

Vol.5 Issue 4 December 2010

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& HEALTH TOURISM

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Ayurveda has cure
for even serious
eye diseases

How to keep your
eyes healthy

**Debate: Unethical
Advertisements in Ayurveda**

**Beautycare in Winter
Meat as Food**



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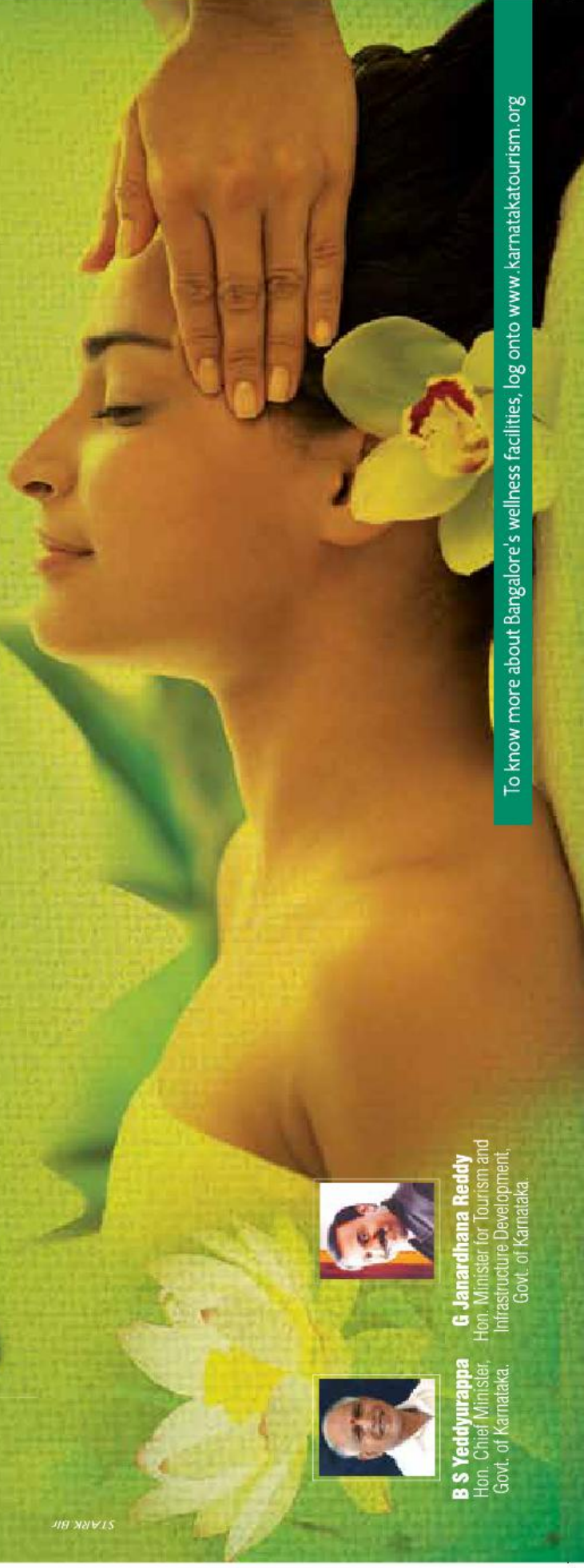
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Building on the foundation

Ayurveda has been the health-keeper of Indians for more than 5,000 years. It brought relief in every medical condition, including those which require surgery. A careful study of Ayurveda classics reveals the amazing understanding its writers had about human life in its totality: the body, the mind and the soul. The concepts are so strong that they continue to serve the purpose even today.

The development of Ayurveda should ideally be based on this strong foundation. However, curative aspects of Ayurveda are not highlighted in a way they deserve. The rule by the British and the encouragement they gave to modern medicine partially eclipsed the image of Ayurveda for some time. It is only recently that the world woke up to the possibilities of Ayurveda as a holistic branch of medicine.

While the new-found interest is most welcome, we have doubts if it is based on the true strengths of the Indian system. We feel that undue stress is being laid on the wellness aspect. True, Ayurveda has unique processes and formulations that can rejuvenate the body system back to full vigour. But this is only a part of the whole. The true genius of this ancient science lies in its efficacy in treating diseases.

Ayurveda and Health Tourism has always believed that the future of Ayurveda lies in its promotion as a treatment regime across the globe. In this issue, we have highlighted the treatments available for eye diseases. It proves that it can offer lasting relief for debilitating and difficult conditions such as diabetic retinopathy. The task now is to take it forward and make it more relevant to our times through research. We hope the authorities and institutions mandated with the job will take it up seriously.

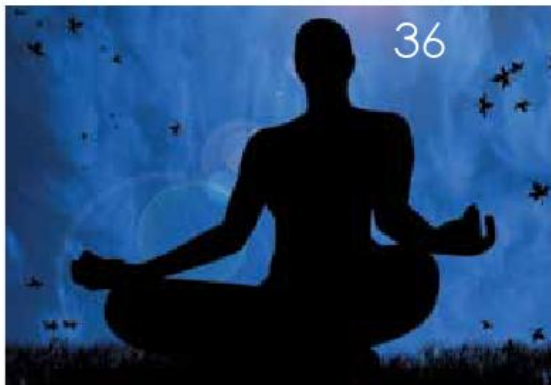
The fourth edition of the World Ayurveda Congress is being organised in Bengaluru this year. It's a unique event in that it brings all stake-holders of Ayurveda on a single platform. We hope the delegates will put their heads together to identify the challenges for Ayurveda in the coming years and formulate a strategy to get over them.

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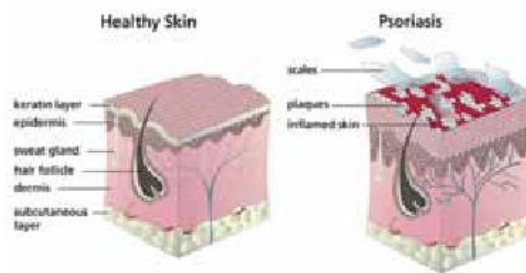


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Śālākya Tantra, one of the eight branches of Ayurveda, prescribes extensive treatment methods for eye diseases. There are effective treatment for difficult conditions such as diabetic retinopathy.

