

# How To Rebalance Your Ayurvedic Doshas

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While the information in this book was prepared to provide accurate information regarding topics related to general and specific health issues, the information contained in the Site is made available with the express understanding that Niraj Naik is not dispensing medical advice and do not intend any of this information to be used for self diagnosis or treatment.

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Niraj Naik <http://www.NirajNaik.com>

## About The Publisher



**Niraj Naik**, has had a roller coaster ride through a multitude of life and entrepreneurial experiences.

In early 2010 he was finally diagnosed with ulcerative colitis due to a very stressful period in his life and had previously suffered from its symptoms on and off for several years.

Using a combination of natural treatments and following the principles of Ayurveda he has finally broken free from the burdens of this illness and is currently still in remission without requiring medication.

This has allowed him to completely reinvent his life and discover a new passion for helping others to do the same.

The stress of modern living is what he believes is the real cause of disease and bad health. The treatment begins with a change in perception, that your illness is a gift and not a burden.

He still enjoys making music with his new band called amAya and is co-founder of some of the most popular meditation music websites online.

<http://www.AlphaMindSystem.com>

<http://www.AmayaSounds.com>

<http://www.TrypnauralMeditation.com>

email: [support@nirajnaik.com](mailto:support@nirajnaik.com)

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## What Is Your Dosha?

According to Ayurveda, the five fundamental elements that make up the universe--space (Akasha), air (Vayu), fire (Agni), water (Apu) and earth (Prithvi)--also make up the human physiology. How do these elements work within us? Looking at the elements from the point of view of what they do in the physiology, rather than what they are, Ayurveda describes three biological humors or psychophysiological energies called doshas. There are three doshas, called Vata, Pitta and Kapha, and each is mainly a combination of two elements. Vata dosha is made up of space and air. Pitta dosha is a combination of fire and water. Kapha dosha is made up of water and earth. Each of these doshas is further divided into five sub-doshas. Together, the doshas orchestrate all the activities that occur within us.

The combination of the three doshas that you inherit at conception is called your prakriti or original constitution in Ayurveda. While it is not unheard of for people to have nearly equal proportions of the three doshas or just one very predominant dosha as their prakriti, most people have two doshas that are more or less equally dominant, with the remaining one less dominant. Thus, there are ten classic types of prakriti possible--Vata-Pitta-Kapha, Vata (where Vata is much more dominant than either of the two other doshas, Pitta, Kapha, Vata-Pitta (where Vata and Pitta are the two major doshas with Vata being slightly more dominant than Pitta), Pitta-Vata (where again Vata and Pitta are the two major doshas, but Pitta is slightly more dominant than Vata), Vata-Kapha, Kapha-Vata, Pitta-Kapha and Kapha-Pitta. Of course, each of us has a unique doshic thumbprint, and an ayurvedic healer performs an ayurvedic pulse assessment to discover that unique doshic make-up and the exact nature of imbalances in order to recommend a very individual program for restoring balance.

For good health and well-being to be maintained, the three doshas within you need to be in balance. That does not mean they need to be equal, unless you were born with equal doshas; it means that you need to maintain your original doshic make-up or prakriti through life as much as possible to maintain good health. Unfortunately, factors such as the dietary choices you make, the lifestyle you lead, the climate where you live, levels of environmental pollution, the work you do, the nature of your relationships with people and even just the passage of

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time can cause one or more of the doshas in your prakriti to increase or decrease from its original level in your constitution, creating vikriti or imbalance. If this imbalance is not corrected, you eventually lose your good health. That's why restoring balance is the central theme of the ayurvedic approach to health.

While it is ideal to follow a personal program of balance laid out by an ayurvedic healer after an ayurvedic pulse assessment and a question-answer session designed to discover your precise needs for balance at a given time, a well-designed questionnaire can help you assess for yourself if you need to balance one or more doshas, and diet and lifestyle tips and herbal formulas can help maintain or restore balance.

## What is Vata?

Vata is made up of the two elements *space and air*.

