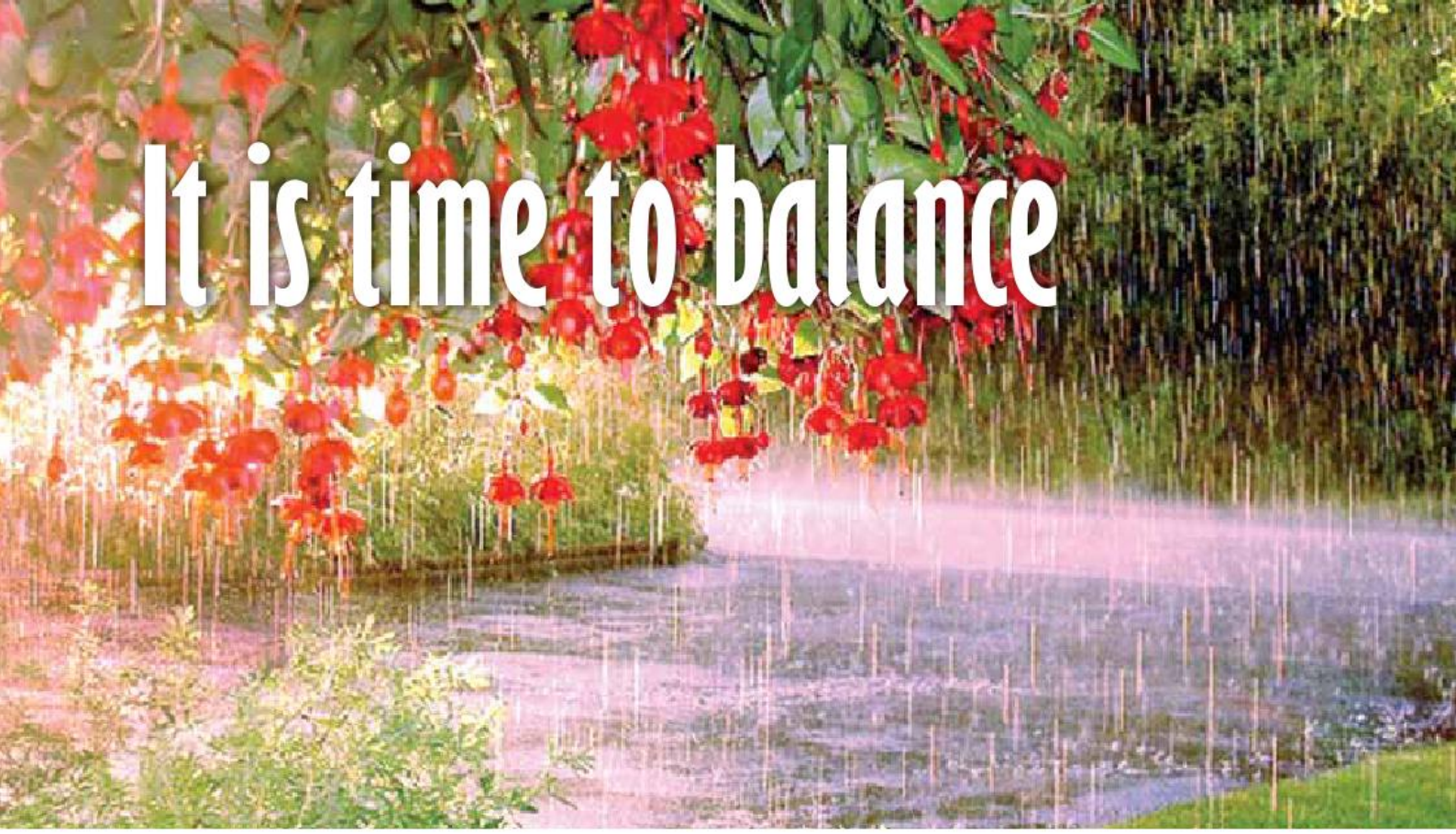
There are advertisements which may inspire drunkards by claiming all-cure for lever problems. Some advertisements are on *'Vajikarana'*, the 'ideal therapy' for the enhancement of male vigour. Their much-in-demand product will be 'hassle free' and with 'no side-effects'. They offer great relief to the men who lead a hectic stressful life. These medicines are said to give one the strength and potency of a horse and enhance erection for a longer duration!

There is no magical cure in Ayurveda. These advertisers are sure that, those who buy these medicines, just by seeing the advertisement, will be silent, even if they couldn't get the expected result!

Recently, there was an advertisement given in some main news papers and magazines claiming that their newly found medicine can cure diabetes completely! These tendencies should be removed as soon as possible from the field of Ayurveda. Faulty and misleading advertisements on over the counter products attract a number of ignorant public and they misunderstand these fake claims as of Authentic Ayurveda. This demoralises Ayurveda and its genuine followers. Moreover, as it is against rules and regulations, authorities should take action against those people who are making Ayurveda a cash cow.

There is no magical cure in Ayurveda. These advertisers are sure that those who buy these medicines just by seeing the advertisement will be silent, even if they did not get the expected result

The writer is Chief Physician, Sarathy Ayurvedic Hospital, Aluva



It is time to balance

People prefer for rejuvenative treatments in monsoon season

Monsoon has many strong characteristics, the profound one being incessant rains. Called the varsha ritu in Ayurveda, it begins in June in Kerala and peaks between July 15 and August 15. This period coincides with the month of Karkkidakam in Malayalam era. Ayurveda practitioners in Kerala have found through ages of experience that this is the best time to perform Ayurvedic treatments.

In the rainy season, the body is more receptive to Ayurvedic treatments than at any other time of the year. It is also considered the best time for preventive and curative treatments, along with special protocols for daily regimens, seasonal regimens, and rituals and costumes with ethical regimen.

The most important of the curative, preventive and rejuvenative treatments include in panchakarma, under the sodhana (purification) therapy. Panchakarma is the systemic cleansing of the body without damaging the tissues. They cleanse all channels (srotasas) of the body and improve oxygenation. Many protocols of the panchakarma act as the best antioxidant treatments. The most ideal and safe time to perform panchakarma is monsoon mainly because the atmospheric condition suites and gives the patient a comfortable feeling during treatments.

Panchakarma improves the functioning of all organs and systems of the body. All obstructions to the metabolic processes are removed and the anabolic process is strengthened. The katabolic processes at tissue level also become effective and efficient to increase the immune system. The treatment activates the hormone-producing glands. Panchakarma enhances the functional processes of organs or system responsible for the excretion process. Excretory products such as urine, stools and sweat remove unwanted and disease producing substances or malas.

Detoxification and purification treatments are the most effective to recharge the body and improve the immune system which could prevent all contagious, autoimmune, metabolic, epidemic and systemic diseases.

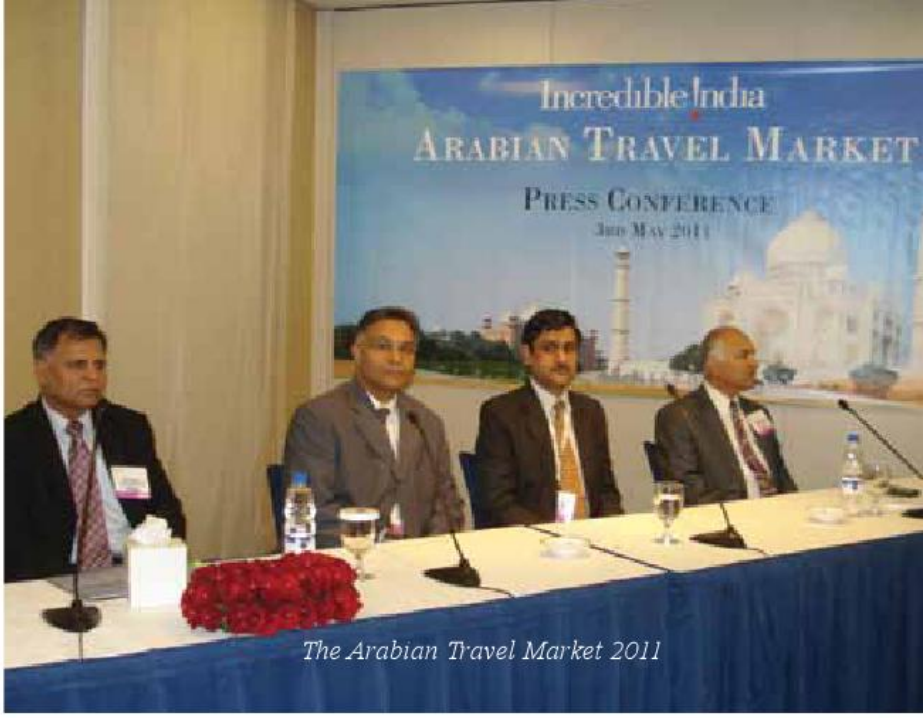
Monsoon packages at Punarnava

Punarnava Ayurveda Hospital in Kochi has announced its special monsoon treatment packages.

The treatments are aimed at total body rejuvenation and have durations of 1, 3, 5, 7 and 14 day. They are aimed at helping to maintain perfect health, youthfulness and high levels of immunity. Treatments include various massages, steam bath, kizhi, nasyam, sirodhara, pizhichil, vasti, virechana etc.

"Our 14-day package is an ideal monsoon package for cleansing and detoxification of the body," said Dr A M Anwar, chief physician. "This package helps in complete expulsion of toxins from the body and is very effective in joint disorders, muscle weakness and improving immunity." Details are available at +91 484 2801415 and +91 97474 34010

Arabian Travel Market shows growth



The Arabian Travel Market 2011

Healthcare tourism offers get huge response

The political unrest in the region apart, the Arabian Travel Market 2011, held from 2-5 May at the Dubai International Exhibition and Convention Centre, has successfully mirrored the strength of the regional tourism industry through its impressive post show figures. As many as 24,300 delegates from across the world attended the tourism event, which is 10 per cent more than the number of participants the previous year. More than 2,200 companies showcased their products at the expo.

Responding to trends in region travel and tourism, this year's ATM exhibition included pavilions dedicated to the cruise and medical tourism sectors – both industry segments showing significant growth across the region. Both these sectors areceived a large number of feedback, according to Mark Walsh, Group Exhibition Director, Reed Travel Exhibitions, organiser of Arabian Travel Market 2011.

The figures demonstrate the robustness of the region's tourism sector, as travel and tourism operators and hoteliers from outside the Middle East look to the Gulf as an inbound source market of choice, especially given the slow pace of economic recovery across Europe and the US.

Exhibitor feedback clearly highlights the success of the show in unlocking new opportunities and providing a central forum for reaching customers, developing business opportunities and gathering industry intelligence.

According to the World Tourism Organisation, Saudi Arabia is the largest outbound travel market in terms of average spend, with travelers spending $6.7 billion per year on overseas travel.

Contributing to the success of ATM are the quality of its conference and seminar programme, with industry experts discussing the top industry trends and issues, addressing headline topics from a variety of segments including aviation, luxury travel, travel technology, 'green' tourism and more.

The show also featured special offerings catering to specific parts of the travel trade, including Travel Agents Day and Careers Day.

The Ayurveda International, the Arab language journal, at the ATM



When it blossoms

A P Jayadevan

Ayurveda is holistic in that it not only considers the human being as a whole. It has comprehensive knowledge about human life beginning from the moment of conception. And even before that: Ayurveda has elaborate prescriptions about the regimen a couple would practice if they were to give birth to a healthy and virtuous baby.

Ancient Ayurvedic texts elaborate on Ayurvedic principles of embryology (the development of the fetus), conception, pregnancy, and delivery. One can find amazing parallels between the knowledge of modern medicine and that of Ayurvedic wisdom which was formed more than 4,000 years ago.

Ashtanga Hridaya, one of the basic texts of ayurveda, poetically describes the formation of an embryo thus: "The soul (*satva or atma*), forced by the afflictions of its own past actions (*karma phala*), enters into a union of pure semen and ovum and thus forms the embryo, in an orderly manner, just like the fire forms from the friction of two pieces of wood. We can't see the sun's rays falling on to a paper through a converging lens but we can understand the presence of the rays by the burning of the paper. Just like this, the entry of soul into the embryo is not visible, but can be inferred by the commencement of life's activity in it." (*Sarira sthana, 1- 1*)

The embryo is formed by the subtle elements ether (*ákásha*), air (váyu), fire (*tejas*), water (*ap*), and earth (*pritvi*). All five elements are contained in both the semen and ovum.

Ayurveda insists on wholesome food and a pure (*satvic*) mind to produce a healthy fetus. The text says: "the factors that the mind gives the embryo are conduct, likes and dislikes, purity, memory, attachment and detachment. Other factors include valour, fear, anger, fatigue, enthusiasm, sharpness, softness, seriousness, and stability or instability. The more pure the mind is, the more positive qualities will be predominant in the newborn."

The classics give importance to the quality of semen and ovum, and it is said that a good baby will be born if both semen and ovum are pure. For this, oleation, purificatory therapies and nourishing enemas are suggested. The man uses milk and ghee with sweet, ojas-building herbs; the woman uses sesame oil, black gram and other ovum building and Pitha-increasing herbs. Healthy semen is white, heavy, unctuous, sweet, copious, and thick like honey or ghee. Healthy menstrual blood is noted by its not staining a cloth after it has been washed.

For those ancient seers, getting an offspring was something divine and there are special prayers and mantras are described in *Ashtanga Hridaya* for this. A good child was considered as an asset to society.





Nurturing life

Caring for the pregnant woman, or garbhini paricharya, is well-documented in Ayurveda. Most Ayurvedic texts have elaborate sections on the specific care a pregnant woman must get in each month and stage of pregnancy. Even today, this ancient wisdom is followed as traditional practices in innumerable households

Dr B Syamala M D (AY)PhD



Dr syamala

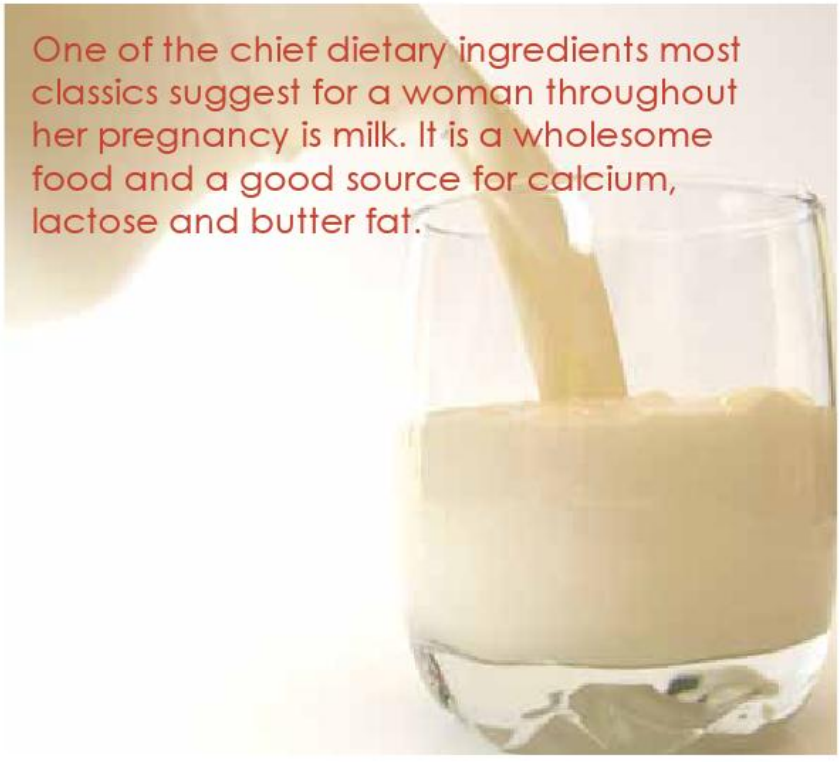
Ayurvedic texts prescribe diet (*ahara*), lifestyle (*vihara*) and thought process (*vichara*) that a pregnant woman must follow during pregnancy as they have a direct impact on the mother and the child. It is recommended that utmost care should be given to the pregnant woman during the first three months as well as the last two months (after the completion of the seventh month).

The factors such as maternal, paternal, habituations, nutrition, psychology of mother all should be normal, without which the baby may be born with congenital anomalies. Dauhrdavamana is another factor that can lead to congenital anomalies. The purpose of Dauhrda is to fulfil the needs of diet and other factors for the proper growth of foetus. As mentioned by Kashyapa, improper diet and mal absorption can lead to retarded growth and congenital anomalies as blindness.

The mental state and behaviour of the pregnant woman have a very important role in development of a normal healthy baby. The child can become a coward if she is always in grief, worry and anxiety during pregnancy. There are indications that the child may develop epilepsy if she constantly quarrels. So the pregnant woman should avoid all these factors and should take proper care of herself.

The right diet is considered the most important factor in the proper growth of the foetus, maternal health and even lactation after childbirth. The diet of a pregnant woman should include shali, Shashtika, Mudga, Laja, butter, ghee, milk, fruit juice, honey, sugar, jackfruit, planton, gooseberry, grapes and other fruits that are sweet in taste

One of the chief dietary ingredients most classics suggest for a woman throughout her pregnancy is milk. It is a wholesome food and a good source for calcium, lactose and butter fat.



and cold in property. Nutritive and favourite diet, affection and care of relatives and comfortable exercises help proper growth of foetus without any anomalies.

Ayurveda classics mention special diets and mode life for pregnant women. One of the chief dietary ingredients most classics suggest for a woman throughout her pregnancy is milk. Along with the habituated diet, she should take milk from the first month itself as it is a wholesome food and a good source for calcium, lactose and butter fat. It enhances body strength. There are chances of developing constipation during pregnancy; regular intake of milk is helpful against it. Mild laxatives and enema are also recommended if there is a tendency to constipation. Milk boiled with sweet herbs is tasty, and helps provide adequate calories.

The embryo gets its nourishment through the umbilical cord. For foetal growth, for maternal health and for further lactation, rice, milk, butter and ghee along with fruits and leafy vegetables are recommended. Nutritional food substances like black gram and gooseberry are also advised during pregnancy.

The foetus is in the formative stage during the first three months of pregnancy. During this stage, the embryo is nourished directly by percolation. Therefore, the diet should include more liquid type foods such as fruits with juice content, coconut water and milk.

In the second and third months, milk, medicated with life-building herbs such as vidari, shatavari (asparagus), yashtimadhu (licorice) and brahmi, are prescribed along with honey and ghee. Brahmi is good for calming the nerves and sustaining the pregnancy.

Towards the end of the third month, the foetus starts showing distinct development and sensory perceptions. Motor reactions start developing and heartbeat can be heard. Milk, honey (to reduce the aggravation of kapha) and ghee can be given along with the diet that can pacify all the three doshas. Shashtiaka rice will provide more strength to the body.



Medicated ghee is recommended as a nutritional supplement to the diet in this stage.

Brahmi is good for calming the nerves and sustaining the pregnancy



The foetus develops body tissues (*dhatus*) in the fourth month. Milk and butter are advised to be taken from fourth month. Butter and ghee contain GABA (*Gamma Amino Butyric Acid*) that is essential for brain functions. It is present only in cow's milk. Shashtikaudanam should be taken with curd in the fourth month that can increase Pitha.

From the fourth to the seventh month, medicinal supplements such as Aswagandha and guduchi are given to strengthen the uterine muscles and to nourish the embryo. They also help in the prevention of intrauterine growth retardation.

