



The word “Ayurveda” comes from two Sanskrit words: Ayur meaning life and Veda meaning knowledge or science. Ayurveda is an approach to living in harmony with the universe in order to achieve optimum health. Developed around 1500 BC, this ancient science is built on solid theoretical and experiential foundations which provide a profound understanding of the physical and biological laws that govern human physiology.

Here in the United States, holistic health care professionals practice Ayurveda as a complimentary or alternative medicine utilizing nutrition, lifestyle, yoga, meditation, and therapeutic massage as treatments.

At it's most basic this ancient practice focuses on adopting a simple seasonal diet and making lifestyle adjustments according to the natural “dosha” of the individual.

Because Ayurveda acknowledges that a human being is much more than the physical body, it recognizes that emotions, mental state, and even spiritual condition have a huge impact on our physical health. Ayurveda acknowledges that each human being is unique and, as such, we all have unique needs and those needs vary season-to-season, moment-to-moment, life stage-to-life stage. For example, the foods and activities that nourish an infant and an adult are quite different. Ayurveda observes this and other transitions as well. For instance, what we eat in summer needs to be different than what we eat in winter if we are to remain healthy. Therefore, what is therapeutically beneficial for one person, may be detrimental to another; we require different food, exercise, and lifestyle

practices to create harmony within our individual body-mind.

Ayurveda literally means “science of life” and was born in ancient India. Five thousand years ago, the Ayurvedic texts explained atoms before there were electron microscopes and formulated a holistic health system of elegance and accuracy. The building blocks of life—the five elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth—weave through our daily lives, and whether we realize it or not, we use them to create or destroy health. The profound knowledge of Ayurveda remains relevant today and will assist us on our journey to health and wholeness.

Both the art and science of healing, Ayurveda cultivates a vast system of knowledge and wisdom relating to the

creation of health and, conversely, the destruction of health. And what is health? Health is vitality, longevity and zest for life. Ayurveda is truly holistic—encompassing the whole of a person—how that person lives, breathes, eats, sleeps, exercises, thinks, feels. Ayurveda addresses the miraculous multidimensionality of what it means to be truly human—a human being rather than a human doing, a human being rather than a human freaking out. Although the results of living an Ayurvedic life-style can look almost miraculous—it is not a miracle cure or magic pill. It is the diligent practice of living in harmony with our own life cycles, seasonal cycles and daily rhythms.

We at Vitality believe that Ayurveda is a path to wholeness, radiant health, vitality, longevity and to fulfilling the greater purpose of our lives. For those that are ill, Ayurveda is a path towards healing, discovering the root causes of illness, changing life so that we may live with more ease, and re-integrate the pieces that have been lost. For those that are well, it is a path to fulfilling and achieving our highest purpose. It is not necessarily about austerity, never having chocolate or a glass of wine ever again, it's about choosing the right moment to have the piece of chocolate, the right time to have the glass of wine, the right people to have the glass of wine with. It's about knowing when it's appropriate to eat certain foods and that those foods at the wrong time could weaken your body such that you become more susceptible to illness. It is a way in which to strengthen the immune system, and engage the heart

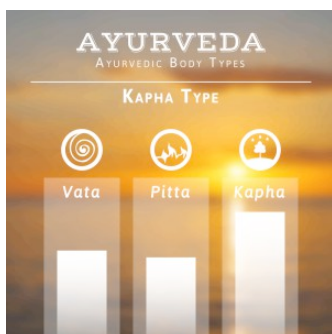
and mind in a healing journey; it is a way of peace, harmony, integration, and connectedness. It acknowledges the opposites without judging them, it gives us context with which to understand other people and, maybe most importantly, ourselves. It offers supportive measures when times get stressful so that we don't necessarily rely on comfort food, vices and addictions to get us by, so that we can more clearly engage with life in a way that fulfills us, in a way that is meaningful.

The elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether—flow, create, stabilize, and move through our bodies. An excess, lack, or displacement of any one element creates disturbance. Driving in a car, staying up late, and feeling angry can all shift the elements out of their natural order. So, how do we achieve and maintain balance in this world of automobiles, alarm clocks, and feelings? Through mindful awareness, through proper exercise, through thoughtful and informed nutritional choices, through healing movement such as yoga or qi gong, through breath-work and meditation, through connecting with our inner wisdom.

What are the doshas?