The most revered ayurvedic text, the Charaka Samhita, defines the characteristics of Vata dosha: dry and rough (rookshaha); cool (sheetoha); light--lacking weight (laghuhu); very tiny, penetrating molecules (sookhshma); always moving (chalota); broad, unlimited, unbounded--akash means unbounded space (vishadaha); and rough (kharaha).

People with more Vata in their constitutions tend to be thin, with a slender frame and prominent joints, delicate skin that is naturally dry, and dry voluminous hair. They are quick and lively in thought, speech and action, and make friends easily. There is an element of airiness to their step, a quality of lightness in their laughter. Change is usually their second name. They are light sleepers and gravitate towards warm environments. Creativity and enthusiasm are hallmarks of balanced Vata.

If your prakriti or original constitution has more Vata in it, you will exhibit many of the characteristics and qualities of Vata when you are in balance than people who have more Pitta or Kapha in their make-up. And that's natural. But if the qualities become extreme, or more pronounced than usual at a given time, then the Vata in you has in all likelihood become aggravated or imbalanced, and needs to be brought back into balance. And if a predominantly Kapha or Pitta person starts exhibiting many Vata qualities, that indicates a Vata imbalance in that Kapha or Pitta body type. In both cases, it is then time to follow a Vata-balancing diet and lifestyle to help restore the level of Vata in the physiology to its normal proportion.

Factors that can cause Vata dosha to increase in the physiology include a diet that contains too many dry or raw foods, over-consumption of ice-cold beverages, and exposure to cold dry winds, a variable daily routine, too much travel, and mental overexertion.

### **Signs that you need to balance Vata**

- Are you constantly worried, anxious, overwhelmed, and fretful?
- Do you feel tired but find yourself unable to slow down and relax?
- Do you find it difficult to settle down and fall asleep at night? Is your sleep restless when you do manage to fall asleep?
- Is your skin feeling dryer than usual, stretched taut or flaking?
- Is your hair more brittle, with split ends happening oftener?
- Are your lips raw and chapped? Is your throat constantly dry?
- Is your digestion irregular? Do you experience problems with abdominal gas?
- Do you feel like you cannot sit still, that you need to be constantly moving?
- Do you feel "spaced out"? Is it harder to remember things for more than a short period of time? Is your attention span shorter than usual? Is it harder to focus?
- Do your bowel movements occur less than once daily?

If you answered yes to many of the questions above, following a Vata-balancing diet and lifestyle can help restore balance to Vata.

### **Balancing Vata Dosha: Diet**

*Ayurvedic texts recommend the principle of opposites for reducing the level of a dosha that has become aggravated. Since the characteristics of Vata include dryness, coolness, roughness, lightness and constant motion, qualities that are opposite to these in diet and lifestyle help restore balance to Vata dosha.*



### **Dietary recommendations**

Include foods that are liquid or unctuous in your daily diet to balance dryness, some "heavy" foods to offer substance and sustained nourishment, foods that are smooth in texture to offset roughness and foods that are warm or hot to balance the cool nature of Vata. So what exactly does this mean in terms of foods you should choose and foods you should stay away from?

Here are some specific dietary tips:

1. If you need to balance Vata, a fat-free diet is not for you. Cook foods with a little ghee (clarified butter) or include some olive oil in your diet every day. Olive oil cannot be heated to high temperatures without destroying its healing value, so drizzle olive oil over fresh soft flatbreads, cooked grains, or warm vegetable dishes. Ghee can be heated to high temperatures without affecting its nourishing, healing qualities, so use ghee to sauté vegetables, spices or other foods. Avoid too many dry foods such as crackers, dry cold cereal and the like.
2. Cooked foods, served hot or warm, are ideal for balancing Vata. Pureed soups, cooked fruit, hot cereal, rice pudding and hot nourishing beverages such as nut milks or warm milk are excellent "comfort" foods and help pacify aggravated Vata. Avoid or minimize raw foods such as salads and raw sprouts.
3. The three ayurvedic tastes that help balance Vata are sweet, sour and salty, so include more of these tastes in your daily diet. Milk, citrus fruits, dried fruit or salted toasted sunflower or pumpkin seeds make good snack choices. Eat less of the bitter, pungent and astringent tastes.
4. Nuts are wonderful Vata-pacifiers. Soak ten almonds overnight. Blanch and eat in the early morning for a healthy burst of energy. Walnuts, hazelnuts and cashews make good Vata-pacifying snacks.
5. Carrots, asparagus, tender leafy greens, beets, sweet potatoes and summer squash such as zucchini and lauki squash are the best vegetable choices. They become more digestible when

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chopped and cooked with Vata-pacifying spices. Vegetables can be combined with grains or mung beans for satisfying one-dish meals. Avoid nightshades and larger beans.