In the fifth month, blood and muscles are formed. Milk and ghee should be taken along with normal diet in the fifth month.

In the sixth month, fatty tissue is formed. In the seventh month, foetal growth is complete. Foetal organs are well formed and acquire strength by the sixth and seventh months. Skin, hair and nails are also noticed at this stage. Medicated ghee is recommended as a nutritional supplement to the diet in this stage.

From the seventh month onwards, fat, salt and water should be reduced in the diet. Rice gruel with

Nothing in excess, please

Tastes of food has got very important role in development of congenital anomalies. The pregnant woman should have a proper idea about the impact each category of food can have on the baby.
Excessive and continuous use of sweets: diabetes, obesity

Sour food: Bleeding disorders, diseases of skin and eyes
Salty food: early wrinkling of skin baldness and greying of hair
Pungent food: unhealthy body. Oligospermic males, anovulatory girls. High chances of infertility.
Bitter food: Thin, weak bodies with less digestive power
Astringent food: Cyanosed, distension of abdomen, gas troubles

Dosha-vitiating diet can lead to congenital anomalies as vatikahara as excessive use of non-oily non-fatty, pungent food lead to development of child with hump back, blindness, muscular dystrophy and cretinism. Excessive use of Pithalahara food articles such as curd, butter milk and pickles, especially in the first trimester, can lead to early baldness, tawny skin etc. Kaphahara leads pale and albino skin.

ghee is a recommended diet. Small amounts of basil can be taken as anti-spasmodic. Mild diuretic herbs such as gokshura and sariba, which are also urinary antiseptics, can also be taken.

Ayurveda advises certain concoctions like ghrita preparations (dadimadi ghrita, kalyanaka ghrita etc.) during pregnancy for the healthy growth of the foetus and the health of the mother. Dadimadi ghritham improves the physical growth of the foetus while Kalyanaka Ghritham improves mental growth.

These concoctions can be taken from the seventh month of pregnancy. Sukhaprasava Ghritham is advised for making delivery of the baby easy. These Ghrita preparations can be included as a part of the diet during pregnancy.

Ghee prepared with *Gokshura that* can prevent retention excess fluid causing oedema and hypertension are to be taken. Rate of growth of foetus and its weight gain increase from seventh month of pregnancy. There will be an increase of 600 grams per month of the weight of foetus from seventh month of pregnancy.

Chances of constipation are more from eighth month of pregnancy. So *yevagu* prepared with milk should be taken by pregnant women frequently. *Anuvasanavaty* prepared with *thaila* and *madhuraushadha* is suggested in the eighth month.

Asthapana vasty with this *thaila, ghrtha*, *saindava*, and *kashaya* prepared with *Shushkamoolaka* and *kola*, with *kalka* of *Shatahwa* help in normalising Vatha without vitiation of Pitha, also help prevent constipation.

Soup prepared from animal flesh, *Yevagu*, *anuvasana*, intake of more quantity of oil and ghee help in normalising *apanavata*. *Pichudharana* with the *thaila* prepared for *anuvasana* can also be done everyday that help in achievement of normal, natural labour. They may also take oil massage (*abhyanga*) in this period.

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Soup prepared from animal flesh, Yevagu, anuvasana, intake of more quantity of oil and ghee help in normalising apanavata



Wildlife

The weak hearted will not have it easy here. Imagine running away from a white tiger or a black panther through thick undergrowth, the hissing of snakes and other reptiles prodding you to remain alert. Or a herd of wild elephants observing your eye movements and crocodiles inviting you with fake tears into their territory. Fast forward to unending treks through rocky terrain, walking without supports through waterfalls and jungle rivers as you aim to reach safe ground. If this sounds like a perfect picture for the pumped up adventurist in you, wake up and witness this amazing adrenaline ride called Odisha.

The Major Wildlife Sanctuaries in the State include Bhitarkanika, Chandaka, Chilika, Simlipal, Tikarpada, Gahirmatha and Nandan Kanan. The Simlipal Tiger Reserve hosts tigers, elephants, and other wildlife. The Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary has been protecting estuarine crocodiles since 1975. The Nandan Kanan Zoological Park in the capital is famous for its white tiger and black panthers. There are also facilities for a joy ride in the toy train to observe the wildlife closely. Tigers, leopards, elephants, bears, sambar, black buck and wolves are seen frequently in the dense forests and hilly parts of the State.

Odisha, the Indian reply to the African safari, remains a test to distinguish the men from the boys. So strap your boots, sling your binoculars and discover the Odisha safari. The spirit of adventure beckons you to its homeland.

Natural wonders

Natural wonders: Or if you prefer the sanguine face of Mother Nature to the wild one, then you have it all here: rivers, lakes, beaches, mountains and valleys.

Welcome to Chilika lake, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon. It is home to 160 species of birds and is the largest wintering ground for migratory birds in India. Explore the lake in a boat made available for tourists, and you could come across Irrawady dolphins near the Satpada Island. Chilika is a system in itself and offers livelihood for more than hundred thousand families!

Odisha has some relatively unexplored beaches. The sea plays hide and seek at Chandipur beach - receding and advancing upto 5 kms daily - in line with the tides. The jetty at the pristine Gopalpur tells tales of a glorious past when trade flourished. The fine white sands of the Puri beach stand mute witness to both the sunrise and the sunset. It is doubtless the most bustling beach in the State with pilgrims taking a long holy dip here. The adventurous visitors may head for Taptapani and Mahendragiri hills which are being developed for trek-



king and mountaineering.

Temples, festivals

If you want to feel authentic Indian heritage, head for Odisha. Its temples, festivals, dance and music will recreate India through the ages for you.

Odisha, with a documented history stretching back to 2000 BC, is dotted with ancient monuments ranging from the ruins of Sisupalgarh to the magnificent Lingaraj and Jagannath temples, and from the Konark Sun temple to the exquisitely carved Mukteswar. The sculpture and superb carvings on the temples at Bhubaneswar, Puri and Konark — the Golden Triangle of Odisha — are the finest examples of Odisha's glorious past.

The Jagannath temple at Puri, one of the four holy cities of Hinduism, was built by Kings Choda Gangadeva and Ananga Bhimadeva in 12 century AD. At present, the world-famous annual chariot festival (rath yatra) is celebrated in June every year. A World Heritage Site, the Sun temple at Konark is known for its architectural marvel as well as the annual dance festival which takes place in December. Bhubaneshwar is home to more than a thousand magnificent temples.

Odisha is home to Odissi, the oldest Indian classical dance form with an unbroken tradition of 2,000 years. The dance form is set mostly to Gita Govindam, the poetic expressions of the love between Lord Krishna and his consort Radha, by 12th century Oriya poet Jayadeva. Odisha is also known for its great folk tradition and dance forms such as Ghumura dance and Gotipua dance.

Handicrafts

Want to carry back some memories home? The alluring arts and crafts of Odisha provide an array of articles which a tourist can hardly ignore. The silk fabrics of Odisha are as diverse as they are beautiful both in design and colour. The skills of artists in traditional Odishan arts and crafts like weaving of Ikat, Bomkai and Sambalpuri sari have been passed on to successive generations.

Dating back to the Kalinga School, Puri has conserved a marvellous heritage of carving. Craftsmen at Puri use soft soapstone and hard kochila to carve temple sculptures. The craftsmen of Khandapara in Puri are proficient at carving plates, bowls, flowerpots and other decorative articles from a creamy white wood. The Patta Chitras of Puri and the silver filigree work of Cuttack are perfect items as souvenirs. Silver filigree work of Cuttack in particular provides a range of items varying from home decoratives to body decoratives providing pleasure to every eye. The ancient art of palm leaf writing still survives in Odishan houses.

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For the new mother

Ayurveda suggests special dietary and lifestyle regimen during Soothika, the 45 days after delivery

Delivery is a traumatic event to the woman as well as the new born. The mother becomes very tired after delivery and hence be given extra care, rest and specific food for a considerable period of time. Ayurveda calls the period of 45 days after delivery as *sootika* and suggests special dietary and lifestyle regimen.

The new mother's diet should be decided based on her health, body nature and habituated diet. It would take some time before her digestive system gets back to the normal and hence she must not be given even the normal pre-delivery diet. Only a very light diet such as rice gruel may be given for up to three days. Milk or a small quantity (five grams) of panchakola choornam with a little ghee may be added to hot rice gruel. This helps increase the appetite and digestive power and relieve her of pain. If the woman is taking allopathic drugs, then start the drug and dietary regimen only after completing the course. It is advised that the new mother take food after a hot water bath.

Rice gruel with milk, milk boiled with small onion or intake of small quantities of castor oil (5-10 ml) can also relieve constipation

Yevagu (barley rice) prepared with *kashayam* of vidaryadi varga drugs, added with ghee or milk, can be given after three days till seven days.

A special medical compound of ajamodakam, ativisha (*atividayam*), *chittaratha*, kayam, elachi and panchakolam, powdered and mixed with ghee can also be given. Its decoction can also be given. The drugs such as *katukurohinim, ativisha, padakizhangu, shakatwak, hingu* and *tejani* can also be given. These help remove the vitiated doshas and relieve the pain.

One may start fish and other non-vegetarian food after 12 days of delivery. Habituated preparations of fish, egg and meat can be given according to the digestive power from 13th day onwards. The mother may drink warm water as per requirement. Water boiled with cumin and rachyspermum copticum (*ajamodakam*) is also good as it does not vitiate Vata or produce gas trouble.

Women may feel pain in abdomen, head and lower abdomen due to contraction of uterus after delivery. For this, five grams of well-powdered *yevakshara* (ash of plant barley) mixed with ghee or hot water can be given. Water boiled with coriander seeds can be given along with jaggery and *trikatu choornam*. These formulations help reduce pain. Some women cannot take ghee and other fat materials; doctors must advise them suitable formulations.

A proper health promoting diet may be initiated after seven days. They can drink ghee or any snehadravya such as yemakasneham. They can also take classic Ayurvedic formulations such as asavam or arishtam in the evening. *Pichudharanam* with *kashayam* prepared with drugs as *shireesham* and *kumbha* is also suggested.

Milk prepared with drugs that can normalise Vata should be given along with food in the next ten days.

Soups prepared with meat of goat can be given for the next 10 days. The diet should continue to be light, congenial and minimum in quantity during this period. Sudation (*swedanam*), oil massage (*abhyanga*) with Balathailam can be done afterwards. This specific regimen can continue for four months.

The regimen after surgery (*Caesarean* operation) is different and may be decided in consultation with a doctor.

Rest

Women must take complete rest at least for 15 days after delivery. However she should flex and extend her legs and arms in between and should feed her baby by sitting on bed.

Complete bed rest is a must on the first day. Standing up even for a while or walking a small distance can lead to giddiness. Excessive bleeding, fever, swelling, retroversion or prolapse of uterus can also happen if one does not take rest during the days just after delivery.

The mother may sleep while taking rest. That helps in relieving mental tensions as well. Ideally, she must sleep whenever she feels sleepy or while the baby sleeps. Lack of sleep may reduce production of breast milk. It may also cause loss of appetite, tiredness, headache and body pain.

There are chances of development of constipation after delivery, especially for those who take antibiotics. It is better to take drugs that can prevent constipation. It will relieve gas trouble as well. Rice gruel with milk, milk boiled with small onion or intake of small quantities of castor oil (5-10 ml) can also relieve constipation. Being tired may force many not to walk to the toilet even when there are natural urges. This may cause constipation.

The new mother must pass urine every three hours. Retention of urine can cause infection or fever. If

Barley is often recommended as an integral part of the diet for the new mother



For the bundle of joy

Prof. (Dr) K Muraleedharan Pillai

Ayurevda acharyas Charaka, Vagbhata, Susruta and Chakrapani have all dealt in detail about the care of a new born child.

After giving a thorough bath to the baby, cleanse the palate, lips and throat using cotton. Then a piece of cotton soaked in oil is kept on top of the head. Afterwards, make the baby lick rock salt with ghee as an emetic. Chakrapani recommends use of warm water in winter season and cold water during summer for bath. Vagbhata insists on cleansing the eyes immediately. He advises artificial respiration if normal breathing is not established immediately after it is born.

The cutting of umbilical cord is to be performed by a one-sided sharp knife. There is a slight difference of opinion between Charaka and Susrutha regarding the procedure of cutting the umbilical cord. Susruta insists on ligation of the cord with a thread before its section where as Charaka does not specifically mention it. According to Susrutha, ligation of umbilical cord should be eight finger breadths in length from the root of the navel.

Improper cutting of umbilical cord may lead to four types of abnormalities and which ultimately may lead to umbilical hernia. The four types of abnormalities are big size and protruding navel, egg-shaped and hard swelling at the navel, concave type of deformity at navel and bulging of navel.

Some acharyas suggest applying of honey and ghee to the new born. Susrutha advises to give mixture of swarna bhasma with ghee and honey. Apply bala-oil to remove vernix caseosa from the new born. This is to be followed by application of milky juice from the trees from maraceas family. Scented water with camphor and cloves is to be used for bathing the infant.

Before giving bath to the child his body should be anointed with bala thaila. Infusion of the barks of kshiri group of trees and the drugs belonging to sarvagandhas group may be used for giving first few baths to the child. Decoction of Kapitha leaves into which hot gold and silver has been immersed may also be used for this purpose. Drugs to be used for preparing the decoction or infusion may also vary according to the predominance of different doshas in the child's body.

As it takes about three to four days to start the lactation there is a need to feed the baby for the first three or four days from some of the sources.

On the first day child should be fed three times with ghee and honey mixed with the powder of the roots of ananta. The child may be fed with the ghee prepared with the lakshmana root on second and third day.

Mother and new born should not be left alone; they must be in the company of friendly people.

there is any burning sensation while passing urine, then one must take proper medical advice and check for urinary infection. *Punarnavadi kashayam*, *Chandraprabha vati* and *Gokshuradi gulgulu* are found effective in such cases.

As the abdomen gets emptied of the whole uterine contents after delivery, there are chances of development of distension of abdomen and gas trouble after delivery. Binding up the abdomen with thick cotton cloth helps prevent such problems. Tablets such as *Dhanwantharam gulika* and *Hingwadi gulika* can also be given.

Dhanwantharam gulika and milk boiled with asparagus root and added with sugar are suggested for reducing burning sensation in the stomach. *Shankhabhasmam* or *Shrnga bhasmam* with milk are also found to be effective. Women must reduce chillies and other hot items as well as sour and salty food in the diet. One must also ensure timely intake of food.

Thirst: There is general concept that women should not take much water after delivery. This may because it is the time involution happening with dissolution of the enlarged uterine body. Filling the stomach with fluids may increase the workload. However, they should take proper quantity of water and fluids—up to one and a half litre of fluid a day. It can be in the form of tea, coffee, milk etc. They can drink water boiled with cumin seeds, shariba or Sida rhombifolia. Water boiled with dried ginger, rice gruel mixed with coconut milk or cow's milk or ghee are also advised.

Headache: Inadequate or disturbed sleep, tiredness, insufficient intake of fluids, blood loss and lack of head bath can lead to headache after delivery. One may take steps to avoid these reasons: may restrict the number of visitors, take nutritious and fluid-rich diet and ensure

The mother may drink water boiled with cumin and rachyspermum copticum as it does not vitiate Vata or produce gas trouble

Milk or a small quantity of panchakola choornam with a little ghee may be added to hot rice gruel. This helps increase the appetite and digestive power and relieve pain

food and medication that can take care of blood loss. Sudarshanam gulika and dhavalalepam are found to relive headache.

Cracks on nipples: Wipe clean nipples with wet clean cloth each time after breast feeding. Applying butter, ghee or jatyadighrtam also help.

Mastitis and breast abscess: Retention of milk in breasts may happen if the baby is not fed and if there is excessive secretion of milk. It may cause swelling and formation of abscess if it is not drained well soon. Let the baby be fed with milk of that breast first. Press a little on the area of hardness towards the nipple so that it can help the flow of the retained milk.

Application of sesame seeds ground after boiled with milk or a paste of neem leaves with honey helps reduce swelling. Jatyadi ghrtam and Gulgulupanchapala choornam are also found to be effective. Varunadi kashaym should be given if there is fever and pus. If the situation persists, then consult a physician.

Loose bowel movement: If there is loose bowel movement, then very light diet such as arrowroot powder boiled with water and added with milk or rice gruel with salt may be given. Vilwadi gulika, Vilwadi lehyam and Kaidaryadi kashayam are the suggested medications. Kutajarishtam or Kutajavaleham can be given if it is severe. Dadimashtaka choornam or Charngeryadi choornam are also effective.

Cold: Ensure that the new mother dries her hair very well after taking bath and that she does not sweat the head. She must avoid curd, buttermilk, fruit juices and fruits if there is severe cold. Dashamoola katuthrayam kashyam may be administered three times a day, before food. Vyoshadi vatakam is also good.

Excessive bleeding: Excessive bleeding after delivery is harmful. It will affect the quality and quantity of breast milk. Very severe bleeding may even cause amenorrhoea. Ashokarishtam, Kutajarishtam and Thenginpookkuladi lehyam are found to be effective in the treatment of bleeding. Kutajavaleham, the juice of leaves of Adatoda vasica plant mixed with honey, juice of flower of hibiscus and pravala bhasmam added with milk are the other useful preparations.

Keeping ice cubes on the abdomen and gentle massage help contraction and arrest bleeding.

Low back ache: Many women complain of low backache after delivery. Proper rest and sound sleep can prevent back ache. Ensure that the woman lies down straight, or sit on a chair with strong back support. The whole body should not be bent under any circumstances. Bend only the legs if you have to.

Apply warm oil on back and do gentle massage. Wipe the oil after 15- 20 minutes with hot towel and then take bath with warm water.

Obese belly: The abdomen should be wound around with thick linen cloth. Take deep breath by lying in supine position and release it slowly. Simple yoga exercises, under the guidance of a trained guru, will also help. Massaging the abdomen well with warm oil and applying hot fomentation after it will help melting the fat deposited on abdominal wall.

Avoid too much oily and sweet food. One may take 15 gms of paste of the roots of Piper nigrum with buttermilk from 21st day of delivery. This should be taken in the morning in empty stomach. But make sure that you do not reduce food intake just for reducing belly; it could be counter-productive on general health condition of the mother and the infant.

Menstruation: Menstruation restarts in some women from one month after their delivery. Majority of women get it after two, three or six months. It starts earlier among women who do not breast feed. Breast feeding increases the production of hormone progesterone and prevents ovulation and menstruation. Hence it reduces the chances of pregnancy during that period. First menstruation after delivery will be heavy with clots at times in most of the women. It can become irregular as well. Drugs should be taken if there is excessive bleeding. Drugs and diet that can increase blood should also be taken along with it.

Proper diet, rest and medication can regularise the menstrual cycle.

Special treatments: People living in cold regions should take light food with Kapha-reducing drugs such as pippali and pepper. They should stay in rooms where there is less chance of entry of wind and cold.

Those who stay in places where there are hills should be given gingely oil. The woman should take oil or ghee, followed with rice gruel prepared with milk. This regimen should be continued for 5-7 days and then rice and other normal diet can be started.

Women must take complete rest at least for 15 days after delivery. However she should flex and extend her legs and arms in between and should feed her baby by sitting on bed

Get ready, the yoga way

There are asanas that strengthen the body and mind, and help face the D-day with confidence



A P Jayadevan

From the moment of conception, a woman undergoes great physical and mental changes. The whole system tries to extract maximum goodness from the mother's body for the well-being of the child.