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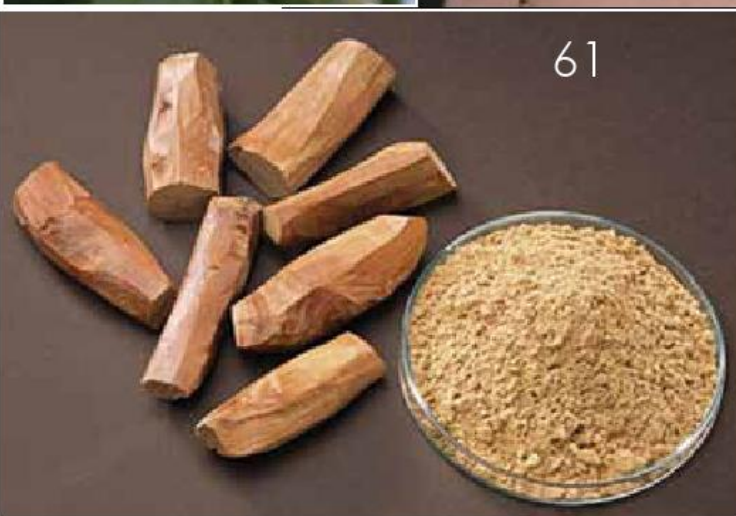
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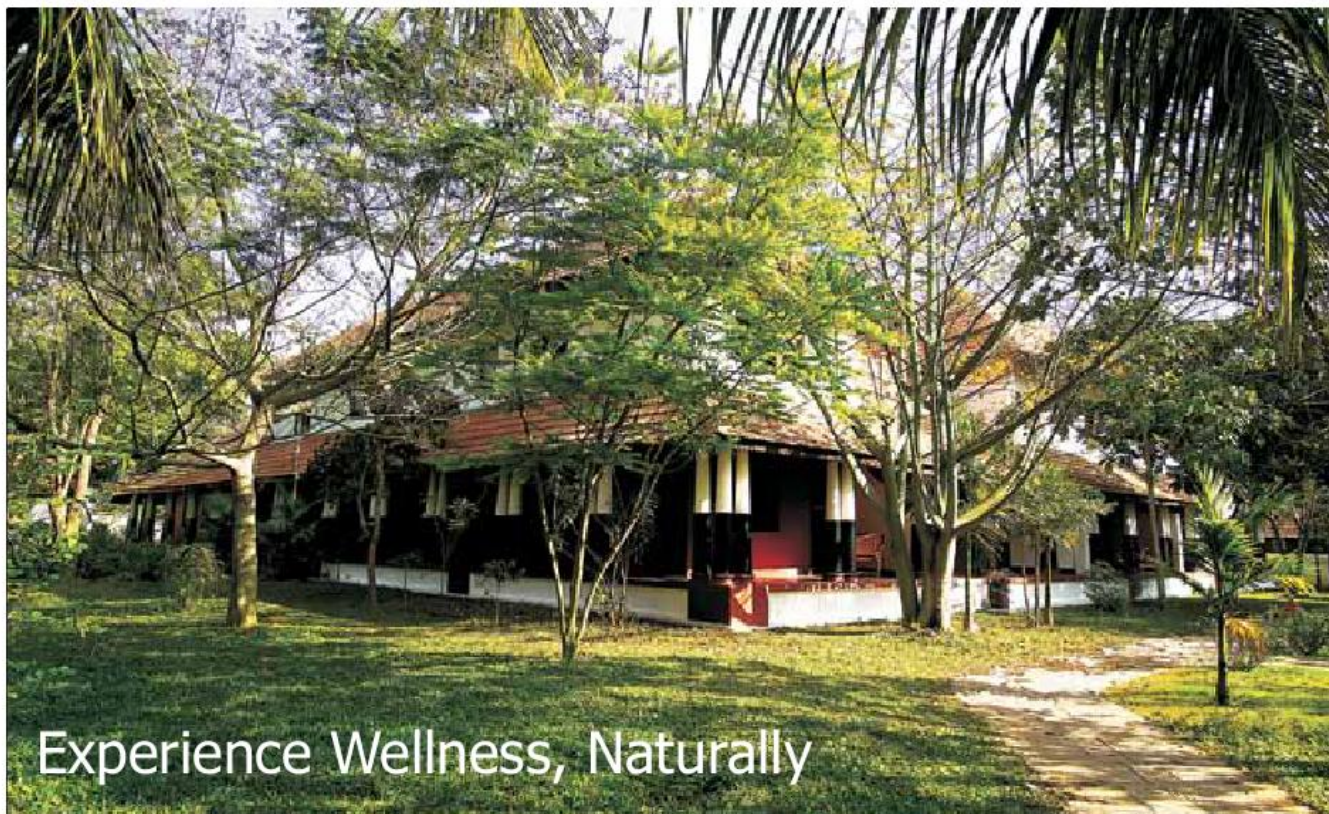
It's generally believed that Ayurveda treatments require a person to stick to a purely vegetarian diet. But this is a misconception.

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Sandal wood is considered the epitome of excellence, which impregnates with fragrance even the axe that attacks it.





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HEALING PRODUCTS

Hundreds of ayurveda herbs have been continuously used for more than five thousand years in the Indian subcontinent. These time-tested herb formulas have been used at KAL's manufacturing facility where over 350 classical and proprietary ayurveda medicines are formulated. We offer a full range of ayurveda lifestyle products, including health supplements, skin and beauty care products. Our products are classified into Classical and Proprietary.

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Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare S Gandhiselvan speaks after inaugurating the CCRAS-Sreedhareeyam Ayurvedic Ophthalmic Treatment and Research Facility, in New Delhi on October 26, 2010.

Arogya in Himachal

The government of Himachal Pradesh is considering setting up of an Ayurveda University. Chief Minister P K Dhumal said the government would be spending Rs 48 crore on the infrastructure upgradation and providing Ayurvedic medicine in 300 Ayurvedic health centres in the State. Inaugurating the three-day 'Arogya' organised by AYUSH Department and the Ayurveda department of the State at Una on September 26, he said the senior citizens were being provided separate OPD facilities in all the Ayurvedic hospitals of the State. He added that during period of 2008-2010, 49 free health check-up camps had been organised in which 7000 senior citizens had been benefited.

The Chief Minister said that Panchakarma centres had been increased from six to sixteen in the

State and 27 Ayurveda hospitals had been brought under National Health Mission.

Ayurveda telemedicine centre in Patna

A telemedicine centre for Ayurveda is set up at the Patna Govt. Ayurvedic College covering four different centres in the district of Nalanda. Similarly a tele homoeopathic medicine unit has been set up in Tripura in collaboration with Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) and the National Institute of Homoeopathy (NIH), Kolkata. The centres have been receiving enthusiastic support from the public.