6. Basmati rice is ideal for balancing Vata. Cook it with a little salt and ghee for added flavor. Wheat is also good-fresh flatbreads made with whole wheat flour (called atta or chapatti flour and available at Indian grocery stores) and drizzled with a little melted ghee combine well with cooked vegetables or Vata-balancing chutneys.

7. Most spices are warming and enhance digestion, so cook with a combination of spices that appeals to your taste buds and is appropriate for the dish you are making. Ayurvedic spices such as small quantities of turmeric, cumin, coriander, dried ginger, black pepper and saffron offer flavor, aroma and healing wisdom.

8. Drink lots of warm water through the day.

### **Suggested Food Choices for Vata dosha**

The following list of suggested foods is by no means all-inclusive, but offers starting guidelines if you are new to ayurvedic dietary principles. We will add to this list regularly, so please check back often!

**Grains:** Rice, wheat, quinoa, oats, and amaranth, all cooked until tender

**Vegetables:** Asparagus, tender greens, carrots, peas, green beans, white daikon, zucchini, lauki squash, parsnips, sweet potatoes, all cooked

**Fruits:** Avocado, pineapple, papaya, peaches, plums, grapes, mangoes, oranges, cherries, all kinds of berries, limes and lemons, apples if stewed, coconut, fresh figs, raisins (soaked)

**Lentils:** Mung beans, urad dhal, mung dhal, masoor dhal, toor dhal, red lentils, all cooked until butter-soft

**Dairy:** Whole milk, cream, butter, fresh yogurt (cooked into foods), lassi, cottage cheese, fresh paneer cheese.

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**Oils:** Ghee, olive oil, sesame oil, cold-pressed nut oils such as walnut

**Herbs:** Fresh ginger root, cilantro, curry leaves, parsley, fresh basil, fresh fennel, mint

**Nuts and Seeds:** Almonds (soaked and blanched), cashews, walnuts (soaked), pistachios, hazelnuts, pecans (soaked), pine nuts, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds

**Spices:** Ajwain, dried ginger, asafetida (hing) in small quantities, fenugreek, turmeric, cumin, clove, cardamom, coriander, fennel, black pepper, basil, Chinese cinnamon, nutmeg, mustard seed, mint, rosemary, thyme, lemon and orange zest, oregano, rock salt or sea salt, black salt, dried mango powder, pomegranate seeds or powder

**Other:** Rice milk, soy milk, poppy seeds, sucanat, turbinado sugar, raw honey, and tofu in moderation (diced small and cooked with spices)

### **Balancing Vata dosha: Lifestyle**

*Ayurvedic texts recommend the principle of opposites for reducing the level of a dosha that has become aggravated. Since the characteristics of Vata include dryness, coolness, roughness, lightness and constant motion, qualities that are opposite to these in diet and lifestyle help restore balance to Vata dosha.*

### **Lifestyle Recommendations**

1. Since Vata dosha is characterized as restless, constantly in motion and irregular, the primary lifestyle recommendation for balancing Vata is to maintain a regular routine. That means rising and going to bed at roughly the same times each day, eating three meals at about the same times each day, and following a similar pattern of work and rest from day to day.
2. Do not skip meals. Eat a nourishing lunch at mid-day and lighter meals at breakfast and dinner. Sit down to eat each meal, eat in a peaceful atmosphere with your attention on your food, and sit quietly for a few minutes after your meal. If your digestive fire is irregular,

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practicing these eating habits will help make it more regular.

3. Daily elimination is very important to prevent ama from accumulating in the body. Triphala Rasayana helps promote regularity as well as toning the digestive system. Since Triphala is gentle, not habit forming and not depleting, it can be taken indefinitely to maintain regularity.