The quality of life in the womb determines to a great extent the baby's future. Fluctuations in the emotional state of the pregnant woman affect the growth and development of the foetus. So, a pregnant woman has to take utmost care in her food, daily routine and even in her thoughts and deeds.

As it is a time of wonderful transitions, she has to face many challenges like the great physical changes occurring in her body. As it is working to the maximum capacity, as the hormones are invading the system at a hundred times their usual rate, the pregnant woman may simply feel below par physically.

Yoga, as the very term indicates, is the pathway to the union of body, mind and soul and is an ideal ener-

Yoga during pregnancy has its effect both on the mind and the body. It optimises physical health and calms the mind. For appropriate poses, however, one should seek the help of an expert always. Remember, even a small mistake can alter the whole story

Savasana destroys fatigue, and quiets the mind. It purifies blood and improves its circulation and provides relaxation to all internal organs



gy booster during pregnancy. Yoga practices during pregnancy have its effect both on the mind and the body. It optimises physical health and calms the mind.

Wendy Teasdill, an expert yoga teacher and writer from England who trains pregnant women in Yoga, says, "Women who have taken responsibility for their own health through Yoga practice during pregnancy find that they heal more quickly and are less prone to postnatal depression than those who don't."

Many people doubt whether it is possible to practise yoga during pregnancy. Yes, it is possible indeed, if and only if one practises it in the right way. And if one can do so, it is the best tool which can protect oneself well in this stage.

A number of Yoga poses can be tried during pregnancy according to the body conditions. For appropriate poses, one should always seek the help of an expert. Remember, even a small mistake can alter the whole story.

The nine months of pregnancy can be divided into three trimesters. Each trimester brings its own changes and adjustments to the body.

The first trimester

Of the three, the first trimester is of great changes. Possible side-effects of the raised hormone levels are vomiting, nausea, fatigue, mood swings, lack of appetite, irritability, headaches and constipation. The body becomes more tender and the blood pressure sometimes goes low.

The secretion of hormones like oestrogen and progesterone dramatically increases and suppresses menstruation and allows the new life to embed itself in the walls of uterus. These hormones, produced in great quantities till the birth of the child, help the body to adapt pregnancy. As days pass, one will feel mood swings and other disturbances such as nausea as its side effects.

Though these imbalances are temporary, it can really shake one, and even frighten. Regular practice of yoga, breathing and meditation can help a lot in this period.

Practice: Do not try to do all asanas recommended for pregnancy during the first trimester. In this period, as the embryo is still to embed completely to the walls of the uterus, one should not practice extreme stretches and back bends, which may dislodge the embryo from its position. If one is new to Yoga, the best thing is to concentrate on the body and breathing. It is better to take as much rest as one can and do — some gentle movements, total rest and breathing.

Rest in the Yoga way

Savasana or the corpse pose is the best yogic way to get complete rest to the body at all its levels. Breathing awareness is part of the corpse pose. Generally, corpse pose is an integral part of each yoga session. It will be of great benefit if practiced during pregnancy.

Gheranda Samhitha, an ancient yogic text, says about corpse pose: "lying flat on the ground on one's back like a corpse is called Savasana. This posture destroys fatigue, and quiets the agitation of the mind." Its regular practice removes the worries of the world. It purifies blood and improves its circulation and provides relaxation to all your internal organs.

The technique

- Lie flat on the back at full length like a corpse, without much strain to the back. Make sure that the head, neck and spine are all in a straight line. (As the pregnancy advances, one may adjust this position by bending the knees or supporting the head and back by some small cushions.)
- Let the hands stay freely on two sides, a little away from the thighs.
- Stretch the legs with the heels together and toes apart. Relax the feet in order to fall them slightly outward.
- Close the eyes and concentrate on breathing. Breathe easily, in a natural way.
- Clench and relax progressive sets of muscles throughout the body, which in turn make one relaxed completely and it enhances the awareness of the body and 'self'. This is especially important for a pregnant woman.



Triangle pose helps improve pelvic flexibility, tones the lower back, opens the chest and strengthens the legs

► Start the process with the toes: clench them hard as you exhale, and let go. Lift the arches of the feet, turn the toes up and let go. Tighten the calves and release. Pull the kneecaps back, tighten and then release. Tense the thigh muscles and let go.

► Tighten the buttocks and release. Draw the whole pelvic floor upwards and release. Pull the shoulders high up to the ears and then release. Clench the upper arms and then lower arms; very hard; and let go.

► Tighten the fingers, make fists, tighten and release. Tighten the neck muscles and then release. Tighten the face muscles and release. Wrinkle the nose and release. Clench the teeth and let go. Open the mouth as wide as possible and release. Work in the same way with the eyes, eyelids and eyebrows.

► After breathing normally for a couple of minutes, clench the whole legs from toes to buttocks with inhalation. Without a pause, with exhalation, release both the legs and simultaneously tighten the pelvic region. Then relax.

► Do not tighten your abdomen region.

► Inhale and clench your neck, shoulders, arms and head. Exhale, and release your whole body.

► Now, bring the full attention to breathing. According to yogic science, with each inhalation you are taking Prana, the life energy into the body. Visualize prana as a bright white light, and imagine that with each inhalation, you are absorbing prana and watch it slowly entering the lungs, then it flows to the heart, from there it flows to the whole body. Feel the prana revitalising the whole body. See your baby engulfed in the powerful prana. Imagine that you are pushing out all the toxins from the body while exhaling. Continue this visualisation for some time. Here, you are fully focused on respiration, with which you are getting completely re-vitalised.

► Come to the normal position, by gently moving the fingers and toes, then stretch the arms over the head, and stretch in whatever comfortable ways.

Continue the relaxation practice throughout your pregnancy.

The second trimester

The second trimester, known as the 'blooming period', usually stabilises all the initial imbalances; one may feel energized during this period. Even the looks change with the hair shining and the skin glowing. The body will start to acquire an aura of vitality. Yoga practice during this stage helps to conform to the changes in body shape and weight.

As the ligaments and muscles are more supple than usual, one should be able to do all the recommended postures. However, one should adapt the practice as the uterus keeps expanding. It is not advisable to stand still in any position for long during this period.

Loosening exercises such as shoulder rotations, neck rolls and hip rolls can be done gently in this period. During pregnancy, the body's centre of gravity moves to pelvic region and hence the focus should be on this area while practising.

Squatting is a best practice for opening up the pelvis, and it is a very good position for the lower back. But if the pregnancy is more than 32 weeks old, then one should not try this.

Main poses which you can try are, mountain pose (taadaasana), triangle pose (Uthita Trikonasana), warrier pose (Veera bhadrasana), cat pose (Maarjaaraasana), seated angle pose (Upavishta konasana), thunderbolt pose (Vajraasana), and tailor's pose (Baddha konasana), to name a few. Among these four poses are briefly described below.

The mountain pose

This is the foundation for all the other poses and it helps to master the art of standing correctly. (Do not do this for more than one minute)

► Stand straight with the feet one foot apart, knees straight and the pelvis tilted. While you exhale, pull the knee caps back and lengthen the hamstrings and thighs, and turn the tailbone under. As you inhale, lift the spine, let the chest expand and feel the sternum opening.

► Exhale, extend the arms and fingers downwards. Look straight, focus attention to the centre of gravity.

► Distribute the body weight evenly on the feet. Be straight, but not rigid. Imagine that you are like a mountain—serene, firmly-rooted and self-confident.

The triangle pose

This pose helps improve pelvic flexibility, tones the lower back, opens the chest and strengthens the legs.

► Stand in the mountain pose. Spread apart the legs sideways as

far as comfortable. Inhale, raise the arms sideways.

► Turn the right foot to the right side at 900. Turn the left foot slightly to the right side. Keeping the left leg stretched and tightened at the knee, exhale and bend the trunk sideways to the right, bring the right hand down to a comfortable point on the right leg.

► Stretch the right leg well and keep the left heel on the floor in order to avoid leaning on the right hand. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat on the other side.

The cat pose

This pose ensures proper blood flow and relieves the pressure of the uterus on the lower back and the pelvic floor.

Go down as a cat on all your fours. Hands should be placed shoulder width apart, knees and ankles hip width apart.

Your spine should be parallel with the floor; your head in line with the spine and look down. (Do not allow the spine to droop in this position).

As you exhale, drop your head, lift your back up as a cat and tuck the tail bone under. As you inhale, return to the straight position.

Again, with exhalation, hump the back. Turn the pelvis under, feel the baby move up to the spine and feel the vertebrae separating.

The thunderbolt pose

Like a thunderbolt, this position is very powerful, compact and grounding. This pose is a best antidote to tired feet. Those who have varicose veins should not practise this. This pose cures rheumatic pains in the knees and gout.

Kneel with your thighs together, sit back on your heels, with toes pointing straight back. Breathe evenly. Let the palms rest on thighs. Drop the chin slightly.

If possible, try to sit on the floor instead of the heels by sliding the feet out. If you have weak knees, omit this. You can try this by kneeling on a pillow, but keeping the feet on floor.

Watch the body and focus on breathing. Keep this position for a couple of minutes.

The third trimester

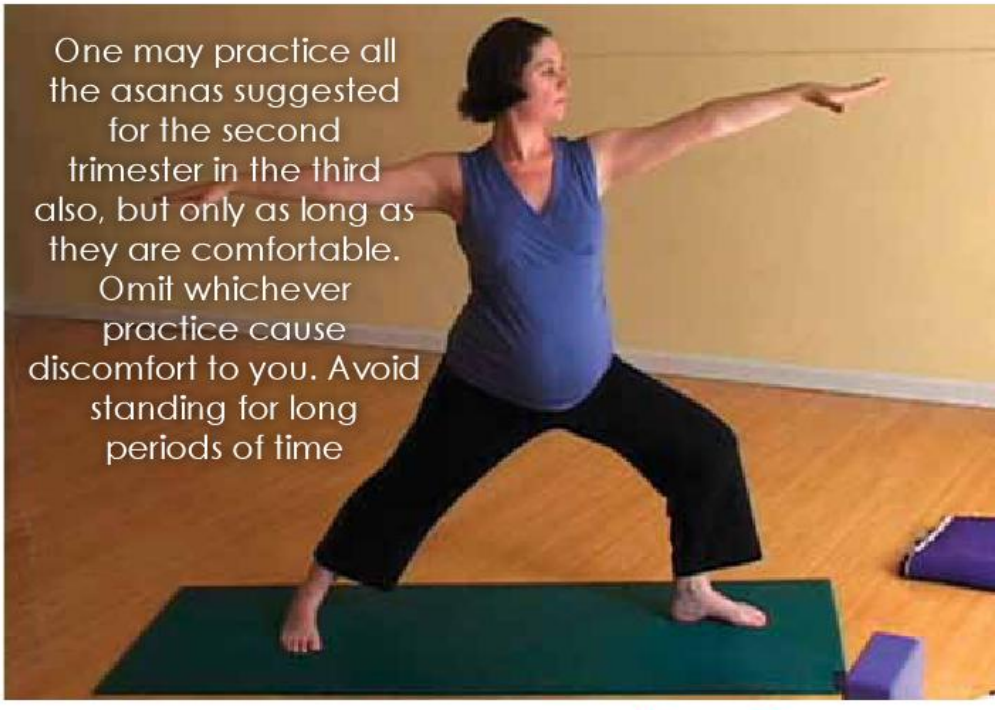
In the third trimester, gentle stretching, deep meditation and breathing practice help to be calm, determined and bold enough to face any challenging situation. It opens up the usual trouble spots like lumbar spine, and frees the joints. It is very important that one has to practise Yoga at this stage with full concentration and awareness, mindful of the changes happening to the 'self'. During this period, the deep buried emotions could jump out to the surface and one may feel depressed. Don't feel negative but accept and understand things as they are. Yoga can help in this regard; it brings an inner feeling of security and a total awareness of body. It will also make labour easy.

During the third trimester, one may focus more on the baby. In this stage one will feel more grounded, and with the yoga practises will become more meditative.

During this period, one may practice all the asanas suggested for the second trimester, but only as long as they are comfortable. Omit whichever practice cause discomfort to you. Avoid standing for long periods of time. As the uterus restricts the backward flow of blood from legs, practice poses like lying on the back with your legs up the wall. Try to do more hip opening poses. Whatever poses you do should be done with utmost care. One may use supports such as cushion or chair while practicing them. Use more cushions to support the lower back.

In the last month, go more slowly than ever and let yourself indulged in breathing, meditation and relaxation. This will flush out the energy blocks in preparation for the labour day. Breathing practices like alternate nostril breathing (Nadi sodhana pranayama) and bee breathing (Bhramari pranayama) are so helpful.

Without proper guidance, do not try any pose. On your meditations, visualise a positive birth experience.



Ask the Doctor



Dr M Prasad, BAMS, MD (Ay), is the chief physician and director of Sunetri Aurvedashram and Research Centre, Thrissur. Dr Prasad, who specialises in Shalakyatanthra, also edits Bharatiya Vaidya Samvadam, a Malayalam quarterly on principles and practices of Ayurveda.

Starting this issue, Ayurevda and Health Tourism readers may send in their queries relating to health conditions.
The letters should contain age, sex and a brief description of your health condition.

The letters may either be emailed to us mail@ayurvedamagazine.org or sent to

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Psoriasis

I am 59 years old. I have been suffering from psoriasis for the past 20 years. I have tried many medicines. I get some relief when I take the medicine, but once I stop, it relapses. It gets worsened during summer. Could you please suggest a remedy?

A Madhavan Nair, Thiruvananthapuram,

Psoriasis has its roots spread very deep. It is seen that the disease relapses whenever it get a chance. There are two major factors which provokes a relapse: faulty diet and mental stress. A course purifying treatment (part of panchakarma) followed by medicines is a better option to treat chronic psoriasis. And you may need to undergo the treatment several times before getting back to normal.

How are kidney stones treated in Ayurveda?

What are the dietary changes one has to make to prevent formation of kidney stones?

M Rajalakshmi, Thrissur

Small-sized kidney stones which do not interfere with the urine-flow can be effectively treated with medicines. However, if the stones are big, or if they obstruct urine flow, then surgery may be required. To avoid stone-formation, one should keep on exercising regularly, reduce fried foods, avoid consuming too much of fatty food, eat plenty of vegetables and should drink sufficient quantity of water. Certain food materials are said to increase the possibility of stone-formation. They include tomatoes, cabbage and sea-food.

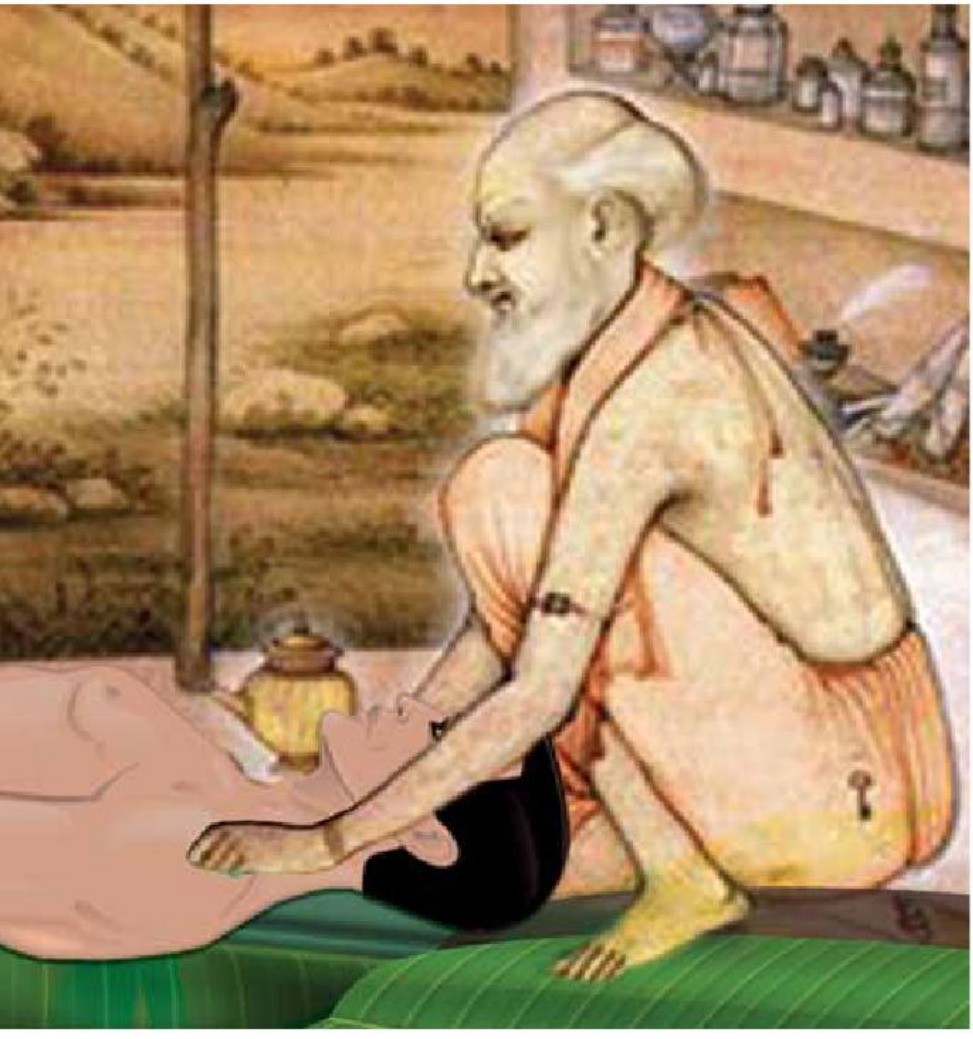
I am 36 years old. My problem is irregular bowel movements. Sometimes I have a tendency to go to the toilet after every meal. At times I also feel a burning sensation in the chest and a slight dizziness. I am a vegetarian and hardly eat much spicy food. Kindly help.

Saj Kaimal, Mavelikakra

It seems that the normal rhythm of your digestion is upset. The *agni* and vayu which control this rhythm are not functioning properly. I am afraid that you had the habit of eating at irregular times. Better keep a daily diet chart. This will help you identify the food materials which provoke your system as well as those which calm it down. Based on this, you can design a menu for a couple of months.
There are many effective medicines in Ayurveda which can help you to traverse this tough situation. You may consult some experienced local physician for this. In any case, medicine alone is not enough. A healthy shift in lifestyle is the most important step.

Time-tested tests

Ayurveda does not differentiate between an age-old disease such as fever or a new one such as AIDS. It has an elaborate system of examination and diagnosis before which it prescribes a treatment. The Dasavidha pariksha, or the ten-fold examination, helped the physician arrive at the right conclusion then. And now



Ayurveda has been in practice for more than 4000 years, taking care of people's health. It is still a vibrant branch of medical science, is part of the human fight against diseases, helps men and women keep healthy. At times it comes up with solutions to problems for which modern science has very little to offer. All in a natural way. It has enjoyed a flawless continuity of legacy.

How does Ayurveda, which had its origins when there was little opportunity for chemical examinations and colleting empirical evidence, has been successful in keeping up its legacy? How is it that its remedies work regardless of age, time, region and sex?

It is told that a pupil once asked Acharya Charaka: "You have taught us all about diseases, their origins, their cures, specifications about medicine etc. But what if we meet a new disease, which you have not described yet? What should we do then?"