Bill to make emergency medical care mandatory

The Clinical Establishment (Registration and Regulation) Bill, at

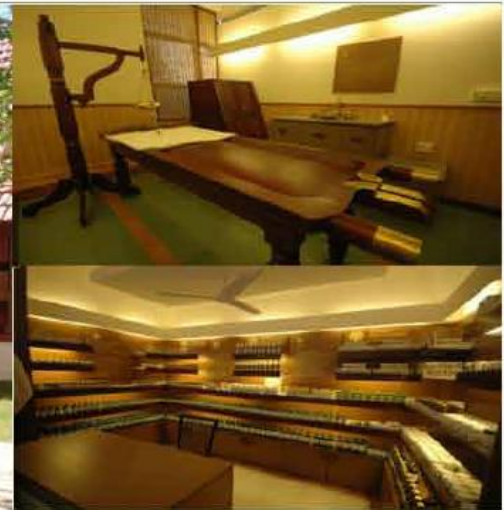
present before Parliament, seeks to bring uniformity in the healthcare delivery by making registration of all clinical establishments mandatory and prescribing enhanced penalty for defaulters. Under provisions of the Bill, the clinical establishments would include hospitals, maternity homes, nursing homes, dispensaries, clinics and similar facilities with beds that offer diagnosis, treatment or care for illness or injury or pregnancy in any recognised system of medicine such as Allopathy, Yoga, Naturopathy, Ayurveda, Homoeopathy, Siddha and Unani. It also includes any laboratory which offers pathological, bacteriological, genetic, radiological, chemical, biological and other diagnostic or investigative services. The Bill also makes it mandatory for all clinical establishments to provide medical care and treatment to stabilise any person in an emergency condition. The registering authority can impose a fine up to Rs 5 lakh on the erring establishment.

NRHM scheme for AYUSH

The Department of AYUSH is implementing a scheme called 'Hospitals & Dispensaries for mainstreaming of AYUSH under National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)' with a total outlay of Rs 625 crore under the Eleventh Five Year Plan. The Scheme was approved by the Cabinet in the last financial year. Against the outlay of Rs 625 crore, the expenditure so far has been Rs 640 crores. A proposal for increasing the Plan allocation to Rs 1000 crore has been forwarded to the Dept. of Expenditure with the recommendation of the Planning Commission.



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AyurVAID bags first NABH certification

Bengaluru-based AyurVAID Hospital has bagged the first NABH accreditation for Ayurveda hospitals in the country. Hospital CEO Rajiv Vasudevan received the certificate from Union Minister of State for Health S Gandhiselvan at function on October 26. The hospital was evaluated on the basis of benchmarks laid down in the form of 10 chapters, 94 standards and 489 objective elements. The standards focus on all aspects of service delivery like patient rights and education, infection control practices, trained and experienced staff, infrastructure and environment safety. The accreditation standards provide framework for improving quality and safety of patient care in the AYUSH hospitals. The multispecialty hospital offers comprehensive Kerala style Ayurveda medical care for serious chronic ailments.

Global meet on traditional foods

Pondicherry will host the first International Conference on Traditional Foods, which will focus on various aspects of production, processing and professionalisation of traditional foods with a scientific temper. As many as 650 delegates, comprising researchers, academicians, entrepreneurs from food industries, equipment manufacturers and farmers will attend the three-day event, which begins on December 1. They will discuss recent trends of research, technology and market developments, scientific developments and future potential of traditional foods. Details can be had from www.pondiuni.edu.in/events/ictf2010/

BHU to have modern Ayurveda lab

In a big boost to Ayurveda research in the country, the Dravyaguna department of Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, is setting up a state-of-the art research lab. The lab will have with highly sophis-

ticated equipment including atomic absorption spectro-photometer (for detection of heavy metals in herbal preparations) and HPLC (for establishing authenticity of Ayurvedic drugs and herbal preparations). The lab would help identify newer indications in older Ayurvedic drugs or herbal preparations besides acting as guidance and reference tool for the research scholars and faculty members.

Call for closer ties between Ayurveda, allopathy

Noted US clinical rheumatologist Dr Gopal Bashist has called for developing a symbiotic relationship between traditional and modern medicine systems where both can mutually benefit and grow together with support from each other. Delivering a lecture on 'exploring a global model of integrative medicine' at Banaras Hindu University, he said Ayurveda and allopathy are like two legs of the body system that cannot move when tied together. "Instead of talking

about integration of these medicine systems, efforts should be made to develop a symbiotic relationship between them," he said.

Ayurveda effective in renal failure: study

There is some good news for patients of renal failure and coronary heart blocks from the world of Ayurveda. According to a study conducted at the PD Patel Ayurvedic Hospital in Nadiad, Gujarat, Ayurveda coupled with healthy and controlled diet, has helped postpone dialysis and renal transplants. According to As per Prof. SN Gupta, the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital, in as many as 2000 cases of renal failure, the bouquet of Ayurvedic medicines, medicated enemas and a restricted diet coupled with a healthy lifestyle has postponed dialysis and renal transplant from four years to life-long postponement. Ayurvedic medicines such as Punarnava, Shilajeet and Koksavadi Guggul have been used in the treatment.



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WORLD AYURVEDA CONGRESS, BENGALURU

The vibrant face

Series of programmes, interactive sessions to propagate
Ayurveda traditions

The fourth World Ayurveda Congress, scheduled to be held from December 9 to 13 in Bengaluru, promises to be a unique event bringing together the various streams of Ayurveda and showcasing its rich heritage to the world. The series of programmes being organised as part of the expo has captured the spirit of the theme of the biennial event: 'Ayurveda for All'.

It is expected that around 4,000 delegates, of which 300 are international delegates from 34 countries, will attend the event. Its previous editions took place in Kochi (2002), Pune (2006) and Jaipur (2008).

Students, Ayurveda practitioners, traditional healers, academics, research scientists, policy makers, industry, cultivators and collectors of medicinal plants, agricultural and forestry experts and international buyers are expected to attend the meet.

Several interactive and business sessions have been organised as part of the event. They include:

Meet of gurus with experts in modern sciences

The unique and ancient way of Indian teaching in which the 'guru' (teacher) transfers knowledge to the 'shishya' (student) over a period of time will be recreated at WAC.

The Congress brings together the selected 'gurus' and their 'shishyas' to meet with the experts of modern education and sciences at the expo with a view to enriching the teaching skills of 'gurus' and orient both 'gurus' and 'shishyas' towards keeping the tradition alive.

Satellite Seminars

Two-day satellite seminars aimed at creating general awareness about the Congress and introducing new concepts along with the basic philosophy to students are organised as a run-up to WAC. Of the 10 such national seminars planned, 6 have been successfully completed in Patna (Bihar), Bathinda (Punjab), Agartala (Tripura), Guwahati (Assam), Bhubaneswar (Orissa), and Raipur (Chhattisgarh). Over 2,500 students are expected to participate in these satellite seminars.

Students' Interaction Forum

The convergence of thousands of thinkers and practitioners of Ayurveda offers a unique opportunity for students of this science to listen to, interact with and learn from these leaders. NASYA (National Ayurveda Students and Youth Association) will identify 1,200 students of Ayurveda across the nation who have the potential to become future ambassadors of Ayurveda. NASYA

will facilitate direct interaction of these students with Ayurveda experts on matters of academia and curriculum.