4. To pamper dry skin, to promote circulation and to nourish and tone muscles and nerves, indulge in an ayurvedic massage every morning before you bathe or shower. Use almond or jojoba oil for your massage. If you like, you can add 3-4 drops of a pure essential oil such as lavender or sweet orange to 2 oz. of massage oil. Mix well before use. Two or three times a week, massage your scalp with warm oil, and let the oil stay for an hour or two before you shampoo. After your shower or bath, apply a generous coating of a pure, gentle moisturizer all over your body to keep your skin feeling smooth all day long.

5. Protect yourself from the cold and wind. Stay warm and toasty in cold weather by wearing several layers of clothing. Wear a cap and scarf when you go out to protect your ears and throat. Wear lip balm to prevent lips from getting dry and chafed.

6. Walking is the ideal exercise for balancing Vata. Walk in the early morning, for about 20 minutes every day.

7. You may have to regulate your sleep if Vata dosha is aggravated. It is important to get to bed early, so that you can get adequate rest each night. A cup of warm milk, with a pinch of nutmeg, can be helpful before bedtime.

8. Set aside about 30 minutes each day for meditation, to help calm the mind and enhance body-mind-spirit coordination.

## What is Pitta?

Pitta is made up of the two elements *fire and water*.

The most revered ayurvedic text, the Charaka Samhita, defines the characteristics of Pitta dosha: hot and a little unctuous (sahasnehamushnam); sharp, burning (tikshnam); liquid and acidic (dravamlam); always flowing in an unbounded manner (saram); pungent and sharp (katuhu). Pitta contains fire, but it also contains water. It is the source of the flame, but not the flame itself. Compare Pitta to gasoline--it is not hot to the touch, but it can be the source of flames.

People with more Pitta in their constitutions tend to be of medium proportions, with a frame that is neither petite nor heavy, warm skin that is very fair or ruddy and may be sensitive, and fine hair that tends towards premature graying or thinning. They are sharp and determined in thought, speech and action. There is an element of purpose to their step, an intensity to their voice. Ambition is usually their second name. They are moderate sleepers and gravitate towards cooler environments. Self-confidence and an entrepreneurial spirit are hallmarks of balanced Pitta.

If your prakriti or original constitution has more Pitta in it, you will exhibit many of the characteristics and qualities of Pitta when you are in balance than people who have more Vata or Kapha in their make-up. And that's natural. But if the qualities become extreme, or more pronounced than usual at a given time, then the Pitta in you has in all likelihood become aggravated or imbalanced, and needs to be brought back into balance. And if a predominantly Kapha or Vata person starts exhibiting many Pitta qualities, that indicates a Pitta imbalance in that Kapha or Vata body type. In both cases, it is then time to follow a Pitta-balancing diet and lifestyle to help restore the level of Pitta in the physiology to its normal proportion.

Factors that can cause Pitta dosha to increase in the physiology include a diet that contains too many hot or spicy foods, fasting or skipping meals, over-exposure to the sun or to hot

temperatures, and emotional trauma.

### **Signs that you need to balance Pitta**

- Are you constantly critical, impatient, and irritable?
- Do you feel obsessed by work or a project, unable to stop for a break?
- Do you wake up in the very early hours of the morning and then find it difficult to get back to sleep?
- Is your skin feeling irritated or more sensitive than usual, breaking out or feeling inflamed?
- Is your hair falling when you shampoo or comb it?
- Do you have problems with heartburn or excess stomach acid?
- Is your tolerance of other people or provoking situations lower than usual? Do you have temper outbursts over minor aggravations? Do you often feel frustrated?
- Do you feel hot even when you are indoors? Do you feel thirsty all the time? Are your eyes red?
- Is your speech often biting and sarcastic?
- Do you find yourself getting into arguments easily?

If you answered yes to many of the questions above, following a Pitta-balancing diet and lifestyle can help restore balance to Pitta.