To this Charaka is said to have answered as follows: "All diseases change. Some disappear, other appears in new forms and new diseases arise. We cannot learn all about the disappeared, existing and newly ap-

The ten principles underline the fact that the appearance of diseases always changes with time, nutritional habits, climate, society, way of life etc, and hence it is impossible to foresee all future diseases

pearing diseases. Therefore you should learn ten principles of examination of diseases, which you should apply always in diagnosing diseases. Each time, if you do so carefully, you will find cause, nature and treatment of the diseases."

Ayurveda physicians till today follow those ten principles of examination (*dasa vidha pariksha*) which help them keep the flag of Ayurveda afloat in a changing world.

The ten principles underline the fact that the appearance of diseases always changes with time, nutritional habits, climate, society, way of life etc, and hence it is impossible to foresee all future diseases. Today, new diseases such as AIDS break out and new forms of cancers are diagnosed. While it could put any physician, especially those who follow modern branches, in a spot, a learned Ayurevda physician would not waver as he always has a comprehensive tool to understand the disease. All that he needs to do is to strictly follow the golden principles of diagnosis Acharyas had prescribed.

As Ayurveda focuses beyond the symptoms and seeks to unravel their reasons, instead of finding methods to suppress them, every physician conduct these examination, if he were to be successful. This examination is divided into three stages where every possible causative aspect of the ailment is examined. The three stages are as follows:

Observation (*Darsanam*): This is the first stage. Here, various factors like appearance, body build, age and other physical characteristics of the patient is thoroughly examined.

Physical checking (*Sparsanam*): In this stage, the body is examined physically by checking the pulse, palpation, (a method of examination in which the examiner feels the size or shape or firmness or location of something) percussion (tapping a part of the body for diagnostic purposes) and auscultation (listening to sounds within the body) are some different 'sparsanam' techniques.

Interrogation (*Prasnam*): In this stage the patient is asked about his ailments and the symptoms that he is observing on a daily basis. It helps synchronize the observation of the doctor with the feelings of the patient.

The three steps are further elaborated in two ways - *Dasavidha Pareeksha* (tenfold examination) and *Ashtasthana Pareeksha* (eightfold examination).

The 10 point examination (*Dasa vidha pariksha*)

It is important that the practitioner gain a thorough knowledge of the patient's state prior to treatment through an analysis of the following ten components:

Body Constitution (*prakruti*): Prakriti refers to the physical condition of a human being. It is the sum total of the state of tridoshas and trigunas. Identifying the states in each place forms the first step in assessing the physical and mental state of a person.

Ayurevda says one of the thridoshas is predominant in each human being, and classifies people accordingly. In some people, it could be a mixture of more than one. Determined by relative predominance of doshas during foetal development, the prakriti can be vatika, paithika, kaphaja, vata paittika, vata kaphaja, pitta kaphaja or samdoshaja.

Pathological State (*vikruti*): Vikruti is the vitiation of prakruti. Diseases caused due to vikruti are easier to treat than diseases caused due to prakruti itself. The state of vikruti is identified by closely examining the dhatus, malas, and the emotional control of the person.

Related to the biological history of the diseases in its entirety, it enables physicians to consider the signs and symptoms of the disease in order to assess the strength of the disease, the causes, the doshas, the affected body elements, body constitution, time and strength of an individual.

Tissue Vitality *(sara):* Broadly speaking, there are seven vital tissues, namely lymph (*rasa*), blood *(rakta)*, muscle *(mamsa)*, adipose *(meda)*, bone *(asthi)*, bone marrow *(majja)* and reproductive tissue *(sukra)*.

Lymph in the skin is assessed by its smoothness, softness, clearness, thinness and whether the skin is covered with short, deep rooted and delicate hair. Percentage of blood in body is evaluated from the condition of the eyes, mouth, tongue, lips, nails and soles of the feet. When muscles are in perfect condition, the temples, forehead, nape of the neck, shoulders, belly, arms, chest, joints of the body, jaws and cheeks are covered firmly with the skin. People with healthy adipose tissue have oily skin and healthy hair, nails, voice and teeth. The health of bones is determined by pliable but firm forearms, chin, nails, teeth, ankles, knees and other joints of the body. Healthy bone marrow leads to good complexion and stout, long, round and stable joints. People with perfectly healthy reproductive system are strong and cheerful.

The condition of dhatus are classified into three: good *(pravara)*, medium *(madhya)* and poor *(avara)*. Pravara suggests excellent

immune system and condition. It also helps the predominance of the trigunas in the patient: a person is said to belong to the satwa group with if he has high emotional stability, clarity of thoughts, calmness, optimism etc. The lower levels will qualify him to be included in the rajas and tamas of trigunas, the three qualities of mind.

Physical build (***samhanana***): Body examination is carried out by direct perception – a healthy body being well- built with symmetrical bones, strong and stable joints and enough flesh and blood. Being very thin or obese is considered ill-healthy.

Body Measurement *(pramana)*: Pramana or examining body proportion involves assessing the relationship between the lengths of spread arms and the height of the person. An almost same length is a healthy sign. There are also several other measurements that tell the physician about a well proportioned body. Any person in close proximity to the ideal measurements is termed as normal and healthy.

Adaptibility *(satmya)*: Satmya is a process of measuring the capabilities of the person to physically or mentally adapt to changing conditions. It is a complex process, measuring the mental and physical reaction of the person to demanding conditions. His/her psychological, neurological, immunological conditions are checked.

Indicating substances intrinsic to the body, satmya refers to two types of people: those that are strong, can adjust easily to difficulties and have excellent digestive capacity and those that are generally weak, intolerant to change and can have only few food options.

This is an examination tool unique to Ayurveda.

Psychic Constitution *(satwa)*: Satwa refers to the mind which controls the body in contact with the soul (atma). It is the capability of the person to continue doing what is required of him without giving heed to distractions—both physical and mental. A person can be judged to be of high, moderate or low mental strength.

Digestive Capacity *(ahara sakti)*: This has to be judged from the individual's capacity to take, digest and absorb food to the body. It also indicates the metabolic capacity of the person.

Capacity for Exercise *(vyayama shakti)*: It indicates a person's ability to stand physical exertion, and do hard work. Appropriate secretion of metabolic or endocrine products during physical exercise is essential for good endurance in demanding situations. It is can be low, moderate or high.

Age *(vaya):* The age of a person provides vital clues for the diagnosis and treatment. The physician compares the actual age of the person with his or her apparent age. If a person appears younger than he or she really, then it is a sign of health. It is broadly categorised into childhood, middle age and old age.

Along with the dasavidha pariksha, Ayurveda suggests an eight point examination (*Ashtasthana Pariksha*) to help the physician make the right diagnosis, especially the doshik imbalance. The following examinatiosn are part of it: pulse (*Nadi*), tongue (*jihwa*), stool (*malam*), urine (*mootram*), voice and speech (*Sabdam*), body temperature, skin and tactile sense (*sparsanam*), eye balls and vision (*drik*) and the physique (*akriti*).

Pulse *(nadi)*: It provides deep insights into the history of the patient. It gives the physician an idea about body nature, pathological state and imbalances of the tridhosha.

Tongue *(jihva)*: By examining the tongue, a physician can assess the doshic state: a Vata-aggravated tongue is dry, rough and cracked, Pitha-aggravted tongue is red with a burning sensation and Kapha-aggravated one is wet, slimy and coated. It also gives an idea about the digestive system.

Voice *(sabda)*: The voice is natural and clear when a person is healthy with the doshas in balance. It vecomes heavy when Kapha is aggravated, cracked under Pitha is aggravated and hoarse and rough when afflicted by Vata.

Skin *(sparsha)*: Skin gives away the tridosha state in a person's body. It becomes coarse and rough with below normal temperature (*Vata*), high temperature (*Pitha*) and cold and wet (*Kapha*).

Eyes *(drik)*: A person with Vata domination has his eyes sunken, dry and reddish brown in colour. When Pitha is aggravated, they turn red or yellow and the patient suffers from photophobia and burning sensations. Vitiated Kapha makes them wet and watery with heaviness in the eyelids.

General appearance *(akriti)*: A trained physician can judge the doshic influences from examining the face of the patient.

Urine *(mutra):* Examination of the urine helps identify the doshik imbalance in a body.

Stool *(mala)*: When Vata is aggravated, the stool becomes hard, dry and grey/ash in colour. Excess Pitta makes it green/yellow and liquid in form whereas high Kapha lines it with mucus.

Today, new diseases such as AIDS break out and new forms of cancers are diagnosed. While it could put any physician, especially those who follow modern branches, in a spot, a learned Ayurevda physician would not waver as he always has a comprehensive tool to understand the disease

Ayurevda for AUTISM

Incidence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is on the increase worldwide. Ayurevda has a systematic, scientific and effective approach to its treatment

Dr. Sheniya Varma, Dr Prasad M



The incidence and prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are increasing worldwide. In India, the exact details of the disease-statistics are not available. Anyway, the cases reported are increasing. As per the latest accounts released by the Maternal & Child Health Bureau of Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), US Department of Health and Human Services, 1 out of 97 children of the age between 3 and 17 years is diagnosed with some or other of the ASD. This is an alarming figure. It is observed that boys are affected more often than girls, with an incidence ratio of 4:1. Various researches and trials are going on worldwide to find some or other method of intervention which can reverse, partially if not completely, the symptoms of autism.

It should be accepted that there is an upsurge in the rate of incidence of the disease. There has been an increase in the awareness about the disease, which helps an early diagnosis.

Diagnosis of ASD: indicators*

- Does not babble, point, or make meaningful gestures by 1 year of age
- Does not speak one word by 16 months
- Does not combine two words by 2 years
- Does not respond to name
- Loses language or social skills

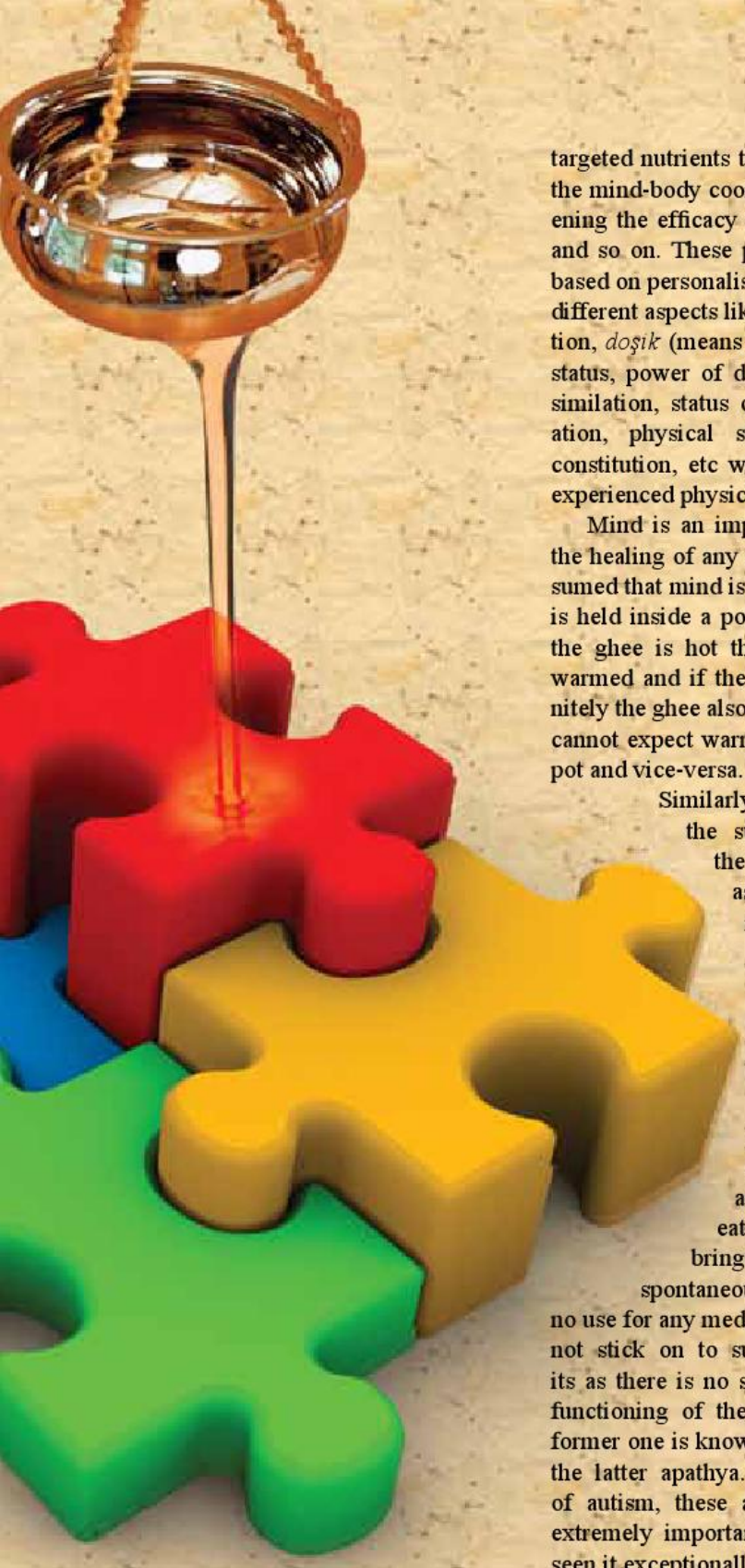
Some Other Indicators

- Poor eye contact
- Doesn't seem to know how to play with toys
- Excessively lines up toys or other objects
- Is attached to one particular toy or object
- Doesn't smile
- At times seems to be hearing impaired

Scope of Ayurveda

Trials with Ayurvedic medicines and treatments for their efficacy in ASD are going on at various centres in India and abroad. In our personal experience for the last eight years, ayurvedic treatments have promising results in the management of ASD. The main advantage of ayurvedic medicine is that it has got a magazine of safe therapeutic preparations of various forms which are developed by continuous trials and rectifications over thousands of years. There are many preparations like decoctions, herbal powders, self-fermented beverages called ariṣtas, different sorts of pills, preparations of medicated ghee (clarified butter) and vegetable fats etc. In recent times, many of the herbs used in Ayurveda are proven to have excellent detoxifying effect as well as free radical-scavenging potential. The therapeutic preparations like herbal decoctions are combinations of many herbs. These combinations are originally developed on the basis of ayurvedic principles. Till recent times these formulations were not given due consideration by the western scientists. But now the picture has changed. More and

taken from www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/autism.cfm



more ayurvedic preparations are under their evaluation.

In Ayurveda, the compounds as well as single herbs are used for different purposes of healthcare like pacifying vitiated functional units called doşas, eliminating excessive toxic accumulations, providing targeted nutrients to tissues, tuning the mind-body coordination, sharpening the efficacy of sense-organs, and so on. These prescriptions are based on personalised evaluation of different aspects like body constitution, *doşik* (means related to *doşa*) status, power of digestion and assimilation, status of bowel evacuation, physical strength, mental constitution, etc which is done by experienced physicians.

Mind is an important factor in the healing of any ailment. It is assumed that mind is like ghee which is held inside a pot called body. If the ghee is hot the pot also gets warmed and if the pot is hot definitely the ghee also will be hot. You cannot expect warm ghee in a cool pot and vice-versa.

Similarly, food is given the supreme role in the healing process as well as in the maintenance of health. It is a basic concept in Ayurveda that there is no use for any medicine if one stick on to a healthy and wholesome eating habits as it brings about health spontaneously and there is no use for any medicine if one does not stick on to such eating habits as there is no scope for proper functioning of the medicine. The former one is known as pathya and the latter apathya. In the context of autism, these assumptions are extremely important and we have seen it exceptionally beneficial.

We care autistic kids with a protocol of a three-step intervention.

1. Detoxifying and stabilising the gut (viz. agni in Ayurveda)
2. detoxyfying the dhathus and balancing the mind-body interaction
3. Enhancing the mental abilities like comprehension

Again, though the stages are generalised in appearance, the execution is highly personalised.

The first stage is based on medicines, almost completely. Medicinal preparations like purgatives, specific formulations for de-worming, for enhancing the functions of the liver and pancreas, for enhancing the digestive fire (called agni), and for regulating the intestinal motility are used in this stage. Certain preparations meant for squeezing out heavy metals from the tissues are also used. To name a few, turmeric, garlic, curry leaves, etc have this advantage. They are used either alone or in combination with other herbs in compounded form.

Second phase mainly comprises massages. Traditional methods of hot-oil massages (*abhyanga*), dry powder massages (*udwartana*), a list of fomenting procedures like *pindaswēda*, *pizhicil*, special types of head-packs like *talapotichil* etc are used here. These manoeuvres improve the muscle tone, reduce hyperactivity, create better motor coordination, and normalise most of the obsessive repetitive movements. It helps the child sleeps well. The bowels become more regular at this stage. He/she will be more receptive to commands or suggestions. The demand for sensory stimulation slows down considerably and the symptoms like increased sensitivity to certain sounds (hyperacusis) slowly disappear.

There will be oral medications parallel to the therapies and a few of these medications will be carried over to the next phase as well.

The third stage is very specific and is meant for enhancing the higher mental functions. This stage of intervention is not started before the proper completion of the first two. It should be kept in mind that nourishing the brain is possible only with an otherwise-clean body. There is no meaning in pouring in the kid with brain stimulants and memory-boosters indiscriminately.



Ayurvedic treatments have promising results in the management of ASD. The main advantage is that it has got a magazine of safe therapeutic preparations of various forms which are developed by continuous trials and rectifications over thousands of years

The major therapies in this stage are irrigating the head with specific medicated fats (*şirodhāra*) holding similar fats on the head within specially designed leather-rims (*sirovasti*), wetting the scalp with oil bandages (*siropicu*), fumigation with specific medicines (*dhūpanam*) etc, along with certain specific oral medications. This follow-up medication is continued for prolonged periods. This third stage of the regimen is repeated later periodically, say, once in six months or so.

Food for ASD

Digestive system of autistic kids often swings to extremes. The three major components of the system viz. digestion, assimilation and excretion, are never in order. This makes the kid a fuzzy eater. Watchful parents report that the behavioural problems of the kids are closely related to the status of their gut. And this observation is perfectly correct.

These kids generally have odd eating habits. They may not eat many of the ordinary stuffs and show cravings to certain other things. They may crave for toothpastes, soaps, paints, plastic, perfumes, creams etc. Stuffs made out of refined starch and sugars may be their favourites. Some kids crave for spicy chips and salted nuts. It is a common observation that the stuffs which they crave for make their behaviour worse and uncontrollable.

Bowels show irregular rhythms. Diarrhoea and constipation may come alternatively. Stools may be bulky, frothy, with lots of undigested food particles, and with atypical odour. Diarrhoea is a cause of concern because it deprives the child of vital nutrients. Constipation makes him/her upset, hyperactive and with poor attention span. Those with recurrent seizures may show an increase in number as well as intensity of the attacks when they are constipated.

All these observations make it a point that kids with ASD needs a special diet.

As mentioned earlier, food is an integral part of ayurvedic treatment. Ayurvedic authors have specifically depicted that the purity of food is the foundation for the purity of mind (*āhārasudhdhau satwasudhi*:). So food becomes very important in ASD. The parents should make sure that the kids get the right stuff, given in right form, get digested properly, assimilation is perfect, no toxin gets into the system, and there is proper excretion. Any food stuff which is difficult to digest should be avoided.