Traditional healer's meet

The WAC has organised a meeting of hundreds of practitioners of traditional healing from the north-eastern and tribal regions which have rich and unique traditions in healthcare. The local healers in these regions are knowledge banks of regional flora and practices. The practitioners will demonstrate not only their skills but also exhibit their products at the programme. The Congress will also arrange group discussions and exclusive seminars to facilitate exchange of local knowledge and skill.

Buyer-seller meet

The WAC has partnered with Pharmexcil, (Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, to open up and bring the international market to India. Pharmexcil, in association with the Department of AYUSH, will organise a global 'Buyer-Seller Meet', from December 11 to 13, 2010, at Bengaluru. The 3-day meet aims at, among others, establishing the scientific validity of Ayurveda to global food and drug authorities.



KTM sells Kerala tourism well

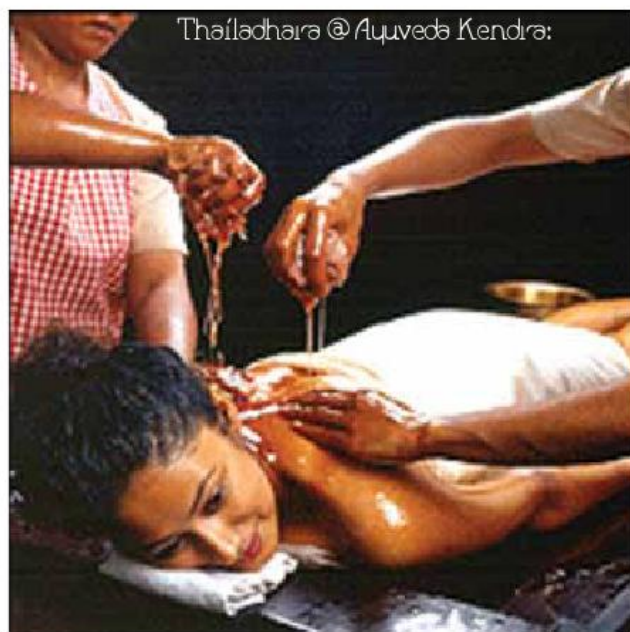
The fourth edition of Kerala Travel Mart (KTM), the biggest travel mart in India, reiterated the unrivalled position Kerala holds in the world

tourism industry.

Held from September 23 to 26 at Bolghatty Palace hotel in Kochi, the event was marked by great participa-

tion by international and national players in the tourism industry. As many as 262 international and 781 national buyers attended the Mart.

The business sessions at the meet offered a structured networking opportunity to bring maximum number of introductions for both buyers and sellers. Participants were able to meet people, make contacts and generate business ideas in short sessions. Chief Justice Jasti Chelameswar of the Kerala High Court inaugurated the meet. The Chief Justice said India's tourism potential was immense but it was not being sufficiently leveraged and there was a need to improve the infrastructure to promote tourism. Presiding over the function KTDC chairman Cherian Philip said that the annual turnover of tourism is now around Rs13,000 crore and tourism has become an important segment of Kerala economy.



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Dr. Lathika, who has an experience of over 16 years, has been an authorised medical officer with the Indian Space Research Organisation since 2001. She is medical consultant at many government and private institutions, and founder of Sarathy Ayurveda Hospital, Aluva.

When the skin erupts

Ayurveda has grouped psoriasis among diseases difficult to treat and cure. However, a determined approach, both from the physician and the patient, can help to return to normal life

Scores of patients the world over suffer from psoriasis which Ayurveda puts under the category of *kushtham*, one of the *mahāroga*s (diseases difficult to cure). This condition is due to severe vitiation of *Vāta* and *Kapha*.

Psoriasis is an inflammatory skin disorder that causes redness in thickened areas with silvery scales, most often on the scalp, elbows, knees and lower back. Sometimes, it affects the whole body. It is not contagious, but it is sometimes transmitted genetically. Some people develop psoriatic arthritis that causes inflammation of the joints.

Causes and symptoms

It could begin with small elevated spots on the skin similar to that of mosquito bite, with a little bit of scaling. This may disappear with the application of ointments, but may come back after a short gap. By then, it would have spread to the whole body and the eruptions might have aggravated. Some patients also develop edema on the face and the limbs.

In severe cases, the hair, mous-

tache and eyebrows would fall off. Red patches with silvery scales appear, usually on the knees, elbows and scalp. Minute bleeding spots may be seen on forcible removal of scales.

V.K. Sasi, a 55-year-old government employee from Njarakkal, Ernakulam, came to me complaining of patchy skin lesions with itching, scaling and redness all over the body and discolouration in certain areas. This gradually increased and spread all over the body, including on the face, scalp and sole. He had been suffering for 16 months. He had the same problem 18 years ago and had got temporary relief with allopathic treatment. But the condition relapsed in the past few years, and the patient was suffering physically as well as mentally. He had insomnia and depression too.

The symptoms were poor sweating, itching, discolouration on the face and body and scaly lesions. His lipid profile and random blood sugar levels were normal. The liver function tests showed elevated SGOT and SGPT levels.

The patient was of Vata-Pitha

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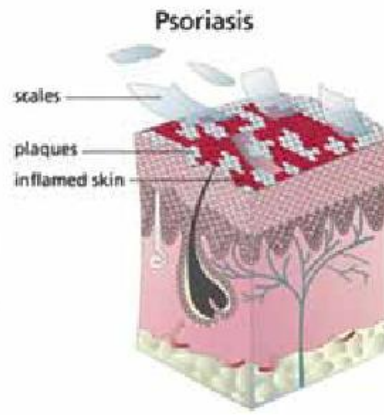
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constitution. The vitiated *dosha* was Vata-Kapha. Dooshyas associated with the condition were blood (*raktha*), marrow (*majja*) and bone (*asthi*). His digestive fire was weak (*manda*), and there were toxins (*ama dosha*) in the body. I could diagnose it as psoriasis (*Kitibha Kushtha*).

I started treatment with *shaddhāraṇa choorṇam* for detoxification (*ama-pachana*). For correcting liver function, *patolakaturohinyādi kwātha* was given, along with *ārogyavardhini vati* and *mānasamithraṇ vatakaṇ*.

Liver function readings were within normal limits in 10 days. He was then given *vilwādi gu-likā* for detoxification, along with *mahāthikthaka* and *āragwdhādi kwātham*. *Haridrākhaṇḍam* gave symptomatic relief.

Purification (*śodhana*) therapy was the important phase of treatment. It started with ingestion of medicated oil (*snehapānaṇ*) with *kalyāṇaka ghṛtham* for physical and mental well-being, followed by mild sweating (*swedanam*).

Enema (*virechanam*) with *avip-athy choorṇam* (medicated powder) was done followed by balancing or pacifying therapy (*śamana chikith-sa*). In *samana* therapy, a special diet that contradicts qualities of the increased *dosha* is prescribed. This helps in suppressing or balancing the aggravated *doshas*. Pouring of medicated buttermilk over the body (*thakra dhāra*) and pouring of herb-

The patient complained of patchy skin lesions with itching, scaling and redness all over the body and discolouration in certain areas

al decoctions (*kashāya dhāra*) were the next procedures.