The doshas are organizing principles. Although we are each comprised of all of the doshas we generally have one or two doshas that is dominant.

Kapha Dosah is the Principle of Structure, comprised of Earth and Water



Kapha dosha forms all of our cells, muscles, connective tissue, white blood cells, plasma, lymph and organs. It functions to lubricate our joints and organs, creates strength in muscles and bones, and produces our ability to remember. Coherent stability and protective lubrication remains the essence of Kapha dosha.

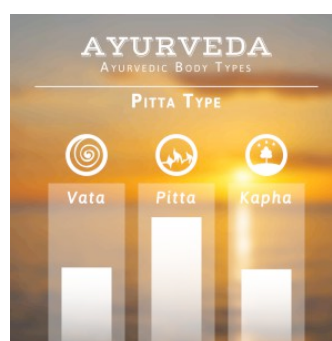
A balanced Kapha person expresses a stable faith, full of loving compassion. She or he expresses deep nurturing and provides a strong foundation for all who come into his or her sphere. Kapha types excel as chefs, accountants and technicians—and thrive in any career that requires great stamina. However, more than any other dosha they are subject to inertia. A Kapha person requires vigorous exercise and stimulation to keep from slowly grinding to a halt. If imbalanced, people with this dominant dosha types may descend into depression, greed and attachment.

Hiking, bicycling, gardening and hot yoga are ideal activities for the predominant Kapha person.

Light, crisp meals and hot teas insure balanced digestion and mental levity.

Late winter and early spring are the Kapha seasons. The earth is cool, wet, and still a little dark. Life prepares to burst forth from its winter rest. Flowers begin to poke their heads up—sometimes into snow. The trees begin to flow with sap and rivers fill with snow melt. This is the essence of Kapha dosha.

Pitta Dosha – the principle of Metabolism, comprised of the elements Fire and Water



Pitta dosha governs digestion, absorption, nutrition, body temperature, as well as cellular metabolism. Pitta makes the skin, hair and eyes glow with health. This dosha creates our appetite for food and water and gives us a sense of taste. It also gives us courage and ambition.

Pitta types are natural leaders and great thinkers with bright, illuminating intelligence and understanding. They are warm-natured and often very friendly; however, when a Pitta person is out of balance their speech may become sharp and they are prone to inflammation, headaches and anger.

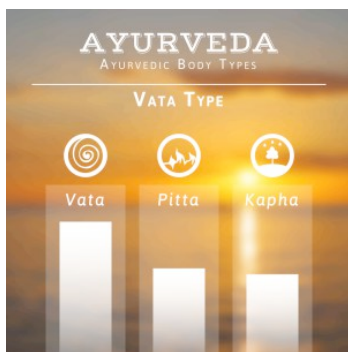
A stable routine helps to balance the seeming opposites inherent in Pitta: fire and water. Natural night-owls, a Pitta type will benefit from peaceful evening

activities such as reading and visualization. Too much stimulation will keep them awake until well after midnight.

A Pitta person tends towards competitive forms of exercise, yet Pitta types possess moderate strength and stamina and can deplete themselves if they don't preserve some of their inner fire. Pitta people find balance by swimming in refreshing lakes in the summer, moon gazing, and contemplating peaceful vistas.

Vata Dosha – the principle of Movement, composed of the elements Air and Ether

expressing the qualities of dry, cold, rough, light, mobile, subtle, clear, and the taste of bitter, pungent, and astringent



Vata dosha governs the movement of the body, from eye blinks to heart beats, to the circulation of blood and food through the large intestine, and air vibrating across the larynx and ear drum. Vata dosha also manages cellular communication. When out of balance, Vata creates fear, anxiety and nervous movement.

A person with Vata dosha as their primary dosha is a natural artist, an imaginative, deeply spiritual, extremely creative and flexible person. Not enjoying the spotlight,

they tend to find roles that are vital but not always obvious.

Vata types need more rest than other people, but like to be active, talking fast and excitedly, but benefit from deep contemplation and afternoon naps. Their delicate nervous systems are nurtured by a soothing and serene environment with soft light, music and colors.

Ideally, exercise for a Vata person would be gentle; such as restorative yoga, tai-chi or qi-gong, peaceful walks in nature and unstructured swimming. A stable routine of rising, sleeping and eating 3 meals at the same time every day benefits Vata dosha immensely.

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