The tool here should be keen observation, not the textbooks. The cravings of the kid should not decide the menu. Many of the protein-rich foods are not tolerated by the system and one should be very selective about them. Same is the case with fermented foods. Though they have certain advantages, they hinder proper digestion and hence should not be a part of the regular menu. In South India dishes like *idli* and *dośa* are (obsessively!) included in the breakfast menu almost daily. These are made out of fermented flour of rice and black gram. No doubt, *idli* and *dośa* are very rich in their nutritive value. But in autistic kids, they weaken the digestive fire and thus promote the growth of unhealthy gut flora. So they are better avoided from the menu. Similarly items like breads, which contain yeast, are to be used with care. This is more so when refined starch is used for its making. They provide excellent culture-medium for the pathological fungi when under-digested. This will create a lot of cravings and hyperactivity.

Fruits, fully ripened, are good options. They provide sufficient amounts of nutrients. Organically cultivated sources are the best. But this never means expensive ones. Locally available less-expensive fruits should be preferred. Bananas, guava, mango, pear, berries, apple, etc can be selected based on avail-

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Ayurevda has a three-stage treatment protocol for ASD. They are detoxifying and stabilising the gut; detoxyfying the dhathus and balancing the mind-body interaction; and enhancing the mental abilities like comprehension

ability. Ripened fruits are easy to digest, and provide excellent nutrition. As consumed raw, the chance of allergic responses is very low. When less ripened, they contain more starch and this is not beneficial. When purchased from the market, the potential threat of pesticides, polishing substances like wax, chemical preservatives, and many other toxic accumulations are to be taken care of.

Refined sugars are better substituted with raw sugars like *jaggery* (row brown sugar-cakes). Cane sugar is not a healthy option even for non-autistic individuals. Palm jaggery is the best alternative. Beverages like coffee and tea are better be avoided but some kids get easily habituated to these items and the parents find it difficult to refuse. In such cases black tea/coffee with jaggery as sweetener can be tried. Organic tea/coffee is available freely these days. Green tea is another option. Tinned health mixes which contain wheat/soya and milk invariably should strictly be avoided. Fresh fruit juices are the best drinks. Honey can be used to sweeten them. Good honey of reliable quality is a good source of glucose and energy. But honey should not be mixed with hot items. Cola and similar bottled synthetic drinks should be strictly avoided. Homemade sweets (with jaggery) may be tried and included in the menu on a rotation arrangement.

Traditional should be preferred over the new-age continental dishes. Food from restaurants which contain a lot of vegetable oils and colours should not be entertained. Artificial flavouring agents like monosodium glutamate (MSG) are very toxic to developing brains. MSG is seen to do a lot of harm on kids with ASD. Refined vegetable oils are not good for cooking. Try to get oils in their natural form. Refining involves heating and this destabilises oil. It is reported that most of the vegetable oils create dangerous trans-fatty acids on heating. Coconut oil is an exemption. Indian cookery which uses oil liberally should take this point seriously. Coconut oil which is plenty in India



Idli and dośa, made of fermented flour of rice and black gram, are very rich in their nutritive value but they weaken the digestive fire. So they are better avoided from the menu of autistic kids

is propagated as an unhealthy option and is getting replaced by other vegetable oils. This is a big mistake.

Hurdles

1. In Ayurvedic management system scope of generalisation is very little if not absent. Though the concepts accept generalisation, the applications in terms of medicines and therapies do not. A method or medicine which worked well with one child may not give the same response when tried on another child with the same symptoms.
2. Many medicinal preparations are not so pleasant to eat/consume.
3. The therapies need hospitalization of 3-4 weeks and some of the methods generate temporary fatigue. So the child is to be resting totally. So all other programs of special education and training may be stopped temporarily.
4. The treatments need periodic follow ups. Sometimes repetitions are needed once in six months or so.
5. The methods are yet to be assessed thoroughly. As of now, the methods practised are not recognized by any accrediting agencies or research organizations.
6. Strict adherence to diet is a must for predictable outputs. But most of the parents, especially working couples, find this point extremely difficult.
7. Children with ASD show increased susceptibility towards certain infections. Skin infections and middle ear infections are the most common to name. These infections are to be handled strategically. At times, parents, out of panic, resort to conventional antibiotic therapies. Some other times, the infection may run a very severe course that nothing other than antibiotics work. In any case, antibiotics bring about drastic setbacks in the progress achieved; and sometimes everything will be back to square one.
8. Some kids may be on long term medications like anti-epileptics (e.g. Carbamazepine) or anti-psychotics (e.g. risperidone). Anti-epileptic drugs are often prescribed to autistic kids indiscriminately. These cases respond much feebly to ayurvedic medications and withdrawing them is quite difficult.

It is seen that the classical ayurvedic treatment done systematically give promising results in kids diagnosed with ASD. But it should be emphasised that the level of improvements is different from child to child. Another important point is that these interventions are made in a corrective manner. The child gets relieved of a lot of physical problems and tantrums. But this will not make him/her a normal child. Intensive training and special education are needed to put him on track and to catch up the peers. This requires the dedicated involvement of parents, special educators, and skilled professional like occupational therapists.

Ghee

Good food, ideal medium

Home-made ghee (clarified butter) is a good medium for cooking. Ghee is really tasty, healthy and has tremendous influence on brain tissues. When properly (or 'traditionally' is the right word) prepared, it contains no casein and so does not create any problem. Milk is boiled over slow fire, allowed to cool and then added with little quantity of souring agent like lemon. This mix is kept overnight for proper curdling and the fermented product is called curd. Fully formed curd, not yogurt, is churned to separate the butter and buttermilk. Butter is thoroughly washed in fresh water to remove traces of buttermilk and can be stored in water or can be refrigerated. If stored in water, the water should be changed everyday. Butter is boiled to procure ghee. This was a routine of our village-life. Ghee is a wonderful product. It is used extensively in Ayurveda. It is observed by the ancient authors of Ayurveda that ghee has excellent potential to nourish the brain. It improves cognitive skills, enhances memory and improves the power of digestion. It can promote the functions of all sensory organs like eyes. It detoxifies the tissues and rejuvenates them. It is described as a rasāyana which means having the capacity to revitalise the entire tissues and systems of the body. A number of medicinal preparations used to treat mental disorders in Ayurveda are prepared with ghee. *Kallyānakaghrtam, mahakallyānakaghrtam, brāhmighrtam, sāraswataghrtam, mahāpaisacikaghrtam* etc are a few examples.

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Fully ripened fruits provide sufficient amounts of nutrients. Locally available less-expensive fruits should be preferred. Bananas, guava, mango, pear, berries, apple, etc can be selected based on availability

When West turns to East



The exploitative healthcare industry and reckless life style have played havoc with the health of the Americans. However, Ayurevda can still rise to the first line of therapy, writes ALDOUS FREEMAN

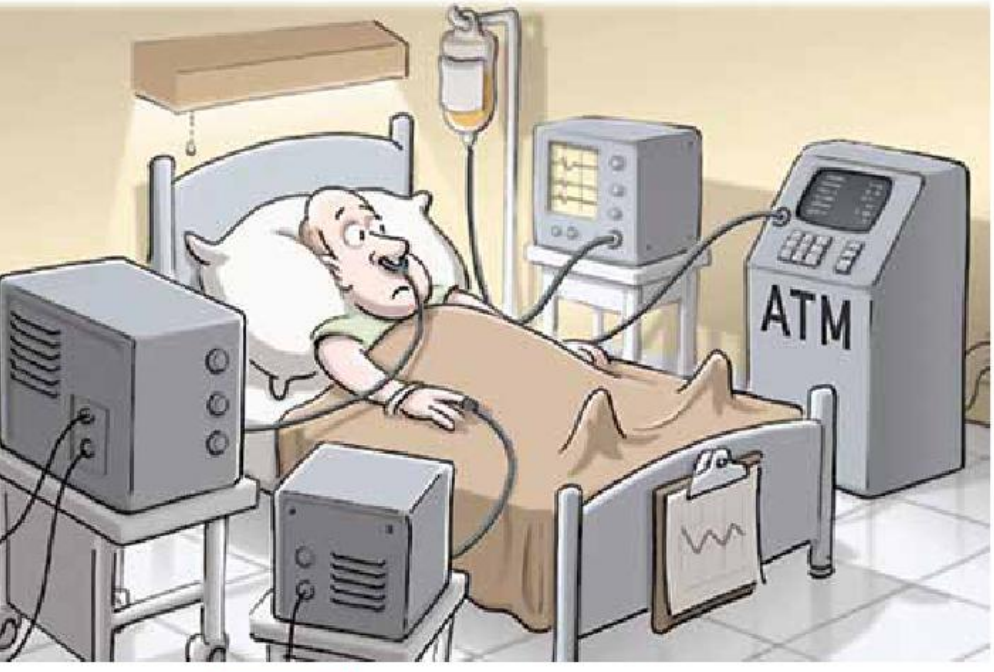
Bobby Fernandez

"Take 1500 mg of calcium a day to prevent osteoporosis". "Drink half your body weight in ounces of water each day for optimal hydration". "Cut your calories by 500 to lose a pound of fat in a week." So many health claims and such little truth.

Welcome to the three-ringed circus that is the modern American health-and-wellness-sphere. The main performers are the medical and governmental bodies who base their recommendations on clinical evidence. The sideshow seems to be made up of anybody who has either read more than a few books or managed to sculpt their own body in to a walking advertisement for optimal health. Some of them agree while others are diametrically opposed yet they all seem to cite the same body of clinical evidence.

Most of the blame for confusion gets placed upon the health and fitness industry authorities. Everyone from doctors to personal trainers are regularly challenged, and rightly so, with some contrary view one of their patients/clients heard somewhere from somebody or saw on some TV infomercial.

It's no secret that Americans are always on the go. We have no time to be sick yet we don't bother to concern ourselves with our health until we are stricken by acute illness. This attention deficit has led to an ailing society with an overabundance of health information and medical gurus. Thus we are constantly looking for the right way to live wrong. Technology has been a blessing and a curse when it comes to empowering the people to



There is a revitalised curiosity on the part of the average sick American of the eastern whole medical systems. From my own experience in Ayurveda, most patients have already exhausted most of what western medicine has to offer and are still not well

take charge of their health. There is a wellness revolution going on because the average American is sick and tired of being sick and tired. The Internet has played a vital role in improving not only the health literacy of the consumer, but also diversity of modalities to consider. People go to Google University and after a few minutes online, can have a diagnosis, treatment and prognosis for their symptoms.

It seems that the average health consumer subscribes to Albert Einstein's belief that insanity is defined as doing the same thing over and over yet expecting a different outcome. There is a revitalised curiosity on the part of the average sick American of the eastern whole medical systems. From my own experience in Ayurveda, most of the prospective clients I encounter are those whom have already exhausted most of what western medicine has to offer and are still not well. This presents a unique challenge for the Ayurvedic practitioner because at this point, the patient is usually not so patient.

So it goes that the Ayurvedic practitioner is faced with a less than ideal situation. The patient has been conditioned to ignore all the subclinical symptoms and only go to the doctor when they really need to. When they finally get to the doctor, they generally only treat the symptoms to the point of stability and tolerability. We, as students of Vedic wisdom, know that the root cause can often manifest in a seemingly unrelated system or body segment. Western medicine is not readily equipped to address the day-to-day burdens on the body that lead up to dosha imbalance and eventually to acute and chronic disease.

I have written and said on many occasion that despite how much I may criticize the western medical model, I feel that it is one of the most sophisticated and precious tools available to any healer. These skilled medical wizards dedicate so much of their lives to learning their craft that it would be silly to ignore all of the scientific and technological advancements made in medicine for the sake of staying true to tradition or a more natural approach. The fact is, there comes a time when we all need the intervention of a surgeon, antibiotic, MRI or even pharmaceutical medication. I liken the MD to a diamond tipped blade. The Ayurvedic or holistic practitioner is a sanding block. Not to say one is more important than the other, however, you must use the correct tool at the appropriate time and in the appropriate order.



Disciplines such as acupuncture and Yoga have earned substantial credibility in the West during the last few decades

Ayurveda works best when it is at the forefront of consciousness while in health rather than as a remedy to an acute illness or injury. The strength of Ayurveda is its ability to join the individual with nature and bring balance to the well body. What actually happens is that Americans are going first to their MD when they are first aware that they are sick.

The reason that the established medical model, or what I like to call Conventional Wisdom (CW), is trusted as first line therapy in the West is because it enjoys the credibility established through a reputation of being evidence-based. There are very stringent standards and norms that are governed by a handful of entities.

Ayurveda, on the other hand, only has 5,000 years worth of longitudinal experimentation. It's very difficult to deliver sound-bytes of ancient wisdom to a modern and fast-paced society. Telling a patient that you care less about their acute symptoms and more about their dinacharya does not go over too well with the post-op, hypertensive, sufferer from chronic fatigue syndrome who still hasn't found relief

Americans will soon learn that their fast-paced lifestyle is further separating them from their true nature. Ayurveda can provide them with daily guidelines to healthy living and overall vitality.

after months of conventional treatments. The skilled Ayurvedic practitioner in the West must succinctly communicate the rationale and reasoning for the seemingly (and actually) regressive initial approach.

So how will we as conveyors of the ancient wisdom successfully articulate all the intricacies of the Vedas? It is my opinion that we must rely on the resources available and utilise those allied methodologies (such as acupuncture and Yoga) that have taken root in the West. We even may find some allies in some unlikely fields.

Disciplines such as acupuncture and Yoga have earned substantial credibility in the West during the last few decades. No longer do them illicit a condescending scoff from physicians and other health care professionals. As excited as I am to see eastern practices grow like they have, I can't help but think that perhaps they haven't met as much opposition from CW because they are seen more as hobbies rather than serious medical practices. This seems to present a sort of comfortable familiarity yet contempt between the alternative and conventional systems.

There is a growing movement towards the wisdom of the past amongst American health professionals. Dr Loren Cordain has coined the term, Paleo Diet (short for Paleolithic Diet). This movement is a sort of exploration of nutritional anthropology. There is a growing body of evidence supporting its validity but the premise is largely based on the simple argument that 99.9 per cent of our genome is identical to our Paleolithic hunter-gatherer ancestors. Proponents of the method point to the evidence that since the advent of modernised agriculture (roughly 10,000 years ago) the human species has declined in brain size, stature and general strength and vitality.

This translates in to a basic set of rules stemming from one premise:

If it wasn't readily available 10,000 years ago, don't eat it.

- No processed foods
- No grains
- Minimal dairy
- Minimal legumes
- Moderate fruit
- Moderate nuts
- Plenty of vegetables
- Plenty of animal products*

*only wild or free-range animal products are allowed

Paleo dieters also subscribe to a set of daily routines in an attempt to mimic the lifestyle of an ancient hunter-gatherer. According to anthropologists, such a lifestyle would include great awareness of one's surroundings with short durations of intense work followed by ample amounts of rest in a communal setting. In this way, the Ayurvedic principles of attention to daily routine, seasons, subtle energies and the universe at large will become more accepted by a society already exposed to this appreciation of ancient wisdom.

As a practitioner of Ayurveda in the US, I see the value in strategising within a sort of grassroots model similar to the Paleo movement. This would require a solid consensus amongst the first wave of teachers and early adopters. Healthy discussion over the differences in approach can quickly turn in to apparent confusion and eventually will lead to a lack of credibility. There must be an established network of reputable schools of Ayurveda to support and guide the growing interest.

The American market is in a state of frustration and exploration. People are hungry for answers to their many medical mysteries. The free-market has thus far fed the monster of misinformation and confusion by catering to a this-for-that consumer. More and more, people are starting to consider that "the little things" in life do matter. We have cell-phones, hi-fi, Wi-Fi and deep-fry all around us. It is difficult to fully convince a population that all these environmental toxins and separations from nature are 100 per cent safe and do not lead to disease. The time has come for more solid and traditional systems of care to take their place in the wellness panacea that is evolving.

Ayurveda must be seen as a first line therapy rather than an "alternative" approach. Americans will soon learn that their fast-paced lifestyle is further separating them from their true nature. Ayurveda can provide them with daily guidelines to healthy living and overall vitality.

The writer is an Ayurveda practitioner in the US. He is a Chronic Care Support Coordinator at Kaiser Permanente, who has studied Kinesiology at San Diego State University. He lives in Irvine, California. He can be contacted at: mdfb63@gmail.com.

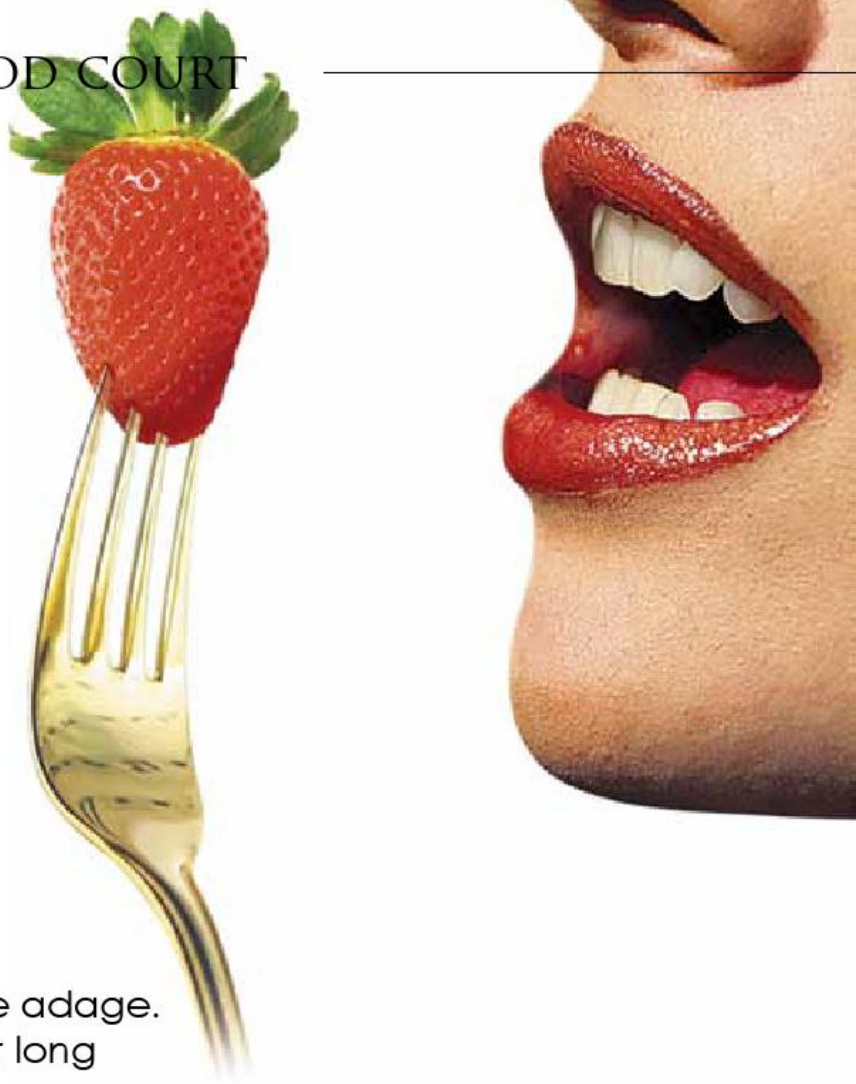
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Western medicine is not readily equipped to address the day-to-day burdens on the body that lead up to dosha imbalance and eventually to acute and chronic disease.