With these treatments, the scaling reduced, but the discolouration persisted. The patient's sleeping habits became normal.

In the last phase of the treatment, continuous pouring of medicated liquids (*sekaṇ with muriveṇṇa*) and a herbal pack over the head (*thala pothichil*) were done to make the patient more confident and get normal skin appearance.

With these treatments, he became normal and left the hospital with a smiling face. As follow-up, I advised him to continue *kwātham* and *āragwadha mahāthikthakaṇ ghṛtham with rasamānikyaṇ* 20 mg for one month. His condition is almost normal now. For more than one year, there has been no further relapse of the skin condition.





For Serefa, it was like prayer. She surrendered completely and was cured.

Serefa closed her eyes as Vijaya massaged the warm golden oil into her back in slow, rhythmic movements.

Around her, flowers danced. The smell of the oil and the ethereal fragrance of the incense were soothing.

This was the last day of the fourteen-day ayurvedic holiday. Fourteen delightful days of rejuvenating regimens, medicated baths and herbal diets. Fourteen days that wiped away a five-year-old backache. Put the confidence back in her stride.

The dance back in her limbs. Youth back into her life. And a smile back on her lips. As Serefa packed her bags she knew that Kerala had become an integral part of her life, where she would return year after year to revitalize her body, mind and soul.

STARK, India 4775

Serefa Malamati and her husband John Rowan have been experiencing ayurveda in Kerala regularly for the last seven years. Natives of Greece, they now live in the United Kingdom.

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kerala
God's Own Country

Defying ethical norms?

Ayurveda definitely got a boost with the advent of health tourism. We too believe in its goodness, and in its ability to bring medical relief to many who had almost lost hope.

But of late, some players in the field are making unrealistic claims in the name of the ancient science and trying to sell their products. They are cashing in on the people's blind faith in Ayurveda, and their lack of awareness of its basic principles. It is a pity that big media houses carry such advertisements, and look the other way while their readers/viewers get cheated. It's a case of media-industry nexus. No one should be allowed to mislead people in the name of a science which is our heritage.

We are initiating a discussion on the ethics and legality of this new trend in advertisements.

We encourage our readers -- Ayurveda practitioners, researchers, students, manufacturers and service providers -- to join us in this campaign against the unscrupulous elements who are out to spoil the name of Ayurveda, the science of LIFE.

- Editor



Dr. C R Agnivesh



It seems that life is a commodity that can be purchased at a cost. Advertisements of Ayurveda products are exploiting our faith in the ancient science and our desire to lead a healthier and happier life endowed with youth and beauty. We are being looted by the money-minded who make promises they know they can never fulfill.

Any ethical business should result in profit for the seller as well as the buyer. Unfortunately, in the case of Ayurvedic products, the buyer ends up being the loser on most occasions. Worse, the perpetrators of

such fraud escape legal action citing loopholes in the law.

Things have come to such a pass mainly because of people's ignorance of the principles of Ayurveda. They have wrong notions too, thanks to the sellers.

For instance, Ayurveda is generally considered to be herbal. But actually, it is not. Ayurveda uses herbs, minerals and drugs of animal origin. For example, the *kastooryadi* pill contains musk which is of animal origin. It also contains civet musk, a drug of animal origin, and minerals such as red oxide, magnetic ore,



Ayurveda for sale

borax, red arsenic (realgar or arsenic disulphide), antimony sulfide and cinnabar (mercuric sulfide). It also contains poisonous herbs such as aconite (Indian aconite, monk's hood = *Aconitum napellus* Linn. = *A. ferox* Wall.)

It is generally believed that all Ayurvedic medicines are safe. Any medicine can be safe only if it is applied in a safe manner. The condition of a patient, his/her age, strength, stage of the disease, mode of application, time of administration, additives used, dosage, etc., are to be taken into consideration

before prescribing medicines. For this, you need the services of a physician.

No guidelines are followed when one buys medicines over the counter. Some say such medicines do not create any problems. If so, it simply means that it is not a proper medicine, that it is bland enough to be inert.

A medicine is a powerful material targeted at the human body and mind to amend the physiology, psychology and pathology. Hence it should be active. If not, it is bland and not fit to be considered as a drug.

Over-the-counter products are not a possibility in Ayurveda if we go strictly by the principles. However, we have a lot of them in the market as the buyers are ignorant of the principles of Ayurveda and treatment procedures.

The promise of miraculous remedies is just a tool to increase sales. Most of the advertisements are illegal, but the culprits often escape prosecution with the help of loopholes in the law. The fact remains that most of these advertisements are unethical as they are primarily intended to cheat the public.

Some advertisers claim that they have proved the efficacy of their products through research. Ayurvedic research is done at the academic and the industrial levels. Academic research does not always follow strict norms followed elsewhere, and industrial researches sometimes produce questionable results.

I have noticed one irrefutable fact about Ayurvedic research. It follows modern or western research lines which are incompatible with Ayurvedic ideas which are concepts, defying objective evaluation.

Tall claims are being made by companies. A five-year old firm claims that it is backed by the tradition of many centuries. But Ayurveda is part of our common heritage.

Many over-the-counter products do not have any basis in Ayurveda. For instance, advertisements being flashed in the media project salt as being good for treating obesity. While talking about the properties of salty substances (*Ashtāṅga Hṛdaya Sootrasthāna* chapter 10, verse 4), there is no mention of their ability to reduce fat. Many manufacturers claim that they are using not common salt, but rock salt (*śaindhava lavaṇa*.) which has medicinal properties.

Rock salt is nothing but common salt mined from the earth. People think that rock salt is potassium chloride. It is true that there is some potassium chloride in it as an impurity. This is there in common salt too.

Moreover, rock salt contains many other impurities such as sand and mud. Any authentic book on drugs will tell you that rock salt is impure sodium chloride. The properties of rock salt mentioned in Ayurvedic treatises do not state that it will reduce fat (A.H.Soo.Ch.6.144).

Also, mining of rock salt is minimal now. What is marketed as rock salt is made by adding impurities to industrially produced sodium chloride and pressing it to form rocky

masses. If at all rock salt has some special property, the market sample of rock salt will not have any.

In Ayurveda, there is mention of medicating oil with rock salt. The product is known as *saindhavādi* oil. There are two types of this oil -- one used for treating fistula (*bha-gandara*) and the other for cervical lymphadenopathy (*apaci*). None of these will reduce fat.

Another instance of applying salted oil on the body is for treating asthma and hiccups. This is done to prepare a patient for vomiting. The oil is applied on the body and the patient subjected to sweating by fomentation or sudation. This is to detach mucous and bring it to the gastro-intestinal tract. After sudation, he/she is given meat soup or curd to enable proper detachment of the mucous. Vomiting is then induced to eliminate the dislodged mucous. In the oil sold over the counter, this elaborate procedure is not even mentioned.

