

Ayurveda: The Sanjeevni of Modern Life

Rupinder Kaur

Manager (Fortis Healthcare), Chandigarh, India

*Corresponding author

Dr Rupinder Kaur (BAMS), Manager (Fortis Healthcare), Sidhman Ayur Clinic & Rejuvne-House Number-2471, Sector 65 Phase 11, Chandigarh -160062, India. E-mail: Rupinder27@hotmail.com

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Abstract

The current era has thrown many challenges for humankind primarily lifestyle diseases. It has happened because modern man has divorced himself from the age-old ideas of oral health traditions enumerated in Ayurveda. Some verbal and textual resources exist to guide people on maintaining good health. It describes it under three cardinal headings: Vata, Pitta and Kapha that are the three Doshas of the body. Perfect harmony between these three Doshas leads to optimal health while an imbalance in Tridosha leads to diseases. This review describes various seasons (Ritu), proper food intake as well as regulated daily activities. There is a shift of understanding from good health to total wellness of the being from an appropriate method of consuming food to sexual wellness. It is a comprehensive construct of how Ayurveda helps in holistic coexistence with nature.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Lifestyle, Sexual lifestyle, Wellness

Introduction

Dinacharya or daily routine is a very important aspect of the lifestyle part of ayurvedic advises. In ayurveda, the idea of health is not just the absence of disease, but physical, mental and social wellbeing together. That is why it stands relevant in modern times too.

Dinacharya (Daily regime)

The advises begins with the time of wake up. Ayurveda suggests to wake up at 'brahma Muhortha' which can be roughly translated to an hour before sunrise. The benefits are fresh and pure air, better concentration, better movement of bowel to aid evacuation etc.

Defecation is to be performed soon after waking up followed by brushing teeth. In ancient days green twigs of certain trees with antimicrobial properties were used as tooth brushes. After brushing, medicated eye ointments are advised to be applied in the eyes to make them sharper and prevent diseases. Afterwards nasal medication to clear sinuses and nose, gargling and mouth washing using herbal decoctions and chewing of beetle leaves to improve digestion is advised. This is to be followed by oil application on the body and then exercise. Exercise is advised only moderately according to each individual's health and also the season. It is suggested that one can utilize half of his strength for exercising if the season is mild. Usually spring, early winter and winter are described as favorable for exercise. During other seasons one should do only mild exercise. This is because the extremeness of the other seasons may make a person much tired.

The very next mistake we make is not listening to our body's natural urges. Maintaining a regular time for toilet habits (like half hour

after waking up or so) will enable the body to eliminate metabolic wastes efficiently and improve the digestion and assimilation. The most common causes other than pathological reasons for deranged digestion like constipation, slow digestion, bloating etc are delaying going to toilet habitually. If we can train our body to evacuate at a fixed time every day, many of these problems will be solved. The same applies to other urges like urination, cough, sneezing, sleep etc. Suppressing them can cause many problems from impaired digestion to chronic head ache, low immunity etc.

Oil application can prevent muscle fatigue and bone degeneration during workout, make the muscles and joints more flexible and thus avoids soreness after workout. Benefits of a nice shower after daily workout are not only removing the sweat and dirt and making us fresh and presentable, but also improving circulation and boosting digestion.

Dinacharya underlines the need to give ourselves some of our precious time in order to stay healthy. It reminds us the importance of being healthy to be more productive in professional and personal life. Pushing harder beyond our limits neglecting our own physic and psyche makes unhealthier, unhealthier and in turn less constructive leading to dissatisfied personal and professional life. Thus it is better to be alert at first.

RituCharYA (Seasonal regime)

In Ayurveda, ritucharya is a means of living one's life in the context of the seasons. This could range from obvious choices, such as wearing warmer clothes during the winter, to Ayurveda and seasonal eating for starters. The importance of ritucharya in Ayurveda is that the principles from it can be applied daily to benefit one's body.

Hemanta Ritucharya – Ayurveda Winter regimen: Mid November – Mid January

During hemantha, the people are strong, digestive fire becomes powerful, because it gets obstructed from flowing outward due to external winter. Like fuel consumes the things that it comes into contact, digestive fire may cause emaciation of body tissues. Hence, in this period, one should consume food predominant with sweet sour and salt tastes. As the nights are longer, person feels hungry early in the morning.