Food court



Look before you eat



A man is what he eats, says the adage. Ayurveda has held this idea for long

Ayurveda considers food as medicine. It holds that if one eats wholesome and good food in moderate quantity appropriate for one's body type and in harmony with the season, one will remain healthy, unaffected by diseases. Good food keeps the body and mind balanced at all levels.

Ayurveda has a holistic approach to food. *Yajnavalkya smriti*, an ancient treatise on human behavior, says: "One should eat like the way one performs a yagna. It is akin to making holy sacrifices in the sacred fire of vital and spiritual energies. Such food eliminates all sicknesses and weaknesses of the body and the mind."

The moot point is: the food should nourish and purify us from within and without.

According to Ayurveda, food has three parts, and accordingly, three simultaneous effects. The gross part is what is consumed by the body (by metabolism) and is excreted; the subtler part, referred to as rasa in Ayurveda, is used in making the basic body tissues such as flesh and bone of the body; and the subtlest, invisible part contributes to nourishing the mind. If one does not consider these finer aspects and eats only to satisfy the sensations of the palate, then it could create a variety of health issues. It, in a way, explains the genesis of what we call lifestyle diseases these days.

According to Ayurveda, agni, or digestive fire, is responsible for digestion of food. Dr. Vasant Lad, a renowned Ayurveda scholar and practitioner, writes: "Many different enzymes are responsible for the transformation of food into energy and Ayurveda uses the term *agni* to describe these enzymes and these metabolic processes."

So while preparing food, one should consider one's capacity to digest (*agni*). The digestive power is strongest for most people with a Pitha constitution; people with Vata constitution have weaker digestion while those with a Kapha constitution tend to digest slowly.

Ayurveda classifies different

If one does not consider the finer aspects of food and eats only to satisfy the sensations of the palate, then it could create a variety of health issues. It, in a way, explains the genesis of what we call lifestyle diseases these days

stages in life as having predominance of three doshas, and suggests that one eat food in accordance with the age and dosha predominance. The early period (up to 20 years) is considered as Kapha age, the active middle years (20 to 50 years) as Pitha age and the rest as Vata age. For the Kapha time, it is better to avoid cold dairy as it increases mucus and congestion. During the Pitha age, one can have any food, but in moderate quantity and should be eaten on time. As one enters the Vata period, *agni* lessens and hence the food for the elderly should include more warm soups, stews and soft foods. On cold winter days, warm spices and heavy grains may be used, while in the summer, more of lighter foods such as fruits and vegetable salads may be eaten.

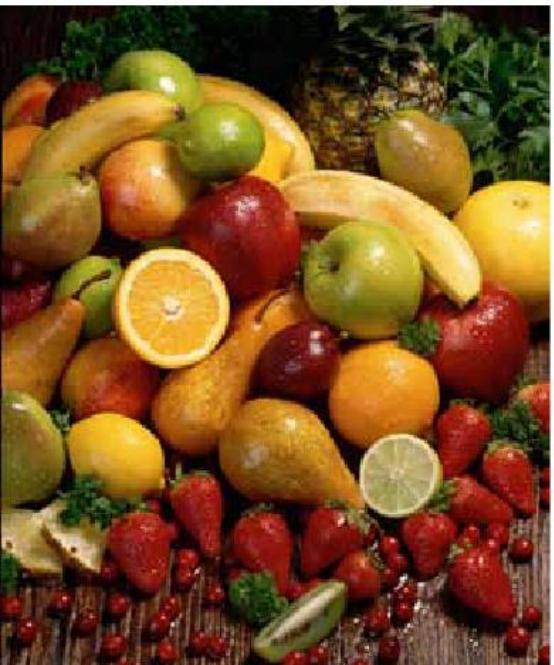
The digestive fire is the strongest at noon, hence it is the best time to eat the main meal. Eating late at night when the digestive *agni* is low may contribute to *ama*, or undigested toxins. Increased *ama* leads to illness.

Six tastes

There are six tastes according to Ayurveda: sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent. Each comprises two of the five elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether.

Sweet

Elements: earth and water



It is cool, heavy, and viscous. Sweet taste promotes handsomeness and longevity and helps the overall growth of the body and tones up *ojus* (vitality). It helps improve the complexion, sweetness of voice and cheerfulness of disposition. It also nourishes the sense organs. It restores vitiated Pitha and alleviates morbid Vata. It stimulates the healing process and is good for lactating mothers.

Examples: whole grains, fruit, and sweet root vegetables;

Sour

Elements: earth and fire



It is viscous, stimulates the salivary glands and promotes appetite and digestion. It is also a carminative. It provokes the Kapha and Pitha.

Examples: seed or nut yogurt, lemon, tamarind

Salty

Elements: water and fire

It is neither heavy nor viscous. Its strong taste causes salivation and enhances the flavour of foods.



It acts as a carminative and a laxative.

Examples: sea salt, rock salt, kelp

Pungent or acrid

Elements: fire and air



It is light and hot. It acts as an anthelmintic, dilates the body channels and allays Kapha. It relieves intestinal dropsy and helps in the

How Rasas Act on the Humors

Sweet increases Kapha

Sour liquefies Kapha, vitiates both Kapha and Pitha

Salty incites Kapha, vitiates Pitha

Pungent increases Pitha and vitiates Vata

Bitter vitiates Vata

Astringent increases Vata

The digestive fire is the strongest at noon, hence it is the best time to eat the main meal

elimination of waste products from the body. According to Charaka, pungent taste stimulates gastric secretions and enhances the clarity of the sensory organs.
Examples: onion, radish, ginger, chilli;

Bitter

Elements: ether and air

It is dry and light. It is paraciticidal and antipyretic. It is also a carminative.
Examples: Dandelion root, rhubarb root, bitter melon;

Astringent

Elements: earth, air



Substances that taste astringent are composed primarily of earth and air. It dries up moisture and allays the provoked Kapha and Pitha. Charaka says, "the astringent taste is sedative and promotes healing of injuries and fractured bones."
Example: Plantain, pomegranate, apples

Ayurveda understands food in two other ways. First is the action of the food-is it heating or cooling? The tastes sweet, bitter, and astringent are cooling and sour, salty, and pungent tastes are all heating. The second is the post-digestive effect or how the foods 'taste' to the tissues during and after assimilation. Sweet and salty are sweet in post-digestive effect. Sour is sour, and pungent, bitter, and astringent are pungent.

Taste, action, and post-digestive effect are known in Sanskrit as rasa, virya, and vipaka respectively. In Ayurveda, they are the keys to understanding food and herbs. With this knowledge, one can unlock the mysteries of the energetic dynamics of food and be able to make the right choices for oneself. Once you could understand your body type, you can structure a diet for yourself that will really work to make you feel totally balanced and harmonised.

Bitter gourd in Coconut Milk- **a cool side dish**

Items you will need for this preparation:
1 medium bitter gourd, trimmed, cut into half, deseeded and sliced thinly
1 tablespoon ghee
1 tsp brown mustard seed
1 tsp urad dhal
1/2 tsp ground turmeric
1/2 tsp ground cumin
1/2 cup thick coconut milk mixed with 1/2 cup pure water
Rock salt to taste
6-8 curry leaves

How to prepare

Blanch the sliced bitter gourd in boiling salted water for 3-4 minutes, drain.
Heat ghee in a heavy-bottomed pot till it looks clear.
Add the brown mustard seed and urad dhal.
When the mustard seed starts to pop and the urad dhal turns golden brown, add the bitter gourd, turmeric, cumin and salt, and mix well.
Add the thinned coconut milk and crushed curry leaves. Simmer until heated through.
Serve hot with boiled Basmati rice.



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Digest it

Ayurveda has certain formulations such as trikatu and triphala that help the digestive process. They can be taken by those who have an upset system or the healthy. But it is always advisable to take them under the supervision of a qualified physician

Trikatu

Your stomach's friend



Ginger is the best spice to kindle the digestive fire. Ayurveda recommends trikatu, a mixture of ginger, long pepper, and black pepper, to ensure the proper working of the digestive system. It improves the digestive fire, helps remove toxins (ama) from the body and prevent formation of excessive mucous. Trikatu ensures production of right amount of gastric juices and hence can cure most of the gastric disorders. Improper digestion, stressful lifestyle and wrong lifestyle changes lead to the accumulation of toxins in the body; trikatu is found to be effective against this also.

Trikatu increases the bioavailability of various nutrients and enhances absorption of nutrients. It improves blood circulation, thus making the skin look more healthy and glowing.

It helps the respiratory system as it is a mucolytic and an expectorant, and can decongest the lungs. It balances the aggravated Kapha in the body and relieves cough, cold, edema and breathing problems such as bronchitis and asthma. Trikatu works as anti-allergic because of its anti-histaminic properties.

Dosage

Half to one teaspoon of trikatu may be taken ideally one hour before each meal. However, some practitioners suggest taking it along with the meal. It could be taken with honey as it is pungent.

Triphala



Triphala is considered a 'tridoshic rasayan' that can balance and rejuvenate the three constitutional elements that govern human life: Vata which regulates the nervous system, Pitha which maintains metabolic processes, and Kapha which supports structural integrity.

A blend of three botanicals, triphala is a popular remedy in Ayurveda for digestive problems. Triphala contains dried and powdered amla (Emblica officinalis), myrobalan (Terminalia chebula), and belleric myrobalan (Terminalia belerica), all medicinal plants. Amla or Indian gooseberry, is one of Ayurveda's greatest rejuvenators and a strong natural anti-oxidant. It also helps boost the immune system and balances Pitha. Terminalia chebula, known as the Tibetan 'king of medicine', a classic heart-brain-longevity tonic, is often depicted in the extended palm of the Buddha and it balances Vata. Terminalia belerica, a powerful rejuvenative that reduces liver and heart diseases, also improves the voice, vision and promotes the growth of hair and balances Kapha.

Considered a gentle laxative, triphala is often used to stimulate digestive health, improve liver and gallbladder function, boost immunity, ease inflammation, and manage chronic conditions like asthma. It improves the absorption of food in intestines especially in the duodenum where most chemical digestion takes place. Triphala also helps to stimulate various gastric enzymes that help to convert complex food into easily digestible forms. Moreover, triphala stimulates the peristaltic action of the intestinal lining (due to its anthroquinones and other bitters) that also aids in proper movement of food at various levels of the digestive tract.

Triphala is best taken with warm water in the morning in the empty stomach; one may avoid eating for an hour after taking triphala. The ideal dosage for adults is one teaspoon and for children, half a teaspoon. It can also be taken with warm milk at night before retiring to sleep or it could be taken thrice or twice in a day with warm water in between meals. Pregnant women are advised against taking it.

Triphala helps to stimulate various gastric enzymes that help to convert complex food into easily digestible forms


BEAUTY ZONE

Precious red threads

Want to add glow to your skin? Go for saffron-based oils and pastes

For more than 3000 years, Saffron has been used as a dye and for seasoning, fragrance and as medicine in various cultures. It is in fact the world's most expensive spice.

Saffron is a reddish-golden colored spice derived from the styles and stigmas of the flower of the saffron crocus (Crocus sativus). It has a characteristic aromatic odour and a peculiar, exotic, bitter taste. Often called 'the golden spice', saffron has a history rooted in antiquity. It has always held a very special place for its extraordinary and flavouring properties as well as for being a striking yellow dye. Saffron is widely used in Iranian (Persian), Arab, Central Asian, European, Pakistani, Indian, and Turkish cuisines.

Saffron is used as a culinary seasoning and to color cottage cheese, chicken and meat, rise, mayonnaise, liquors and cordials. It is also used in specialty breads, cakes, confectionaries and Mughalai dishes. Saffron is also used as a perfume in cosmetics.

In India, Saffron is cultivated mainly in Kashmir. Kashmiri saffron has a particularly high reputation due to its extremely dark maroon-purple hue, strong flavour, aroma and colouring effect. Currently it is hardly available outside India due to the decrease in yields and quality. This is because of various negative situations like repeated droughts, blights, and crop failures in Kashmir. Moreover, its production is confined to a small area around the village Pampore.

Beautiful flowers show up for about two weeks in the end of October or the beginning of November. They are picked from the plants (to stimulate more flower formation) and separated into styles are waste afterwards. The high cost of saffron is due to the difficulty of manually extracting large numbers of minute stigmas; the only part of the crocus with the desired properties of aroma and flavour. In addition, a large number of flowers need to be processed in order to yield marketable amounts of saffron.

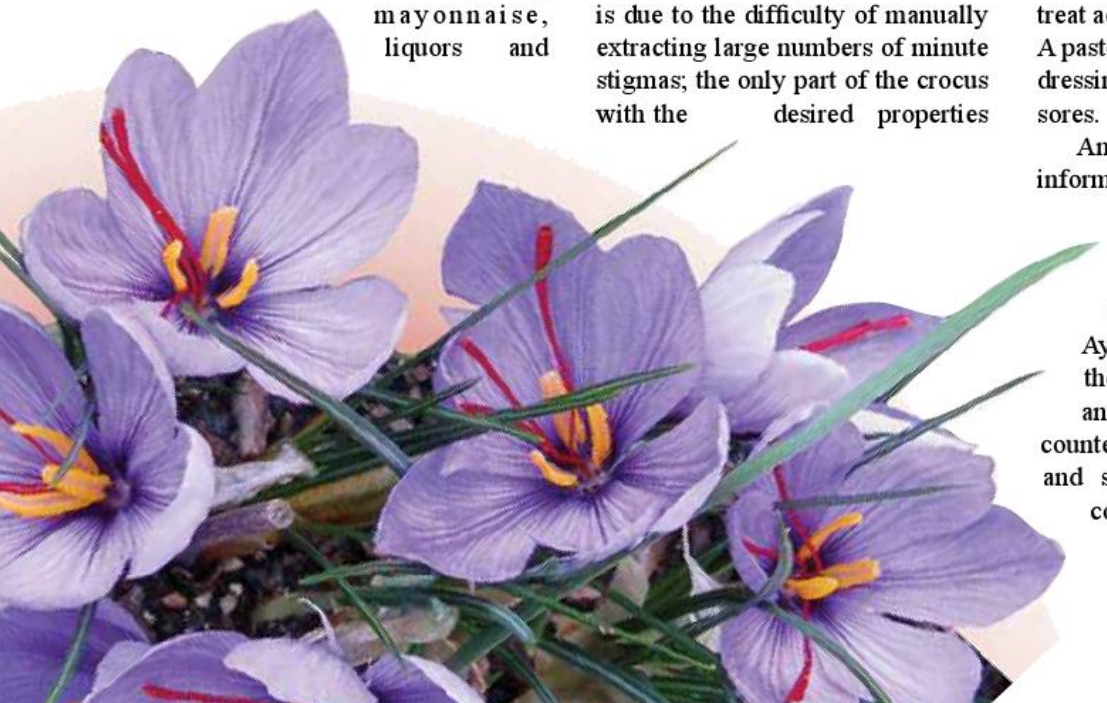
Because of being triploid, saffron is necessarily sterile, and due to this, reproduction depends on human assistance: corms, underground bulb-like starch-storing organs, must be dug up, broken apart, and replanted. Irrigation is required if not grown in moist environments such as Kashmir. Generous spring rains and drier summers are optimal for saffron. The plants fare poorly in shady conditions; they grow best in full sunlight. Fields that slope towards the sunlight are optimal.

Medicinal Usages

In Ayurveda, saffron is used to cure chronic diseases such as asthma and arthritis. It is also useful in treating cold and coughs. Ayurvedic medicines containing saffron are used to treat acne and several skin diseases. A paste of the spice can be used as a dressing for bruises and superficial sores.

Ancient texts on Ayurveda have information about the herb's use as an aphrodisiac. It is a stimulant. It is largely used as an indigenous medicine across India. According to Ayurveda, saffron strengthens the functioning of the stomach and promotes its action. It also counteracts spasmodic disorders and sustains involuntary muscle contraction.

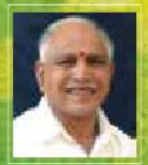
It is beneficial in the treat-



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ment of several digestive disorders. Its use has been found especially valuable in flatulent colic. It is also used in the fevers, melancholia and enlargement of the liver and spleen. It is used in medicines that reduce inflammation. A combination of saffron and ghee is used to treat diabetes. Saffron is also used to treat brain and kidney disorders. It acts as a diuretic, if soaked overnight in water and administered with honey.

A number of beauty care preparations using saffron are described in Ayurvedic texts. Kumkumadi lepa and Kumkumadi taila are two such effective beauty boons from Ayurveda.

Kumkumadi Lepam

It is an age old, best Ayurvedic beauty care preparation. It is highly effective against acne, pimples, dark circles, pigments, scars and stretch marks. Main ingredients in this wonderful medicine are saffron, sandal wood and turmeric.

In Ayurvedic texts, saffron is explained as one which imparts fairness and glow to skin. Saffron is bitter in taste and it increases digestive fire. It balances all the three doshas viz. Vata, Pitha and Kapha. As the name indicates Kumkuma (saffron) is the main ingredient in Kumkumadi lepam. In this cream, the presence of saffron helps to reduce skin problems such as acne and pimple.

When applied as face pack, it increases fairness and glow of skin. Sandalwood helps clear blemishes, soothes the skin and works against germs. Turmeric acts as a natural antibacterial medicine and helps to fight acne and pimple. Ayurvedic texts elaborate about the good qualities of turmeric. It reduces blemishes and scar easily. Thus, saffron in this cream heals acne, while turmeric fights with germs and sandal wood soothes the skin which is irritated due to microbial attack. So, its regular use will bring a wonderful skin to you!

Apply only a small quantity of this cream on the affected area at night and wash off it next day morning with warm water and a mild soap.

Stretch marks due to pregnancy or obesity which spoils the beauty of the skin can be removed by the regular use of this cream. It is also the best antidote to dark circles and pigments.

Kumkumadi tailam

Kumkumadi tailam is a unique blend of oils and herbs, formulated to help skin look young and healthy. It is prepared using 16 Ayurvedic herbs out of which saffron is the main ingredient. Essentially, Kumkumadi thailam is the high quality saffron oil.

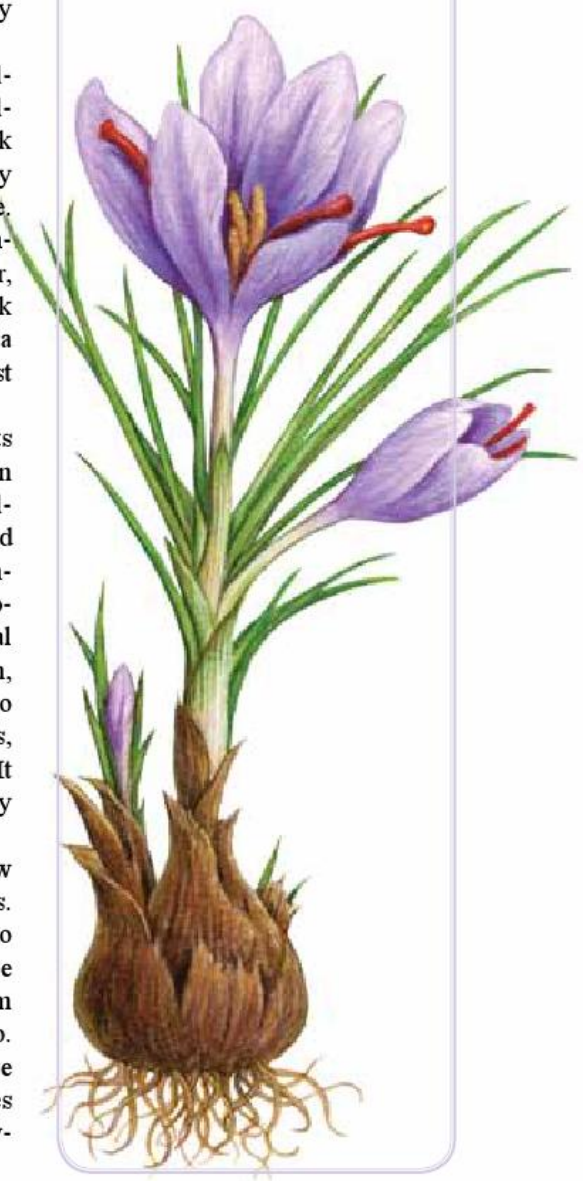
This ayurvedic product is excellent for the skin treatment: especially for skin lightening, curing dark circles under the eyes and it is very effective in improving skin texture. It is a combination of saffron, sandal, red sandal, turmeric, vetiver, sacred fig, Indian madder, black cherry, blue lotus, liquorice, lodhra extract, manjistha extract and jast bhasma.