Bhaishajya Ratnāvali of Govinda Dasa written in the 19th century is the latest authentic treatise on Ayurveda. It has a separate chapter on obesity or diseases due to fat (*medo-roga-adhikāra*). The book prescribes certain formulations to reduce fat, but none of these contain rock salt.

Ashtāṅga Hṛdaya Sootrasthāna (chapter 14, verses 21 to 28) deals with the treatment of obesity. But here too, there is no mention of rock salt. All the drugs mentioned in the text are for oral consumption, not for external application.

The oils containing salt that are sold over the counter do not have any scientific basis. They seem to be innovations by manufacturers. Since these formulations have no basis in Ayurveda, the manufacturers should have conducted research to prove the efficacy and safety of the products. But they do not provide any information to this effect. All they do is to repeatedly vouch that the product is Ayurvedic.

Oil, rock salt and some of the other ingredients used in these formulations may be used in Ayurveda, but not for reducing obesity. Hence these products are not Ayurvedic.

Many medicines sold as allopathic drugs earlier are now being sold as Ayurvedic drugs. They are sold not only in drug stores but also even in pan shops. The same is the case with over-the-counter "Ayurveda" products. The manufacturers proudly announce that their products are available in modern drug stores, Ayurvedic drug stores and even in departmental stores. Selling medicines in departmental stores is illegal and unethical.

Ayurveda texts have laid down the rules for manufacture and sales of medicines. *Charaka Saṁhita* permits the study of Ayurveda by the business class (*vaiśya*) for professional purposes. In *Rasa-ratna-samuchaya*, a book on medicinal chemistry written in the 13th century, rules are laid down regarding the profit to be taken by the manufacturer and the commission to be granted to the physician when he purchases medicines for his patients. Such regulations are mentioned in Kautilya's *Arthasāstra* too. This indicates that manufacture of medicines for sales is legal.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Kerala witnessed a major change in the field of Ayurveda. Till then, Ayurvedic formulations were tailor made, excepting certain emergency medicines in the form of pills and fermented products. But gradually, Ayurvedic medicines, including formulations with short shelf life, were made available in ready-to-use format. This ultimately led to production of medicines without any scientific basis. In some cases, it has even created artificial demand.

The writer is Principal, Nangelil Ayurveda Medical College, Kerala, and Editor-in-Chief of Kerala Ayurveda Vaidyam. He can be contacted at 092492 20187

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critique

CORAL REEF, ANDAMANS

VISITOR'S DIARY

WITH A PASSION FOR AYURVEDA



Peter Waldner from Germany is a teacher and performer of keyboard instruments such as organ, harpsichord, virginal, spinet, clavichord and fortepiano. Music and travel were his passions. His visits to Kerala added two more things to the list -- Ayurveda and Yoga.

"I had thought of Ayurveda as nothing more than some beauty therapy for women. But my perception changed completely after I attended a three-day Ayurveda and Yoga camp in Vienna six years ago. It refreshed my body and mind, and Yoga lessons enlightened me.

My first two visits in search of Ayurveda treatments were to Sri Lanka. I first came to Kerala in 2006. The greenery, the backwaters, the elephants and a friendly people... I realised why some call it God's Own Country. Kerala's atmosphere itself has a natural healing effect. When I came here last year, I stayed at a resort in Palakkad. A Kashmiri friend told me about a centre of the Nagarjuna Ayurvedic

Centre at Kalady. So this time I decided to come here. I feel very much at home at the centre. I consider Ayurveda as a branch of preventive medicine, and firmly believe in the healing power of herbs. I don't have any health problem now, and I normally opt for a course in *pancha karma*. As it is a deep cleansing process, it will help me stay healthy. Every year, I would like to re-energise myself and enjoy the healing power of Mother Nature through Ayurveda. I would like to explore your rich music tradition too. In the West, life is so fast and people long to relax. For me, Ayurveda and yoga are the best options. There is an upsurge in the quest for holism the world over. I feel Kerala has much to do in this area."

When health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot become manifest, strength cannot be exerted, wealth is useless and reason is powerless.

-Herophilus, 300 B.C.

The competent physician, before he attempts to give medicine to the patient, makes himself acquainted not only with the disease, but also with the habits and constitution of the sick man.

-Cicero

The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease.

-Thomas Edison, Inventor

It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has...let thy food be thy medicine and thy medicine thy food.

-Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.)

The treatments themselves do not 'cure' the condition; they simply restore the body's self-healing ability.

-Leon Chaitow, N.D., D.O.

Health is the proper relationship between microcosm, which is man, and the macrocosm, which is the universe. Disease is a disruption of this relationship.

-Dr. Yeshe Donden, physician to the Dalai Lama



SUDARSHANAM NETRALAYA NETRA CHIKILSALAYAM

Ayurvedic Eye Clinic



Dr B G Gokullan

BAMS, FAIP(U.S.A), FCRY(Ind), Chief Physician / CEO
Guru-Netra Chikilsa - R.A.V, Govt. of India - New Delhi.

The Sudarshanam Netra Chikilsalayam, Thiruvalla, established in 1993 by Dr. B.G. Gokullan, holds a pre-eminent position in the field of Ayurvedic eye treatment. The hospital is unique in that it, apart from offering traditional treatment modes, puts to use modern diagnostic methods.

The centre provides treatment for eye ailments that may not be cured exclusively through surgery, such as

- Glaucoma
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Short sight in children
- Sinus-related eye ailments
- Allergy-related diseases
- Defects in the pupil
- Computer vision syndrome

Panchakarma as well as 'karkidaka'(monsoon) health therapies are offered here.

Dr Chitra Rajan, BAMS
Senior Physician



Tarpana

Dr. Gokullan has been trained in modern ophthalmic care at Sankara Netralaya, Chennai.

He has received lifetime fellowship from US-based Ashoka Innovators For The Public. He has also implemented 'Project CRY Suraksha' meant for eye care among schoolchildren. The Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidya Peeth (RAV) of the Union Government has selected him as 'guru' in recognition to his expertise and contributions to Ayurvedic ophthalmology.

SUDARSHANAM

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But sometimes fate has it that they sustain injuries. Treatments in modern medicine are often helpless.

But do not lose hope, yet. Daisman Ayurkendra, Sports Medicine & Nutrition Research Centre, with its nuanced approach of combining India's ancient medical science and yoga, has become a beacon of

hope for hundreds of sportspersons who were on the verge of leaving their chosen field.

Daisman is India's first and only Ayurvedic sports medicine injury management and rehabilitation centre. Our doctors are specialised in sports medicine, sports injury management and rehabilitation. The services of sports physiotherapists, fitness trainers, sports nutritionists and sports psychologists are also available here.

