

Ayurveda – How to eat according to your body type.

Ayurveda is the ancient Indian Science of healing. Yes !! it is not some hocus-pocus but a well-established science which has been there for as long as 5000 years. Some of the famous healing techniques now prominent even in the west such as Homeopathy and Polarity theory have stemmed from Ayurveda.

Ayurveda's roots lie in the Vedic culture “Ayur” meaning life and “Veda” meaning science. So, Ayurveda is the science of life. Although developed in India the knowledge and effects of Ayurveda are not limited to India itself but can be applied to anyone around the world. That is why it has become so popular even in the West.

Eating-According-Body-Type-Ayurvedic-Diet

How Is Ayurvedic Diet Different From Others?

There are a number of diets and foods you will find on the Internet to boost your metabolism but you will hardly find any logic behind why and how these diets react with your body.

According to Ayurveda, everyone has a different body constitution or in Sanskrit ‘Dosha’. An Ayurvedic Diet is a customised diet based on your body constitution.

Ayurvedic diet is based on the rhythmic changes that occur in nature such as, rise and fall of the sun, changing nature, changes in phases of life(childhood and ageing), etc.

Our body follows a circadian rhythm or biological clock. The different hormone levels in our body rise and fall as the sun rises and falls and so does the functioning level of our body vary. So, the Ayurvedic diet includes all these factors and keeps changing throughout our lifetime.

Slow Metabolism Is An Imbalance

In Ayurveda, perfect health means that our body is in equilibrium and this equilibrium not only depends on our internal bodily functions but our external environment as well.

The effect of an external factor such as sleep, stress, etc. which we are researching now has been in ancient Ayurveda texts for thousands of years.

Classical Ayurveda texts cover food depending on the diversity of natural sources, their relation to seasons and places.

According to Ayurveda, there is a strong association between dosha (body constitution), Prakriti (surrounding environment) and metabolism. Any imbalance in either dosha or

Prakriti could disturb our body's equilibrium and lead to an imbalanced metabolism.

The Three-Body Energies

There are three different types of body constitution. The key to following an Ayurvedic diet is to first understand your dosha or body type. Just like fingerprints every person has a different set of energy pattern which includes a combination of physical, mental, and biological characteristics and which forms their dosha and which does not change throughout their life.

The factors that disturb our body's balance also change our dosha leading to diseases and disorders.

Understanding your external factors and your body's composition can help you restore the balance.

There are three types of energy that circulate through everyone and everything and these are related to basic bodily functions. In Sanskrit, these energies are called Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.

Vata: This is the energy of movement. This energy is required to move fluids and nutrients through the body and to the cells.

Pitta: This is the energy of digestion or metabolism.

Kapha: This is the energy of lubrication and structure.

The entire Universe is composed of five elements- Space, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. Vata, Pitta, and Kapha are nothing but permutation and combinations of these five elements.

Vata

The energy of movement is a combination of air and space. It governs breathing, blinking, muscle and tissue movement, pulsation of the heart, and all movements in the cytoplasm and cell membranes. Balanced vata promotes creativity and flexibility and unbalanced vata produces fear and anxiety.

Pitta

Pitta the energy of metabolism and digestion is composed of Fire and Water. It governs digestion, absorption, assimilation, nutrition, metabolism and body temperature. Balanced pitta promotes understanding and intelligence and unbalanced pitta arouses anger, hatred, and jealousy.

Kapha

Kapha forms the body's structure.-bones, muscles, and tendons. It holds the cells together, formed from Earth and Water. Kapha supplies the water for all body parts and systems. It lubricates joints, moisturises the skin, and maintains immunity. Balanced kapha is expressed as love, calmness, and forgiveness. Unbalanced Kapha leads to attachment, greed, and envy.

Know how home cooked food is the main ingredient for a healthy lifestyle?

Tridosha- The Three Body Types

Usually one of the three energies is prominent in a person's body and the rest is secondary and tertiary. A person's body type depends on the prominent energy.

In Ayurveda, diseases are caused by an excess or deficiency of vata, pitta or kapha or by the presence of toxins.

A. Vata Prominent Body Type

A person with vata predominant is creative and flexible. Vata people walk, talk and think fast but they are easily fatigued.

They are generally thin, have smaller bones, and do not put on weight easily and struggle with digestion. Although creative and energetic, they are fearful, stressed and have less willpower, boldness, and confidence than other doshas. Vata types are susceptible to mental issues, including fear and grief, and health problems, like neurological disorders, insomnia, arthritis, and heart disease.

The attributes of vata are dry, light, cold, rough, subtle, mobile and clear, any of these qualities in excess can cause imbalance. Frequent travel, especially by plane, loud noises, drugs, sugar, alcohol, cold foods, liquids, and places, etc all disturb vata. Vata types should go to bed by 10 PM and they need more rest than the other types.

Dietary guidelines For Vata Type:

Have warm, well-cooked foods.

Have small meals three or four times a day and snack when needed.

Maintain a 2-hour gap between every meal.

Be Regular in meal times.

Try and have more one-pot meals such as soups and stews.

Limit their intake of raw foods.