### **Dietary recommendations**

Include a few dry foods in your daily diet to balance the liquid nature of Pitta, some "heavy" foods that offer substance and sustained nourishment, and foods that are cool to balance the fiery quality of Pitta. So what exactly does this mean in terms of foods you should choose and foods you should stay away from? Here are some specific dietary tips:

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1. If you need to balance Pitta, choose ghee, in moderate quantities, as your cooking medium. Ghee, according to the ancient ayurvedic texts, is cooling for both mind and body. Ghee can be heated to high temperatures without affecting its nourishing, healing qualities, so use ghee to sauté vegetables, spices or other foods.
2. Cooling foods are wonderful for balancing Pitta dosha. Sweet juicy fruits, especially pears, can cool a fiery Pitta quickly. Milk, sweet rice pudding, coconut and coconut juice, and milkshakes made with ripe mangoes and almonds or dates are examples of soothing Pitta-pacifying foods.
3. The three ayurvedic tastes that help balance Pitta are sweet, bitter and astringent, so include more of these tastes in your daily diet. Milk, fully ripe sweet fruits, and soaked and blanched almonds make good snack choices. Eat less of the salty, pungent and sour tastes.
4. Dry cereal, crackers, granola and cereal bars, and rice cakes balance the liquid nature of Pitta dosha, and can be eaten any time hunger pangs strike during the day.
5. Carrots, asparagus, bitter leafy greens, fennel, cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, green beans and bitter melon (in very small quantities) are good vegetable choices. They become more digestible when chopped and cooked with Pitta-pacifying spices. Vegetables can be combined with grains or mung beans for satisfying one-dish meals. Avoid nightshades.
6. Basmati rice is excellent for balancing Pitta. Wheat is also good--fresh flatbreads made with whole-wheat flour (called atta or chapatti flour and available at Indian grocery stores) combine well with cooked vegetables or Pitta-balancing chutneys. Oats and amaranth are other Pitta-balancing grains.
7. Choose spices that are not too heating or pungent. Ayurvedic spices such as small quantities of turmeric, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, cardamom and fennel offer flavor, aroma and healing wisdom.

8. Drink sweet lassi with lunch to help enhance digestion and cool, not ice-cold, water to quench thirst.

### **Suggested Food Choices for Pitta Dosha**

The following list of suggested foods is by no means all-inclusive, but offers starting guidelines if you are new to ayurvedic dietary principles. We will add to this list regularly, so please check back often!

**Grains:** Rice, wheat, barley, oats, amaranth, sago, all cooked until tender

**Vegetables:** Asparagus, tender and bitter greens, bitter melon, carrots, fennel, peas, green beans, zucchini, lauki squash, artichoke, parsnips, okra, celery, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, sweet potatoes, all cooked, small quantities of raw lettuce, carrots or cucumber

**Fruits:** Avocado, pineapple, peaches, plums, grapes, mangoes, melons, pears, pomegranates, cherries, all kinds of berries, apples, coconut, dates, fresh and dried figs, raisins (soaked), all ripe and sweet

**Lentils:** Mung beans, mung dhal, red or brown lentils, small portions of garbanzos, lima beans, black beans, all cooked until butter-soft

**Dairy:** Whole milk, cream, butter, fresh yogurt (cooked into foods), lassi, cottage cheese, fresh paneer cheese

**Oils:** Ghee, olive oil, walnut oil

**Herbs:** Cilantro, curry leaves, parsley, fresh basil, fresh fennel, fresh mint

**Nuts and Seeds:** Almonds (soaked and blanched), sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds

**Spices:** Turmeric, cumin, cardamom, coriander, fennel, small quantities of black pepper, Chinese cinnamon, mint, saffron, dill, sweet orange zest

**Other:** Rice milk, soy milk, sucanat, turbinado sugar, date sugar, and tofu in moderation (diced small and cooked with spices)



## Balancing Pitta Dosha: Lifestyle

Ayurvedic texts recommend the principle of opposites for reducing the level of a dosha that has become aggravated. Since the characteristics of Pitta include sharpness, heat, and acidity, qualities that are opposite to these in diet and lifestyle help restore balance to Pitta dosha.