Among its ingredients, extracts of Indian madder and the banyan tree help smooth fine lines. Sandalwood, vetiver and lotus cool and cleanse while helping clear blemishes. Liqorice, an antiseptic, protects against bacterial and fungal infections. It lightens complexion, makes skin fair and add radiance to the skin. It helps remove pimples, blemishes, scars and wrinkles. It reverses sun tan and treats patchy skin.

You can try it by mixing a few drops in your regular face packs. Or you can add 1or 2 drops of it to your daily moisturiser. Or it can be used in place of your night cream as it has anti-ageing properties also. Apply directly to cure under eye dark circles and scars/ blemishes on the face. Try it and you will say- "miraculous beauty fluid!"

Saffron -
Scientific classification

Kingdom: Plantae
Order: Asparagales
Family: Iridaceae
Subfamily: Crocoideae
Genus: Crocus
Species: C. sativus
Binomial name: Crocus sativus L.
Other names: Kesar, Zafran (Hindi); Safran(French); Za'afaran(Persian); Kumkuma, Kesara(Sanskrit)



The art of being beautiful and young

If you have a healthy idea about beauty, then Ayurveda can help make you look radiant



In the Ayurvedic tradition, massage is considered just as essential to overall health and beauty as good diet and positive lifestyle

Beauty and youthfulness are all about radiance: the vitality one keeps 'in' and radiates 'out'. If one nurtures oneself properly, one would become radiant mentally, spiritually, physically and emotionally. Ayurveda links beauty to this ability of a person to radiate physical, mental and spiritual energy.

Ayurveda not only postulates this theory, but also helps one with suggesting practical ways to make it practical.

The physical level: Physical health hinges on two processes: the smooth circulation of vital life fluids to all body parts and proper discharge of waste materials. If you follow a lifestyle and food pattern that ensures these two, then you are on your way to maintain yourself, defying age. Ayurveda suggests that one's food and lifestyle have a dominant role in the maintenance of beauty and youth. Both have to be balanced and amenable to the seasonal changes.

Most dietitians suggest fibrous food. Ayurveda, too, does it, but has its own reasons. It holds toxins, or 'ama', responsible for unsettling the balance of the three humours—Vata, Pitha and Kapha—in the body. A healthy digestive tract ensures timely elimination of toxins and waste. If it is not done, then the toxins would seek elimination through the skin or get deposited inside the body. This could lead to diseases. A fibre-rich diet ensures the proper process.

Ayurveda suggests that one decide a proper diet as per one's body constitution. The larger idea is that the food must be high in vegetables, fruits, whole grains and other naturally fiber-rich and wholesome foods. They not only provide lasting energy throughout the day but also keep the body toned and radiant. It does not rule out non-vegetarian food. In fact, Ayurvedic classics have elaborate discussions about the qualities of various meats and the time to consume it.

Low fat foods help keep the blood clean and enhance its circulation. An efficient circulatory system works to cleanse and nourish the

Physical health hinges on two processes: the smooth circulation of vital life fluids to all body parts and proper discharge of waste materials

whole system, and naturally help weight control. Vegetable proteins, which are quickly and efficiently metabolised, fully nourish the body.

Ayurveda suggests that meals become more digestible with spices as garlic, ginger, cumin, cayenne, and black pepper. However, diets high in salt tend to make the mind and body stiff and tight. Having a constricting influence on the body, it tends to slow circulation and create retention of fluid. This can create that sunken effect under the eyes and make one look puffy. Ayurveda suggests a very low salt diet for skin problems. Strong stimulants or depressives such as coffee, sodas, or alcohol stress the body's organs and make skin loose and flabby, furrowing the brow and producing bags under the eyes in the long run. Fresh organic foods are nutritionally the richest, coming from healthy soil and thus carry the strongest, vital energy. This contributes to a radiant, rich glow in general.

Well, that was all about food. But what about following a daily routine? Is it easy to follow the strict 'pathya's? What about the therapies?

Nothing helps the body more than a routine care and nurturing through tools such as massage. In the Ayurvedic tradition, massage is considered just as essential to overall health and beauty as good diet and positive lifestyle. *Ashtanga Hridaya* the ancient Ayurvedic text, says about massage (*abhyanga*) thus: "do daily self-massage with medicated oils, which can restrict problems due to the aggravation of Vata and can reverse ageing process."

All types of massages are highly beneficial. For example, an Ayurvedic facial massage activates deep centres of the brain, reflex points and facial circulation which can totally soothe the body. Tensions in the neck, shoulders and face are freed and energy is rebalanced from head to toe. A variety of herbal extracts and essential oils, currently available in the market, can be used for massage. Special oils can be added on the advice of a physician, for their additional healing properties and pleasant fragrances.

During Yoga, the total body is getting toned up, refreshed and purified. The increase in oxygen intake and proper blood flow can add to your natural beauty

Besides massages, Ayurvedic face packs, *nasya* (nasal ingestion of medicine), *anjana* (applying collyrium) and other *lepas* (applying packs/creams) also help the body retain its youthfulness. A number of highly effective Ayurvedic beauty preparations containing precious herbs are now available. With a physician's help you can choose products appropriate for your body constitution.

The second level is ensuring that you keep your mind calm and happy. But this is easier said than done. Life brings its daily stresses, which can make you feel more aged and tired than you really are. All the stress and tension could lead to the creation of more toxins, which get deposited in the body. They could cause rigidity of muscles or joints. In fact, a restless mind can kill your beauty. Anger and tension could lead to you face losing its natural glow; wrinkles are formed all over the face too early!

Yoga is one way to control all these. Yoga practice for at least half-an-hour a day can make you feel the difference in weeks. Continuous and regular practice will bring long-lasting changes.

Yoga can help you much in this regard. With gentle stretches, harmonious breathing, mild movements and deep relaxation techniques, one can revitalise his/her body. During Yoga, the total body is getting toned up, refreshed and purified. The increase in oxygen intake and proper blood flow can add to your natural beauty.

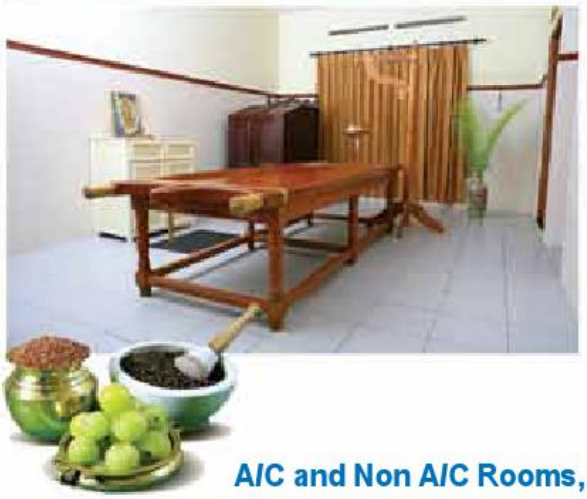
Daily meditations and breathing practices *(pranayama)* can bestow you with an everlasting pleasant mood. The power of meditation to enhance self-confidence is a clinically proven fact. Regular meditation makes you more focused and determined, it is the key to self-awareness, which in turn makes all your steps graceful.

Spiritual beauty is the beauty of your soul. If your heart is filled with compassion and contentment, then you would become a special person whom everyone would love to like. True calmness in the innermost self, if one can tap it, can enlighten each and every cell of the body. In such a stage you will say, "life is beautiful!"

Stress and tension could lead to the creation of more toxins, which get deposited in the body. They could cause rigidity of muscles or joints







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REJUVENATION AT IT'S BEST!







The versatile tree



Coconut is not just a food. Ayurveda makes immense use of this tree which has a history dating back to the Vedic period

Coconut tree is considered kalp vriksha, provider of all goodness. From the food they eat to the beverage they drink to the preparation of healthcare products, it is closely intertwined with the life of people wherever it grows. Cooking oil, household utensils, baskets, furniture and cosmetics are sourced from it.

The exact origin of coconut tree is not known; there are contradictions among scholars on this count. Historians suggest several countries such as India, East Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Madagascar as the birthplace of coconut. But they all are united on one count: the world-wide distribution of coconut was through the sea travellers who traded crops in between various countries. The famous Venetian explorer Marco Polo was highly impressed by coconuts he saw in India, Sumatra and Nicobar Islands, and he called it 'Pharaoh's nut'!

Ancient Indian texts have reference to coconuts. It enjoyed a hallowed status like holy basil and gooseberry in the Vedic tradition.

Coconut is a tall palm grown throughout the tropics. This unbranched palm grows up to 30-35 meters in height. It has large leaves, which are pinnately compound, leaflets up to one meter long, tapering with tough central nerve. Its flowers, in spadix inflorescence, are enclosed within the hard spathe.

The famous Venetian explorer Marco Polo was highly impressed by coconuts he saw in India, Sumatra and Nicobar Islands, and he called it 'Pharaoh's nut'!

Tender coconut is a proven Pitha-pacifier. It can unclog the body's channels from toxins (ama). It cleanses the gastro-intestinal tract, and its snigdha or sweet quality is life-restoring

Flowers are unisexual, with many male flowers and a few female. Its globular fruits are green, fibrous one seeded drupes; and the oval seeds are with hard endocarp and white tasty endosperm, and sweet milky fluid in the cavity.

There are two distinct types according to size and stature of the palm—talls and dwarfs. Talls are by far the more commonly grown variety around the world. Talls are cross-pollinated and are thus highly variable, as seen in the wide variation in characteristics such as size, shape, and color of the fruit as well as fruit composition (thickness of husk, weight of endosperm), and yield. Dwarfs, on the other hand, are largely self-pollinated and thus are genetically more homogeneous. This is reflected in the more uniform appearance of the different dwarf types.

A year-round warm and humid climate favors the growth of coconut. A mean annual temperature of 27°C, an evenly distributed rainfall of 1500–2500 mm per annum, and relative humidity above 60 per cent provide the ideal climatic conditions for the vigorous growth and yield of the palm. A permanent water table within easy reach of the roots can offset inadequate rainfall, while amounts in excess of 2500 mm could result in diseases of the fruit and leaves.

Coconut in Ayurveda

Coconut is known as naarikela in Ayurveda. The fruit is divided in to three, according to its maturity. Tender (bala), half-mature (madhyama), and ripe (pakva) coconut.

Tender coconut contains 90 to 95 per cent water. The sweet liquid inside it is considered best for its cooling properties. It is a proven Pitha-pacifier. It can unclog the body's channels from toxins (*ama*). It cleanses the gastro-intestinal tract, and its snigdha or sweet quality is life-restoring.

Half-matured coconut: The coconut has soft pulp at this stage. And they have less water than tender ones. The water is slightly milky at this stage. This type generally has more carbohydrates, protein, minerals, phosphorus, and Vitamins A, B, and C than the other two forms. According to Ayurveda, coconut at this stage is said to be the most nutritious.

Mature coconut: The pulp is firm at this stage and there is very little water. Ayurveda says that a matured coconut is heavy to digest, and it can aggravate Pitha or Vata if the digestive fire of the individual is low. Consuming large quantities of this variety can cause toxin build up in the body due to weak digestion. Its excess usage can cause hyperacidity.

Therefore, those who are of weak digestion are not advised to eat mature coconut, unless it is combined with other ingredients which helps balance its negative properties. The chutney of the south India is a best example. Chutney, made of combining healthy ingredients like roasted chickpea flour, curry leaves and mustard seed to coconut, which is used in smaller quantities, is good to use.

In general, tender and half matured coconuts are having more medicinal properties. According to Charaka, tender and half-mature coconuts can help nourish all seven tissues, and strengthen the body, and are filled with sweetness.

Botanical name: Cocos nucifera Linn.
Family: Aracaceae

Ayurvedic properties
Rasa : Madhura, Kashaya
Guna : Guru, Snigdha
Virya : Seeta
Vipaka : Madhura

Plant name in different languages
English : Coconut tree
Hindi : Nariyal ka pet, Nariyal
Malayalam : Nalikeara, Tengu,
SANSKRIT: Narikela, Sadaphala, Trinadruma, Dridhaphala



Coconut oil

Healthiest dietary oil on earth

Coconut oil is always debated much for its benefits and hazards. It has been used throughout Asia and the Pacific region for thousands of years as both as food and medicine. In India, coconut oil is in use from Vedic period itself. It has been mentioned in texts like Sushruta Samhita around 2000 years before. Acharya Sushruta explains the health benefits of coconut oil as follows:

- Coconut oil is a natural coolant
- It is digested slowly
- It helps improve the quality and strength of hair and promotes hair growth
- It is a natural aphrodisiac
- It nourishes the body tissues.

Coconut oil is useful in the treatment of diseases like emaciation, debility, respiratory conditions, diabetes and urinary system disorders.

When applied on wounds, it quickens the healing and helps in filling up of skin depression in wounds. It calms Vata and Pitha and supports Kapha.

Coconut oil is the base for many Ayurvedic and herbal formulations used (externally or internally) for a number of health problems. Some of them are: Kayyanyadi coconut oil, Karpooradi coconut oil, Eladi coconut oil, Dhurdhurapatradi coconut oil and Chemparatyadi coconut oil. Coconut oil is the best available base for hair oils. It is a good skin moisturiser and softener. It is very good to include coconut oil in regular diet in limited quantities for a normal healthy individual. According to Ayurveda, coconut oil is nourishing in nature when taken internally. Hence it is used in conditions like emaciation, debility etc. It is a natural coolant and is good in conditions like eczema.

But some modern dietary guidelines categorise coconut oil as a food to be avoided. According to them coconut oil is 'fatty' and will increase cholesterol level.

In Kerala, coconut oil is used in almost all the dishes. If coconut oil was really the cause for obesity, Kerala should have been filled with obese people, which is not the case! Coconut oil is used here as a food ingredient and as a medicine for external application and for internal administration. It is an integral part of Kerala's lifestyle.

Bruce Fife, ND, director of the Coconut Research Centre, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public and medical profession about the health aspects of coconut, has written several books on coconut. In *The Coconut Oil Miracle* and *Coconut Cures*, he says:

"Once mistakenly thought to be bad because of its saturated fat content, coconut oil is now known to contain a unique form of saturated fat that actually helps prevent heart disease, stroke, and hardening of the arteries. The saturated fat in coconut oil is unlike the fat found in meat or other vegetable fats. It is identical to a special group of fats found in human breast milk which have been shown to improve digestion, strengthen the immune system, and protect against bacterial, viral, and fungal infections."

And he warns: "If you're not using coconut oil for your daily cooking and body care needs you're missing out on one of nature's most amazing health products."

Coconut oil is the base for many Ayurvedic and herbal formulations used (externally or internally) for a number of health problems.

According to Charaka, tender and half-mature coconuts can help nourish all seven tissues, and strengthen the body, and are filled with sweetness

Kapha dominated persons should take care in the usage of coconut water, especially during night, because of its cooling properties.

Its flowers and roots are also used in various ayurvedic medicines. Its flowers are used in conditions like diarrhoea and dysentery. The flowers help pacify vitiated Pitha and blood. And they are also useful in excess urination. In ayurvedic as well as folk medicine, there is a preparation including coconut flowers used in post-natal care.

Ayurveda considers coconut as a natural stress-buster. It balances (cools) sadhaka Pitha, which is associated with emotions.

Combined with spices like cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, cloves, cumin, coriander, and turmeric, coconut is not only delicious and versatile, but also heals the digestive system and promotes better metabolism.

Massage using coconut oil on scalp improves hair growth and restricts dandruff. Body massage using coconut oil is good for dry skin; it accelerates wound healing and prevents skin diseases.



CORAL REEF, ANDAMANS

The skin protector

Christmas candle, the best herbal fungicide



Botanical name: Cassia alata Linn. (C. herpetica Jacq)
Family Caesalpiniaceae
Sanskrit Synonyms Dadrughna, Dvipagasti
Ayurvedic Medicinal Properties
Rasa: Tikta, Amla
Guna: Lakhu, Rooksha
Virya: Seeta
Name of the herb in other languages
English: Ringworm shrub
Hindi: Dadmurdan
Malayalam: Aanattakara, Malamtakara, Puzhukkadittakara
Sanskrit: edagaja, prapunal, urabhrh, uranakshaka
Useful parts of the herb: Leaves, Flowers, Roots.

Its big leaves and beautiful yellow flowers will definitely catch anyone's eye. Ring worm shrub, or *Cassia alata*, is called as candle stick or Christmas candle, due to its shape. The attractive shrub is named so for its flower buds which grow in a column and look like fat yellow candles each complete with a flame. The leaves fold together at night. It may be seen in your courtyard, but are you sure that you are giving due importance to this plant, which can be a strong protector of your skin?

Yes, as its name indicates, ring worm shrub is a good antidote to skin problems: it can kill bacteria, fungi and candida; it relieves pain and inflammation and is a strong laxative.

Cassia alata grows aggressively in areas where the water table is high. It prefers open areas and sunlight and often forms thickets and grown as ornamental too.

An annual shrub, ring worm shrub grows up to 2.5 meters in height. It is seen distributed mainly in tropics and subtropics. It has compound, paripinnate leaves and beautifully decorated with yellow and showy flowers seen in long terminal spikes. Its fruits, green angulated dehiscent pods, contain numerous compressed brown colored ovate seeds. Propagation is by seeds rather than by cuttings. The seeds should be soaked in water for at least 24 hours before sowing. Germination can take 3 to 4 days. The plant prefers moist well drained soil. Planting can be done the year round.

It flowers from November to

Scientific investigation has validated the use of ring worm shrub as an anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and laxative agent

April, and the flowers are visited by large black bees which presumably pollinate them. The leaves are harvested without pruning the branches and terminal buds to allow the plants to recover. The first harvest is done in 5 months after planting, and the second some 6 months later. The productive cycle can last two or three years. The leaves are harvested when needed; and the active constituents are probably most abundant prior to flowering, which is why the leaves are preferably collected at that time.

Scientific investigation has validated the use of this herb as an anti-fungal, anti-bacterial and laxative agent. Dr S. Damodaran from Tamil Nadu, who has done research on 'curing fungal infections of the skin with *Cassia alata* leaves, writes thus: "The existing medicines in the treatment of superficial fungal infections have limited therapeutic spectrum and cause several side-effects besides the cost factor. Many medicinal plants have a potential role in the treatment of fungal infections. *Cassia alata* is one such plant and can be used in the treatment of superficial mycoses."