We are the only centre in India that has treated more than 7,000 cases of injuries to sportspersons

including national and international athletes. Many medal winners of the Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games have been successfully treated by us.

Our centre has conducted official training programme for the Sports Authority of India (SAI), and organised more than 100 sports medicine workshops across the country.

We were the first ones in Asia to develop a body composition analysis software. Apart from treating bone and spine disorders, fractures, etc., we also offer orthopedic rehabilitation.

Sports injuries

We specialise in the management of sports injuries like meniscal tear, ligament tear, rotator cuff tear, hamstring tear, groin injury, shin pain, calf muscle strain, plantar fasciitis, unknown foot pain, mid foot pain of athletes, thigh injuries (quadriceps), shoulder dislocations, ankle sprain grade I, II and III, ankle fracture, wrist injuries, triangular fibrous cartilage tear, muscle imbalance, back pain, disc prolapse, neck pain, achilles tendonitis, patellar dislocation, fracture of fore arm, ankle, lower leg (conservative treatment), chronic muscle injuries, chronic shoulder injuries and myofascial pain.



Dr. Arshad P.

BAMS (Kottakkal)

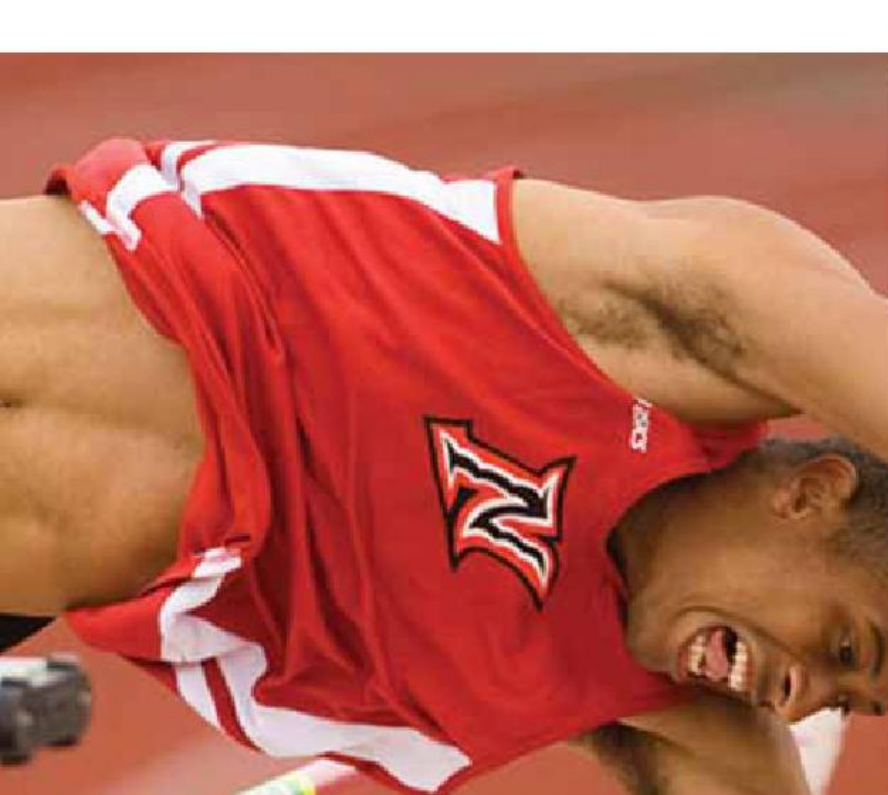
PG Dip. SPSN (Apollo Hospital Hyderabad)

CSM (International Olympic Committee- IOC)

TPDC (Asian Federation of Sports medicine)

Ayurvedic sports medicine consultant for Sports Authority of India (SAI)

Sports medicine & sports trauma specialist



Back to the pole, thanks to Daisman



Dija Chandran, national record holder in pole vault, is the beneficiary of the nuanced approach of Daisman Clinic towards sports injuries.

Daughter of Chandran, Vazhikkada-vu, Nilambur Via, Malappuram district, Kerala, Dija was suffering from static lower back pain for one year. She started getting slight back pain during practice. Later, it aggravated while sitting and standing. She consulted many doctors at superspeciality hospitals in Kerala and Coimbatore. Many orthopedic surgeons did not have an answer to her problem. They asked her to stop sports activities and take rest. She was told about the option of surgery in case of the problem getting worse. Finally, one of the orthopaedic surgeons told her about their limitation in treating her kind of condition, and referred her to us.

We combined Ayurveda treatment procedures and Yoga to treat her. The condition of the patient was quite promising after two months. She was able to sit and bend the spine without pain, and started doing sports-specific exercises.

After five months, she remarkably improved and was totally pain free while doing almost all activities. She went on to win the gold medal in pole vault by creating a personal record of 3.30 metres.

What's unique about Daisman

Combining Ayurveda and Yoga gives excellent results

The unique approach to the management of sports injuries that combines Ayurveda, physiotherapy and Yoga has attained excellent results in various cases.

We have successfully treated 7,000 cases including 276 national-level and more than 800 State-level athletes. Management of sports injuries and rehabilitation are to be carried out with great care and responsibility as an athlete is a national asset.

The treatment methods at our centre include Ayurvedic medication, Marma therapy, oil massage, range of motion exercises, strength training, proprioception, conditioning, core stabilisation along with physiotherapy modalities, muscle stimulators, bandaging with herbal combinations (upanaha swedha), deep heat therapies (with oil, stone, herbal leaves, dried herbal powder, sand and salt bag), etc.

Expert knowledge in modern sports medicine, training modalities, periodisation, biomechanics, exercise physiology, kinesiology, sports physiotherapy and sports nutrition is essential for the management and rehabilitation of injured sportspersons.

Many of the treatment modalities adopted for sports injuries are very specific. Any faulty training or exercise may adversely affect a sportsperson's career. The treatment mode should be chosen scientifically based on the nature of the sport.



Daisman Ayurkendra, Sports Medicine & Nutrition Research Centre

Kuruppath, Kondotty, Malappuram

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www.daisman.com

Looking

Contributors:



Dr B G Gokullan

Founder and Chief Physician of Sudarshanam Netra Chikitsalayam, Thiruvalla, Dr Gokullan has an experience of over 20 years. A pioneer in Ayurvedic eye care, Dr Gokullan, Graduated in Ayurveda from the Ayurveda College, Coimbatore. After receiving extensive training in traditional ophthalmology, he underwent an intensive training at Sankara Netralaya, in Chennai, in modern ophthalmology. For more details: www.netrafoundation.com



Dr Prasad M

Dr. Prasad, Chief physician and Director of Sunetri Ayurvedashram, Thrissur, is one among the few practitioners in Kerala working in the speciality of Shalakyatantra. He had his BAMS (Ayurvedacharya) from Vaidyaratnam Ayurveda college, Thrissur; and MD (Ay.) (Ayurveda Vachaspathi) from Govt Ayurveda college, Thiruvananthapuram. He is a direct disciple of the renowned Acharya Vaidyabhooshanam K. Raghavan Thrumulpad. He can be contacted at: sunethriayurveda@gmail.com



Dr Nishanth Gopinath (BAMS, DYN)

Graduated from Rajiv Gandhi University of Health sciences Bangalore, Dr Nishanth started his career six years back and is presently working as Asst. Manager (Products), Nagarjuna Herbal Concentrates Ltd.

into the eye

Jayadevan A P

"Na peedayeth indhriyāṇi na cha ethānyathilālayeth"

"Do not strain your sense organs too much nor rest them too much"

Our eyes, being the most vital and vulnerable part of the body, are easily susceptible to the adverse effects of stress, strain, smoke, dust, ultraviolet radiation and improper diet. But a little bit of care can go a long way in helping us maintain good vision. Ayurveda has a set of eye-catching solutions.