### Lifestyle recommendations

1. The primary lifestyle recommendation for balancing Pitta is to stay cool--both physically and emotionally. Avoid going out in the heat of the day, especially on an empty stomach or after you have eaten tangy or spicy foods. Avoid exercising when it's hot. Walk away from situations that make you see red.
2. Do not skip meals, do not fast and do not wait to eat until you are ravenously hungry. Start your day with cooked fruit, followed by some cereal. Eat a sustaining meal at lunch, and a lighter meal for dinner. For snacking, choose sweet juicy fruit--fully ripe mangoes, sweet pears and sweet juicy grapes are excellent Pitta-pacifying choices. Delaying meals can cause excess acidity, so eat on time every day. The Amalaki Rasayana helps enhance digestion without aggravating Pitta dosha. It also helps balance stomach acid.
3. Daily elimination is very important to prevent ama from accumulating in the body. Triphala Rasayana helps promote regularity as well as toning the digestive system. Since Triphala is gentle, not habit forming and not depleting, it can be taken indefinitely to maintain regularity.
4. To soothe sensitive skin, to balance the emotions and to nourish and tone muscles and nerves, indulge in an ayurvedic massage every morning before you bathe or shower. Use coconut oil for your massage. If you like, you can add 3-4 drops of a pure essential oil such as lavender or rose to 2 oz. of massage oil. Mix well before use. Two or three time a week, massage your scalp with warm oil, and let the oil stay for an hour or two before you shampoo. After your shower or bath, apply a pure, gentle moisturizer all over your body or spray your skin with pure rose or sandalwood water to keep your skin feeling cool all day long.
5. Protect yourself from the heat. Stay cool in warm weather by wearing loose cotton clothing. Wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses to protect your eyes when you go out. Drink lots of room temperature water.

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6. Water-based activities are ideal exercise for Pitta-dominant people. Try swimming or aqua-aerobics to stay fit but cool. Strolling after sunset, especially along a waterfront, is also a soothing way to fit some leisurely activity into your day.
7. If Pitta dosha is out of balance, you may find that you can fall asleep without much trouble, but you wake up in the very early hours and find it difficult to get back to sleep. It is important to get to bed early, so that you can get adequate rest each night. A cup of warm milk, with some cardamom, can be helpful before bedtime.
8. Balance work and play. Set aside some time for R&R every day, and do not get so absorbed in a project that you are unable to detach from it.
9. Set aside about 30 minutes each day for meditation, to help balance the heart and emotions and to enhance body-mind-spirit coordination.

## What is Kapha?

Kapha is made up of the two elements *water and earth*.

The most revered ayurvedic text, the Charaka Samhita, defines the characteristics of Kapha dosha: heavy--both water and earth are heavy elements (guru); cold (sheetoha); soft (mridu); unctuous, offering lubrication (snigdha); sweet (madhura); stability, offering immunity (sthira); and slippery (tikshila).

People with more Kapha in their constitutions tend to be of larger proportions, with a robust frame and padded joints, thick smooth skin that may tend towards oiliness, and rich, wavy hair. They are stable and calm in thought, speech and action, and are easy-going and supportive in relationships. There is an element of steadiness to their step, a quality of serenity in their smile. Loyalty is usually their second name. They are long, heavy sleepers and uncomfortable in damp, clammy environments. Calm and sweetness of disposition are hallmarks of balanced Kapha.

If your prakriti or original constitution has more Kapha in it, you will exhibit many of the characteristics and qualities of Kapha when you are in balance than people who have more

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Pitta or Vata in their make-up. And that's natural. But if the qualities become extreme, or more pronounced than usual at a given time, then the Kapha in you has in all likelihood become aggravated or imbalanced, and needs to be brought back into balance. And if a predominantly Vata or Pitta person starts exhibiting many Kapha qualities, that indicates a Kapha imbalance in that Vata or Pitta body type. In both cases, it is then time to follow a Kapha-balancing diet and lifestyle to help restore the level of Kapha in the physiology to its normal proportion.

Factors that can cause Kapha dosha to increase in the physiology include a diet that contains too many deep-fried, sweet or heavy foods, over-consumption of ice-cold foods or beverages, exposure to cold and damp, daytime sleep, and lack of exercise.