Pityriasis versicolor is a fungal infection caused by a fungus Malassezia furfur. The complete removal of it is very difficult but it is easy to make it invisible. The topmost layer of the skin gets infected, and it is characterized by spots that may be more pigmented (hyper pigmented) or less pigmented (hypo pigmented). Treatments for this result in the gradual disappearance of maculae's, and restoration of a healthy skin which may be very slow.

Dr Damodaran describes the shrub's amazing medicinal quality thus: "one-time application of *Cassia alata* leaf extract over the infected regions will be enough to get rid of pityriasis versicolor for nine months. This establishes the therapeutic supremacy of *Cassia alata* leaf extract over the existing medicines. It is to be noted that permanent cure of the pityriasis versicolor infection is a very difficult and time consuming process". (Courtesy: curing-fungal.blogspot.com/)

Traditional uses

Leaves or sap of this shrub are used to treat fungal infections such as ringworm. They contain chrysophanic acid, a fungicide. Because of its anti-fungal properties, it is a common ingredient in soaps, shampoos and lotions in the Philippines. The effectiveness of this plant against skin diseases is confirmed by modern scientific studies.

Other chemicals contained in the plant includes saponin which acts as a laxative and expels intestinal parasites. In Africa, the boiled leaves are used to treat high-blood pressure. In South America, besides skin diseases, it is also used to treat a wide range of ailments from stomach problems, fever, asthma to snake bite and venereal diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhoea.

This powerful plant is used in the Indian systems of medicine namely Ayurveda, siddha and unani. According to Ayurveda, this plant pacifies vitiated Kapha and Pitha. It was used in medicaments against inflammation, ringworm, cough, bronchitis and asthma. It was also used against other skin diseases, intestinal worms, poison, constipation, hemorrhoids, alopecia and sexual weakness.

In treatment for ringworm, usually, the leaves are crushed and made into paste and applied on the affected parts. For treatment of eczema, the infected part is washed repeatedly with strong decoction of the leaves and flowers.

In cases of bronchitis and asthma, in herpetic constitutions, decoction of the leaves and flowers is administered repeatedly during the day, relieving dyspnoeal oppression and promoting expectoration. The medicine also acts on the bowels slightly and increases the secretion of urine.

In snakebite, the fresh leaves are given internally. For scorpion's sting, any part of the plant is made into paste and applied to the sting. However, the leaves are not an antidote to snake-venom and the scorpion sting.

Several traditional uses of *Cassia alata* have been discovered in several places. In India, China and the Philippines, the leaves are considered most effective against herpes and the wood in decoction is used as a mild purgative. In Guinea, the pounded fresh leaves are applied or rubbed on to all kind of skin afflictions. In the Gold Coast, the leaves are applied to dhobey itch, craw-craw and ringworm on the forehead or on the skin. This is one of the most effective amongst native medicine. Women drink water boiled with the leaves to hasten delivery.

This plant is used in different ways and for different purposes. The bioactivity of this plant includes antibacterial, antifungal, antimicrobial, diuretic, laxative, analgesic and choleretic. Studies for the clinical use of this plant are still under development for its maximum effectiveness.

The herb contains chrysophanic acid, a fungicide. Because of its anti-fungal properties, it is a common ingredient in soaps, shampoos and lotions in the Philippines

Ready for the world

Highly qualified doctors, state-of-the art infrastructure, world class spas offering rejuvenation therapies, a salubrious environment: Ayurveda in Kerala is ready for a take-off. While most players bank on the curative and samana aspects of Ayurveda, they also ensure that the treatments are offered in very pleasant atmosphere, making it an experience, not just a treatment procedure.

By Aby Abraham G K and A P Jayadevan



Kerala, the land of traditional Ayurveda, has advanced its scope as a place where one can get the best Ayurveda experience in the world, not only in terms of treatment but also the Ayurveda experience. Traditional as well as new players have recognized the role Ayurveda will play in the healthcare of the future and its relevance as a holistic branch of medical science.

From presidents to prime ministers to ordinary people, people come to Kerala, seeking the 'miracles' Ayurveda performs. While there are unscrupulous players who make a fast buck in the name of Ayurevda, there are serious players who want to make Ayurveda's name known all over the world. They get some of the best infrastructure for treatment. True, most of them practice purificatory treatment, but even people who stick to the curative nature of Ayurveda is trying to put in place world class infrastructure. Dr A M Anvar, chairman and chief physician of Punarnava Ayurveda Hospital, Kochi, said more than 450 people from abroad sought treatment in his hospital last year. While half of them come from the Middle Eastern countries, South Africans of Indian origin have become the latest votaries. "Last year there were 16 people from Slovenia taking treatment here," he said.

The rush to Ayurveda is because of a number of reasons. Today, the world witnesses a tendency among people to look positively at alternative systems, and make a return to it. They are also increasingly becoming mindful of the virtues of alternative and herbal medicine. Very little side-effects, comprehensive but simple treatment methods, ability to offer cure for chronic diseases…there are many reasons why the world looks at these systems. And the rise of India as an economic power has kindled people's interest in all that is Indian, including Ayurveda.

Kerala Ayurveda, which uses mostly medicines of herbal origin compared with the mineral-rich variety practiced in north India, has its own advantages. Over the time Kerala has developed its own treatment protocols and formulations, which are very effective and simple. Some of them are so Kerala-specific that they cannot be practiced anywhere else. "For example, for an elakkizhi we use fresh leaves," says Dr Anvar. "Several such formulations demand fresh preparations which are next to impossible in a foreign land. There are several protocols which are tied to the practices in Kerala, which one would not find anywhere else."

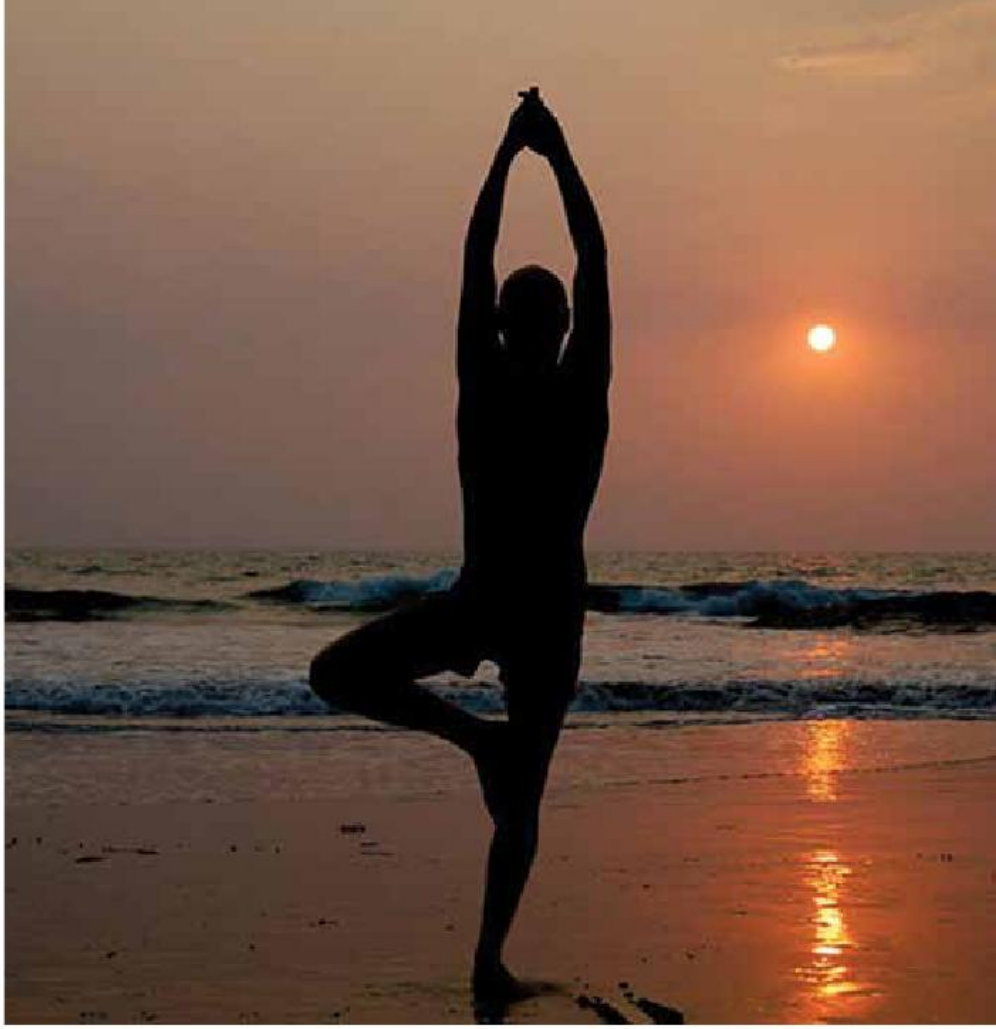
The availability of highly-skilled and trained professionals and the active presence of traditional vaidyas who inherit sound knowledge of













the system through generations have together contributed to the authenticity of Kerala's Ayurveda. Professionally trained doctors and Ayurveda hospitals they run have also helped the acceptability of Ayurevda.

Kerala's gifted climate, its geographical position on Western Ghats and lush greeneries and forests with medicinal plants are conducive for the successful practice of Ayurveda. The unique monsoon season which many hold the best to administer rejuvenation therapies. In fact, it comes as a package: the salubrious climatic conditions, unpolluted air, clean water, educated and friendly people, the slow pace of life... "Ayurveda is in perfect sync with the soft raga of Kerala," says Mr Jose Dominic, CEO of CGH Earth Hotels, whose Green Leaf-certified facilities offer authentic Ayurveda.

Kerala's social and physical infrastructure has also helped Ayurveda gain popularity. The four

international airports give the State unparalleled air connectivity while the extensive network of roads make even remote towns, suited for Ayurveda treatments, easily accessible.

It is an irony that while Ayurveda physicians vouch for the efficacy of pacification therapy, but it is the purification therapy employing massages and panchakarma which has made Ayurveda famous of late. Most doctors dismiss it as a temporary phenomenon and stand by the traditional and classical Ayurevda which treats patients and bring them back to healthy life.

"Samana Chikitsa needs precision," says Dr M Prasad, chief physician at Sunethri Ayurveda Hospital, Thrissur. "It needs regular follow up as well. When patients are just visitors, doctors tend to opt for easier options. At many places, it is 'order and get".

Ayurveda has effective management systems for several diseases for which modern medicine has very little to offer. They include auto-immune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, neuro-muscular diseases, skin diseases such as psoriasis, life style diseases such as obesity, diabetes and infertility management. "For certain diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis, a total cure is not possible but a patient who adheres by the conditions can live a normal, zero-symptom life," said Dr Shaji Varghese Pattarumadom, who runs the Pattarumadom Ayurvedic hospital at Nedumbasserry, Kochi. A sixth generation Ayurveda practitioner, he treats patients who come from several foreign countries.

Most physicians and entrepreneurs are confident that Ayurveda has great potential, but Kerala, and India, are yet to optimise it. The global herbal and alternative medicinal systems are estimated to be a $100 billion industry, of which the Chinese systems command 85 per cent share. Ayurveda's share is less than a per cent. Indian Ayurveda industry is about ₹4,000 crore.

"Kerala has about 1200 companies offering Ayurevda products and services," says Dr Joy Varghese, CEO of CARe-Keralam, a consortium of Ayurveda product manufacturers. Their total revenue is less than ₹500 crore. "Considering Kerala's rich heritage in Ayurveda and the presence of 200 GMP-certified manufacturers, this low figure is far from satisfactory. At the same time, it points at the big opportunity lies ahead of us."

The involvement of the Department of Tourism has helped bring in some discipline on this front. Its Green and Olive Leaf certifications help patients have a basic criteria for choosing a hospital. There are only about 100 institutions in the State with the certification, which shows the lack of keenness. The NABH, which works at the national level for accreditation, finds the response from Kerala very poor.

"Patients from all over the world come to India for allopathic treatments," said Mr K Aboobaker, a tourism consultant. The charges are very low compared to that in western countries, especially for major surgical procedures like cardiac surgery, cosmetic surgery and den-







tistry. Kerala's well trained professionals and well equipped, high standard hospitals attract a number of tourists who need medical care. "An integrated approach in health care will boost the image of Kerala as a complete medical tourism destination," he said.

"We should follow ethical practices to ensure that we sustain the growth," said Dr Anvar. "We cannot offer treatment just because the patients have landed here. I recently refused to treat a couple from the Gulf because they were unwilling to stay the course of the treatment. They wanted instant Ayurveda," he said. Apart from Bamboo Lagoon which had a soft launch recently, Punarnava is setting up a 300-bed referral hospital in Kochi.

Picture courtesy

Somatheeram Ayurevedic Health Resort, Chovvara
Punarnava Ayurveda Hospitals, Kochi
Kalari Kovilakom, Palakkad
Estuary Island Resort, Thiruvananthapuram
The Zuri Kumarakom Resorts, Kumarakom
Ramada Resort, Kumbalam, Kochi

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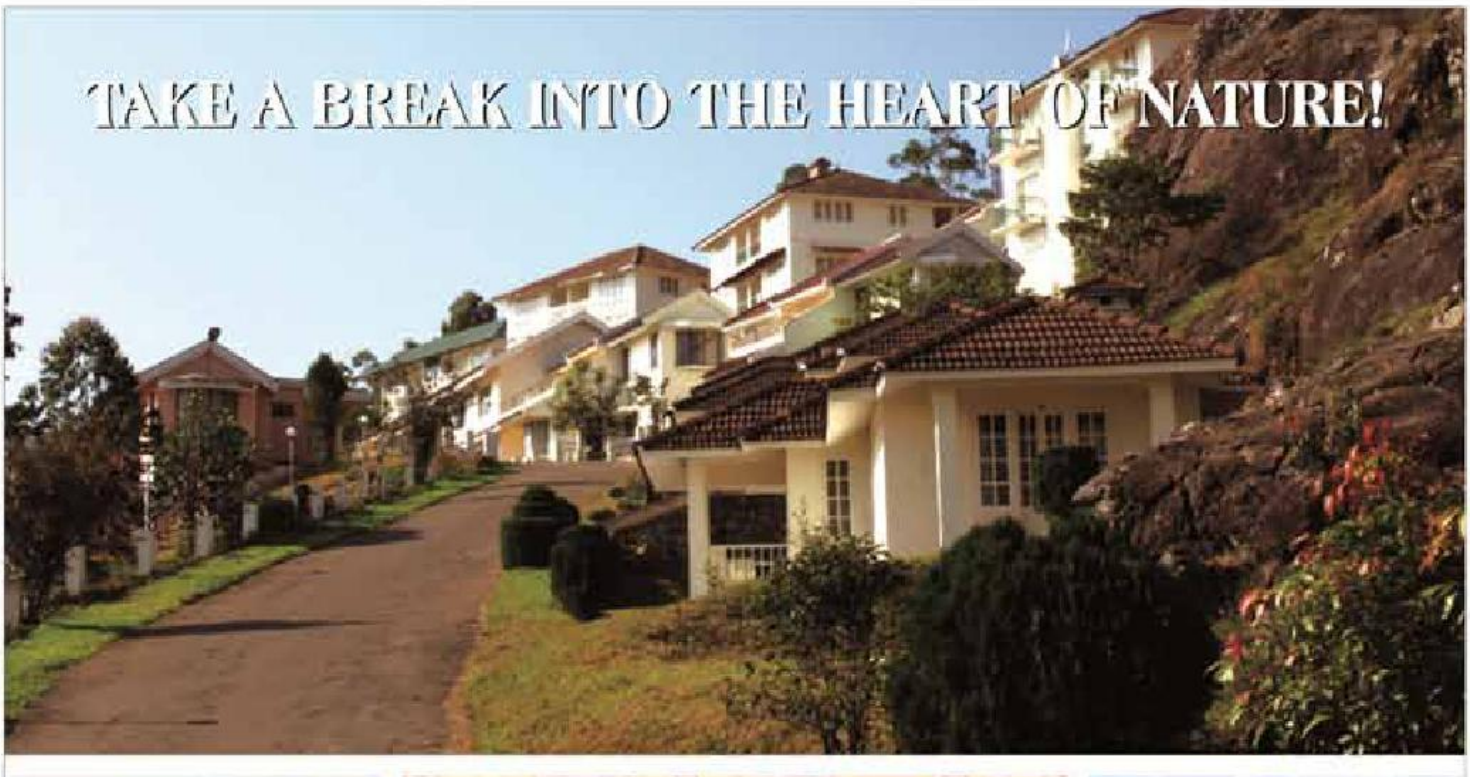
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GLOSSARY

Agni: digestive fire, synonymous with properly balanced cell metabolism in Western medicine.
Ama: residual impurities deposited in the cells as the result of improper digestion. Also mental ama, impure or negative thoughts and moods.
Artava: Menstrual Blood.
Asana: Yoga Posture.
Arishta/Asava: Fermented formulation
Ashtānga Hṛdayam: One of the three most important books in Classical Ayurveda(the other two are the Caraka Samhita and the Sushruta Samhita). Written by Vagbhata in the 7th century AD.
Bhasma: Residue after incineration
Bhoota: Element, "that which manifests as Caraka Samhita : Considered the greatest of all the classical texts on Ayurveda. Written by Caraka
Churna: Powdered herbal medicine
Dhara: One of the preparatory procedures for panchakarma. Specially trained masseurs apply specified medicated oil on the body of the patient
Dhatu: body's basic constituent (seven in number)
Dinacharya: daily routine
Dosha: three basic metabolic principles connecting the mind and body and biological humour.
Ghritham: Ghee based drug
Kapha:the dosha responsible for bodily structure
Katu: Pungent or spicy
Mahabhuta: Five basic elements (space, air, fire, water and earth)
Mala: Metabolic end-products
Mantra: Sacred sounds
Nadi pariksha: Pulse examination
Nasya: Nasal administration of medicines
Ojas: The purest expression of metabolism; the final end product of correct digestion and assimilation of food
Panchakrama: The five cleansing (purification) methods to balance the doshas
Pitta: the dosha responsible for metabolism (closely identified with agni, the body's vital heat)
Pizhichil: Lukewarm herbal oils are poured all over the body continuously for 45-90 minutes a day for 7-21 days. This treatment is most effective in rheumatic diseases such as arthritis, paralysis, hemiplegia and paralysis-agitans.
Prakriti: primal nature, natural state, constitution
Prana: It is vital energy, basic life force, which is responsible for all functions in body and mind
Pranayama : respiratory exercise, also called "balanced breathing"
Raktadhatu: blood
Rasayana: Traditional Ayurvedic herbal or mineral preparation for longivity and rejuvenation
Sadhaka pitta: type of pitta governing the brain
Shukra: reproductive tissue
Snehana: oleation therapy
Snehapanam: The oral intake of medicated oils for body purification.
Samanam: Pacification therapy
Shirodhara: Warm oil is poured onto the forehead for 40 minutes a day for 7-21 days to treat insomnia, loss of memory, headaches, mental tension and certain skin diseases. This is generally applied after a 'vasti' head massage.
Sodhanam: Purification therapy
Swedanam: Use of medicated steam made with leaves root and twig of herbal plants to generate sweat to detoxify the body.
Tikta: bitter
Vata: the dosha responsible for all movement in the body, biological air humor.

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