Nightshades—tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants, and peppers—as well as spinach, should be avoided if the vata person has stiff, aching joints or muscles.

Sweet, ripe and juicy fruits are good for vata.

The astringent and drying fruits, such as cranberries, pomegranates, and raw apples, should be avoided.

Fruit should always be eaten by itself on an empty stomach.

Legumes are difficult to digest and should be consumed in limited quantity by those trying to reduce vata. The legumes should be the split type and soaked before cooking. All nuts and seeds are good for vata but are best used like butter or milk.

Sesame oil is warming for vata, but all oils are good.

All spices are good, but should not be overused.

Since vata people tend to be prone to addiction, they should avoid sugar, caffeine, and tobacco.

Should avoid cold, frozen or raw foods

They should avoid extreme cold

Use ghee or healthy fats with each meal to help with grounding.

Don't fast or skip meals.

Drink warm water or tea.

B. Pitta Prominent Body Type:

Pitta body types generally have a medium and athletic built. They are versatile in terms of weight and muscle gain. Pitta people have warm bodies and sharp intelligence. When Pitta is out of balance they can become agitated and short-tempered. Their hairs are silky and they experience early greying and hair loss.

Pitta types have strong metabolism and good digestion. They have a strong appetite and eat plenty of food and liquids. They like hot spices and cold drinks. They have a low tolerance for sunlight, heat and hard physical work.

Pitta types tend to have diseases involving the fire principle such as fevers, inflammatory diseases, and jaundice. Common symptoms include skin rashes, burning sensation, ulceration, fever, inflammations or irritations such as conjunctivitis, colitis or sore throats.

Since the attributes of pitta are oily, hot, light, and liquid, an excess of any of these qualities aggravates pitta.

Dietary Guidelines For Pitta Types:

Exercise in the morning or the coolest time of the day.

Avoid sour, salty and pungent foods.

Being Vegetarian is the best choice.

Include sweet, cold and bitter tastes in your diet.

Barley, wheat, oats, and rice are good grains for them.

Avoid raw onion, radishes, tomatoes, and garlic. (Pungent tastes should be avoided)

Avoid anything too sour, oily or hot.

Salads and raw foods are great.

All legumes except red and yellow lentils are good for Pitta types.

Avoid nuts or take in moderation.

Limit salt intake.

Eat sweet dairy products and avoiding salted cheese and butter.

Avoid coffee, alcohol, and tobacco. But an occasional beer is good.

To avoid heartburn, space out meals by at least two or three hours. Eat smaller meals throughout the day instead of only two to three big meals.

Avoid hot spices, using cardamom, cinnamon, coriander, fennel, and turmeric predominantly, with small amounts of cumin and black pepper.

Black tea may also be used occasionally with a little milk and a pinch of cardamom.

Also read how low-calorie and zero calorie products are making you gain weight?

C. Kapha Predominant Body Type:

They have a bigger body build and easily gain weight and have a slow metabolism. They have smooth and oily skin. Their sleep tends to be long and deep. They are generally calm, tolerant, and forgiving in nature but imbalance may make them possessive, lazy, insecure, and envious at times. They have thick skin and their bodies and muscles are well developed.

They are attracted to sweet, salty and oily foods. They are more likely to have diseases connected to the water principle such as flu, sinus congestion, and other diseases involving mucous. They are prone to diabetes, obesity, cancer, fluid retention and respiratory illness.

Dietary Guidelines for Kapha Types:

They should avoid dairy products and fats of any kind, especially fried or greasy foods.

Eat more bitter, astringent and pungent tastes.

They should eat fewer grains with buckwheat and millets being the best for them, followed by barley, rice, and corn.

Eat green and leafy vegetables and those grown above the ground.

Avoid root vegetables.

Avoid very sweet, sour or juicy vegetables.

Eat more astringent and dry fruits such as apples, apricots, cranberries, mangoes, peaches, and pears.

Avoid non-vegetarian foods.

Black beans, moong beans, pinto beans, and red lentils are best for kapha types. But consume in moderation as kapha types do not need much protein.

Kapha should avoid heavy nuts, dairy, and sweets.

Occasional consumption of almonds, sunflower and safflower, corn and pumpkin seeds is alright.

Use only raw honey as a sweetener.

Ginger and garlic are good for them and they can use any spices except salt.

Alcohol, tea, and coffee are not as damaging for kapha as for other doshas.

They need to do plenty of exercises.

They should avoid heavy foods and iced food or drinks.
They should keep changing their routine.
They should avoid fatty, oily foods and eat dry and light.
Daytime naps are a big no.

Bottomline

Although Ayurveda has been there for several years, we have ignored it for long as there was no scientific evidence behind the healing process followed in Ayurveda. However recent interest in this thousand of year old system has made the scientific community study this system and conduct various experiments on it.

Researchers from the University of New Mexico and the University of Arizona conducted published a study which reported that an Ayurveda based lifestyle modification program is a feasible approach to weight management.

There are a number of other studies which point to the benefits of following an Ayurvedic diet.

Finally, you might not be able to identify with one particular dosha. That does not mean you completely ignore it but find out the one which is most predominant and follow the guidelines according to it, eventually, you will find out which type you are.