Dakshinayana – Visarga Kala – Southern Solstice – mid July–mid January

During this period, the Sun releases strength of the people. Here moon is more powerful, earth is cooled down due to clouds, rain and cold wind. Sour, Salt and sweet (Amla, Lavana and Madhura) tastes are dominant respectively during the three seasons of this period.

Strength in Ayurveda is defined as “Shite Agryam” means HIGHEST STRENGTH in winters.

As the digestive power is highest in the winters and frequent hunger pangs happen, one starts consuming high calorie diet with low physical activity. Leading to accumulation of fat and excessive gain in weight in winters as comparative to others seasons.

The lethargy and laziness during the winter season, the calories consumption is higher than the calories exhaustion by the body and to keep one warm and cozy, external means of heat are used to keep the warmth of the body intact which results in excess calorie storage in body.

As per the studies, Physical activities & exercises are required to be doubled in winters to make all doshas in our body intact and keep one self-healthy.

Ayurveda regime for winters is as below

1. Abhayanga (OIL MASSAGE) of all over body and especially head & forehead, is mandatory to maintain VATA BALANCING IN BODY.
2. Soups Ingestion(VEG & NON VEG)
3. Lots of Warm water minimum 1glass/hour
4. Exercises (WALKING & RUNNING)
5. Most of time exercise is excluded from the regime, which leads to increase VATA Dosha in the body leading to increased appetite and fat accumulation resulting in increased weight in winters.

Food Indications in winters

1. Cinnamon, fennel, anise, nutmeg, cumin, cardamom, licorice, cloves, fresh ginger, parsley and basil, just to name a few.
2. **Avoid ice cold drinks - favour warm drinks instead**, such as Vata Tea, Gentle Breath Tea, Almond Drink, a full flavoured, delicious ayurvedic coffee substitute.
3. With lunch, you may drink a glass of Lassi: Thoroughly whisk one part of yogurt with three parts of water, plus a little rock salt and a pinch of cumin. If you prefer, you can also prepare sweet lassi with sugar or Sharkara, and, for instance, cardamom, cinnamon, or vanilla.
4. Regular sipping of hot water is highly recommended. It should simmer for about 15 minutes with the lid off. Transfer it into a thermos and drink it in small sips throughout the day.
5. Avoid stimulants such as coffee, black tea and cigarettes,

because they quickly produce a Vata imbalance.

Vasanta Rutucharya (Ayurveda Spring regimen) – Mid March–Mid May

Kapha which has undergone increase in Shishira (cold season) becomes liquefied by the heat of the Sun in Vasanta (spring). It diminishes the digestive fire (Agni) and gives rise to many diseases. Hence Kapha should be controlled quickly, by resorting to strong emesis therapy (Vamana Panchakarma procedure), Nasya (nasal medication) and other therapies. Food should also be chosen to mitigate Kapha, that are easily digestible and dry (moisture-free, fat-free).

Physical exercises, dry massage and mild trampling should be done. Having thus mitigated the kapha, the person should take bath, anoint the body with the paste of karpura (camphor), candana (sandalwood), aguru (Aquilaria agallocha), and kumkuma (saffron). Have one year old barley, wheat and honey, meat of animals of desert-like land, and meat roasted in fire as food. Drink the juice of mango fruit mixed with fragrant substances, in the company of friends, getting it served by the beloved; the drink, thereby producing satisfaction. Beverages such as asava (fermented infusion), arista (fermented decoction), sidhu (fermented infusion), mardvika (fermented grape juice), or sarambu (extract of trees such as asana, candana etc.) or water mixed with honey, or water boiled with jalada (musta – Nut grass). Avoid foods that are hard to-digest and cold, sleeping at day time, foods which are fatty, sour and sweet. Because, all these will increase Kapha.

Sisira Ritu charya – Ayurveda winter regimen – Mid January–Mid March

Even in shishira Ritu, the same regimen, as described above should be adopted with more intensity. During this period cold is severe and dryness more.