### **Signs that you need to balance Kapha**

- Are you gaining weight easily, even though you feel like you don't really have an appetite?
- Do you feel tired even though you are not performing any physical activity?
- Do you find it difficult to awake even after long hours of sleep? Do you wake up feeling unrefreshed, tired?
- Is your skin feeling oilier than usual, with breakouts?
- Is your hair oily and streaky even with regular shampooing?
- Are you heavy and congested in your throat, head and chest?
- Is your digestion slow? Do you feel heavy and lethargic after a meal?
- Do you feel like you just want to sit and be a spectator?
- Do you feel withdrawn? Is it difficult to deal with change? Do you constantly feel the need to "cling"?
- Do you feel mentally unmotivated?

If you answered yes to many of the questions above, following a Kapha-balancing diet and lifestyle can help restore balance to Kapha.

Ayurvedic texts recommend the principle of opposites for reducing the level of a dosha that has

become aggravated. Since the characteristics of Kapha include heaviness, softness, sweetness, cold, stability and unctuousness, qualities that are opposite to these in diet and lifestyle help restore balance to Kapha dosha.

### **Dietary recommendations**

Include a few dry foods in your daily diet to balance the oily nature of Kapha, foods that are nourishing but light to counter the heaviness of Kapha and warm foods with a zing to them to balance the sweet, cold quality of Kapha. So what exactly does this mean in terms of foods you should choose and foods you should stay away from? Here are some specific dietary tips:

1. If you need to balance Kapha, choose ghee, in very small quantities, as your cooking medium. Ghee can be heated to high temperatures without affecting its nourishing, healing qualities, so use ghee to sauté vegetables, spices or other foods. Steaming foods and then adding a mixture of spices sautéed in very little ghee is best. In general, avoid too many oily foods.
2. Light, warming foods help balance Kapha. Clear vegetable soups with beans and diced vegetables, stews made with Kapha-balancing vegetables, bean casseroles, dhal soups and light grain/vegetable combinations are ideal for balancing Kapha, especially when combined with Kapha balancing spices. Stay away from too much salt and instead infuse dishes with fresh herbs and spices for flavor.
3. The three ayurvedic tastes that help balance Kapha are pungent, bitter and astringent, so include more of these tastes in your daily diet. Apples, garbanzo beans cooked with Kapha-balancing spices or steamed broccoli or cauliflower with a light olive oil and spice mixture make healthy Kapha-pacifying snacks. Eat less of the salty, sweet and sour tastes.
4. Dry cereal, salt-free crackers and rice cakes balance the liquid nature of Kapha dosha and make good snacks. However, eat snacks in moderation if you are trying to balance Kapha, and avoid sugary snacks. Honey in small quantities is the recommended sweetener.

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5. Carrots, asparagus, okra, bitter leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, daikon radish and bitter melon are good vegetable choices. They become more digestible when chopped and cooked with Kapha-pacifying spices. Vegetables can be combined with lighter grains or mung beans for satisfying one-dish meals. Avoid nightshades. Fresh green chili peppers and fresh ginger root add flavor while balancing Kapha.

6. Choose lighter whole grains, and eat grains in moderation. Barley, buckwheat, millet and couscous are good choices. If you choose heavier grains, such as rice or wheat, eat very small quantities.

7. Zesty warming spices are wonderful for balancing Kapha. Ayurvedic spices such as turmeric, cumin, coriander, cayenne, black pepper, dried ginger, asafoetida (hing), cloves and fenugreek offer flavor, aroma and healing wisdom.

8. Drink lassi infused with digestion-enhancing spices and herbs with lunch and lots of warm water through the day to help flush toxins from the body.

## **The Ayurvedic Wellness Guide**

### **Suggested Food Choices for Kapha dosha**

The following list of suggested foods is by no means all-inclusive, but offers starting guidelines if you are new to ayurvedic dietary principles. We will add to this list regularly, so please check back often!