Vasanta Rutucharya (Ayurveda Spring regimen) – Mid March–Mid May

Kapha which has undergone increase in Shishira (cold season) becomes liquefied by the heat of the Sun in asanta (spring). It diminishes the digestive fire (Agni) and gives rise to many diseases. Hence Kapha should be controlled quickly, by resorting to strong emesis therapy (Vamana Panchakarma procedure), Nasya (nasal medication) and other therapies. Food should also be chosen to mitigate Kapha, that are easily digestible and dry (moisture-free, fat-free).

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Greeshma Ritucharya (Ayurveda Summer Regimen) Mid May– Mid July

In Greeshma (summer) the sun rays become powerful and appear to be destructive. Kapha decreases day by day and Vata increases consequently, hence avoid use of salt, pungent and sour foods, heavy physical exercises and exposure to sunlight, during this season.

Food which are sweet, light (easy to digest), fatty, cold and liquid should be taken, take cornflour mixed with cold water and sugar after taking bath in cold water. Madya (wine) should not be taken; if very necessary, taken in very little quantity or diluted with more quantity of water; if wine is taken in large doses, it will cause inflammatory conditions, and it will make the body fragile and weak, increases burning sensation and causes delusion.

Varsha Ritu carya- (Ayurveda seasonal regimen for rainy season)– Mid July – Mid September

In rainy season, the agni (digestive activity) is weak. It is already debilitated by summer, it undergoes further decrease and gets vitiated by the Doshas. The Doshas get aggravated by the effect of thick clouds full of water, cold wind having snow, dirty water because of rain, warmth of the earth and sourness. Salt and powder of panchakola, should be used. Rain water or water from deep wells, well boiled should be used for drinking. On days of no sunlight at all, the food should predominantly sour, salty and unctuous, dry, mixed with honey and easily digestible. 45-46 ½

Ritusandhi- (inter-seasonal period)

The seven days at the end and commencement of a season is known as Ritusandhi (inter seasonal period). During this period, the regimen of the preceding season should be discontinued gradually and that of the succeeding season should be gradually adopted; sudden discontinuance or sudden adoption gives rise to diseases caused by asatmya (non-habitation)

Sex & Ayurveda

Sex is an integral part of our daily habit (Dinacharya). The importance of sex in our lives has remained unchanged. The crucial points to be kept in mind in relation to this are:-

- 1. Timing:** According to Ayurveda, the best time to have sex is during the full moon, after 10 p.m. and at least 2 hours after a meal. The ideal timeframe for sex is between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. This is because this particular time is when our stamina and passion are at their peak
- 2. Digestion:** Once should wait at least 2 hours if you have a full stomach before your body is ready to roll. Having sex before that big meal is digested will create conflict in your mind and body. It's best to direct energy and blood towards digestion, as both of these are required for optimum performance.
- 3. Abstain from sex:** Ayurveda says that we must abstain from sex if we are not fully present in the moment as we will not be able to seek pleasure from the act. Stress, Anxiety, Sickness, tiredness, Hunger, physical fatigue only make worse for the body.
- 4. Frequency & Self Control:** Ayurveda believes that a lot of our vital energy called Ojas gets discharged during orgasm. Ojas is responsible for our immune powers so people who have high Ojas don't fall sick as often. The important thing is to strike the right balance in the amount and intensity of sex to be healthy and happy.
- 5. Seasonal effecting Sex regime:** The body is at its prime during

winters so you can indulge in this pleasurable act every day during winter.

In spring (vasanta ritu) and autumn (sharad ritu) our stamina is moderate so sexual frequency should also take the middle road – once every three days.

In rainy (varsha ritu) and summer (nidagha ritu) our strength is at its lowest so it's best to reduce sexual frequency to once every 15 days.

The most important measures at a glance

1. Healthy levels of activity, rest, sports, adequate sleep and Transcendental Meditation
2. Fortifying, nutritious and hot meals
3. Regular daily routine - especially regular eating habits
4. Heat - warm oil massage, hot food, warm clothes
5. Strengthening of the physiology with Ayurvedic food supplements [1-5].

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