**Grains:** Buckwheat, quinoa, barley, millet, oats, amaranth, sago, small portions of Basmati rice, all cooked until tender

**Vegetables:** Asparagus, all kinds of greens, bitter melon, green beans, lauki squash, artichoke,

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celery, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, kohlrabi, daikon, radish, cabbage, all cooked

**Fruits:** Apricots, prunes, peaches, pears, cherries, berries, apples, lemons, limes, pomegranates, dried figs, raisins

**Lentils:** Mung beans, mung dhal, toor dhal, red or brown lentils, small portions of garbanzos, lima beans, black beans, all cooked until butter-soft

**Dairy:** Whole milk diluted with water, lassi, small portions of cottage cheese or fresh paneer cheese

**Oils:** Small portions of ghee and olive oil

**Herbs:** Cilantro, curry leaves, parsley, fresh basil, fresh mint, fresh oregano, fresh thyme, sage, neem leaves

**Nuts and Seeds:** Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds

**Spices:** Turmeric, cumin, cardamom, coriander, fennel, dried ginger, Chinese cinnamon, black pepper, Chinese cinnamon, mint, saffron, dill, lime zest, nutmeg, cayenne, fenugreek, mustard seed, oregano, marjoram, thyme, rosemary, paprika, mace, cloves

**Other:** Raw honey in moderation, unsalted unbuttered popcorn, crackers in moderation, cooked tofu in small quantities (diced small and cooked with spices)

### **Balancing Kapha dosha: Lifestyle**

Ayurvedic texts recommend the principle of opposites for reducing the level of a dosha that has become aggravated. Since the characteristics of Kapha include heaviness, softness, sweetness, cold, stability and unctuousness, qualities that are opposite to these in diet and lifestyle help restore balance to Kapha dosha.

### **Lifestyle recommendations**

1. The primary lifestyle recommendation for balancing Kapha is to get moving. Physically, get some exercise every single day. Mentally, challenge yourself with new activities—learn a new skill, solve some puzzles or take a class. Emotionally, welcome new relationships in your life

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by making it a point to meet people—volunteering comes naturally to the caring Kapha nature and can provide a forum for building nurturing new bonds.

2. Do not skip meals, and do not fast. The Kapha digestive agni tends to be low, as does appetite, and not eating on time slows down the metabolism even more. Start your day with a light breakfast. Eat a sustaining meal at lunch, and a lighter meal for dinner. The Amalaki Rasayana helps enhance digestion and revs up the metabolism.
3. Daily elimination is very important to prevent ama from accumulating in the body. Triphala Rasayana helps promote regularity as well as toning the digestive system. Since Triphala is gentle, not habit forming and not depleting, it can be taken indefinitely to maintain regularity.
4. Deep-cleanse oily skin twice a day with a natural cleanser to rid the skin of surface impurities and grime. Once a week, exfoliate your skin with a cleansing scrub. Shampoo your hair every other day at least with a gentle natural shampoo. The ayurvedic oil massage, performed each morning before your shower or bath can help dislodge embedded toxins and increase natural energy levels.
5. Protect yourself from the damp and cold. Drink lots of warm water, infused with warming spices such as turmeric, dried ginger and black pepper. At-home steam therapy can help open clogged channels.
6. Vigorous activities are ideal exercise for Kapha-dominant people. Exercise everyday for best results, but without overstraining. Racquetball, singles tennis, jogging and aerobics are good activity choices for balancing Kapha. Exercise in the morning if you can to get a good charge for the day ahead.
7. If Kapha dosha is out of balance, you'll tend to feel tired even after a solid ten hours of uninterrupted sleep. Go to bed early and wake up really early in the morning, definitely before sunrise, to improve the quality of your rest. Do not indulge in daytime snoozes.

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8. Add zest to your life by consciously incorporating variety and new experiences into your life. Travel, meeting new people and trying new hobbies are ways to embrace change.

9. Set aside about 30 minutes each day for meditation, to help balance the heart, mind and emotions and to enhance body-mind-spirit coordination.

In the next installment you will find out the top 10 Ayurvedic herbs and how you can use them to reverse aging, prevent and cure disease.

*See you next time!*

**Namaste**

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**Visit <http://www.NirajNaik.com> to get access to lots of information and products that will help you discover how to rebalance your dosha's, and reach optimum mental and physical performance using the ancient medical science of Ayurveda.**

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