Netra chikitsa (eye treatment) is not an independent branch in Ayurveda. It forms a part of *śālākyaatanthra* which deals with etiology, diagnosis and management of diseases affecting parts of the body above the neck. However, in practice, *netra chikitsa* represents a major share of *śālākyaatanthra*. This could be due to the importance given to eyes as an *indriya* (sense organ).

Ayurveda adopts a holistic approach and views a person as a whole. According to it, any disease reflects an imbalance in *dosha* (humour) in the body. Hence a physician first finds out which *dosha* is aggravated, and then decide the treatment that can correct the imbalance, thereby restoring health.

This is true of eye diseases too. Among the five different kinds of Pitha, it is *āllochaka pitha* which is the predominant *dosha* in the eyes; this helps in maintaining eyesight. Therefore, it is important to maintain proper balance of Pitha *dosha*

through diet and regimen.

Diseases

Ashtāṅgahr̥daya classifies eye diseases on the basis of the parts involved -- *varthma roga* (lids), *sandhi roga* (canthus, limbus), *sitha roga* (sclera), *asitha roga* (cornea), *dṛṣṭhi roga* (refractive pathway up to the retina and higher centres) and *sarvākshi roga* (the entire eye). It also carries a detailed description of the diagnosis and management of common eye diseases.

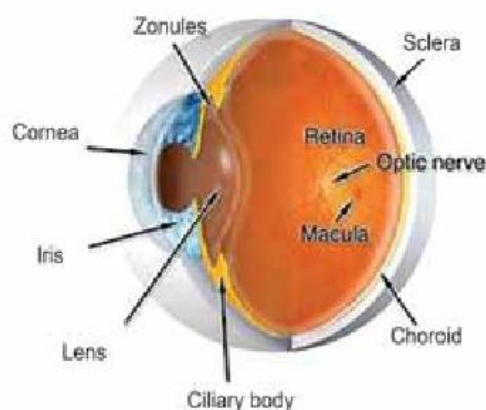
Retinitis pigmentosa refers to a set of inherited eye diseases that cause degeneration of photoreceptor cells in the retina, causing progressive vision loss.

Macular degeneration or age-related macular degeneration is a leading cause of vision loss above the age of 60. It destroys sharp, central vision.

Glaucoma is caused by increased intraocular pressure (IOP) resulting from either malformation or malfunction of the eye's drainage structures. If left untreated, an elevated IOP can cause irreversible damage to the optic nerve and retinal fibres resulting in progressive, permanent loss of vision.

Retinal detachment is a serious condition that occurs when the retina becomes separated from its underlying supportive tissue. The retina cannot function when these layers are detached. Unless it is re-attached soon, there could be permanent vision loss. Its early symptoms include spots, floaters and flashes of light. Vision may be-

Normal Eye Anatomy



For computer users



Spending long hours in front of television or computers can cause many vision-related problems. And if you are a computer professional, you can't escape this situation. People tend to blink less while working on a computer, and this can lead to dry eyes. Here are a few eye care tips:

- When at work, keep the computer at arm's length from the eyes, at about 20 degrees below eye level.
- After every 20 to 30 minutes of work, look at a distant object and blink several times. This will help you to focus better.
- Exercise your eyes at frequent intervals. All you need to do is just blink several times, then close your eyes and roll the eyeballs clockwise and anti-clockwise. While doing this, inhale and exhale slowly. Open your eyes slowly after doing this.
- Rub your palms against each other till they become warm. Cover your eyes with the palms for about a minute. This will have a soothing effect on your eyes.
- Splashing water on your face during breaks can keep you refreshed. This also helps in cooling your eyes.
- A few minutes of walk during breaks will refresh your body and mind. Walking also increases blood supply to your eyes.
- Fix an anti-glare screen on your monitor or use anti-glare glasses while working on computers. Also, position the monitor and lights in such a way that glare is minimum.

come blurred.

Keratoconus: Often appearing in the teens or early twenties, keratoconus is a progressive disease in which the normally round cornea becomes thin and begins to bulge into a cone-like shape. This deflects light as it enters the eye, causing distorted vision.

Myopic degeneration: Degenerative myopia is the seventh leading cause of blindness. This can start at birth, but it most often manifests during pre-teen years. It is believed to be hereditary.

Hyperaemia retinae happens due to congestion of blood in the retina. Normally, the size of arteries is 3/4 that of veins. If there is any congestion, the size of veins and arteries will change.

Diabetic retinopathy: It is a common complication in diabetic patients that can lead to blindness. Those with a history of diabetes for more than 10 years are more susceptible to the disease. It is caused by changes in the blood vessels of the retina, light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye. In some patients, the blood vessels may have swollen and leaked fluid, while in others, abnormal new blood vessels may have grown on the surface of the retina.

Distorted metabolism, a result of diabetes, denatures walls of the blood vessels, causing changes in blood flow to the retina. As the retina runs short of sufficient blood supply, it initiates a series of changes. In the early stages, i.e., background retinopathy, the visual symptoms may not be that significant. The next stage is proliferative retinopathy, in which the body creates new blood vessels to supply the starving retina. These new vessels are weak, and are highly susceptible to rupture, causing bleeding. This may keep happening, threatening vision and creating a series of other complications like glaucoma.

Treatment

The modern solution for a person having refractive errors is a pair of "powerful" glasses. But Ayurveda takes a different approach. It sees the functioning of the eye as a biological mechanism. Instead of correcting the problem mechanically, it tries to improve the focusing capacity from within.

Naturally, the eyes can adjust their focal lengths in order to view properly. And the problem occurs in the natural functioning of eye muscles and retina. With proper medications, treatments and eye exercises, the spasm in the eye muscles is removed and they are re-energised. With this, the lens gradually regains its natural convexity. However, if the problem is hereditary, or has occurred in the intra-uterine stage, the only solution is to wear glasses.

The treatment of systemic diseases like diabetic retinopathy is another case in point. The main treatment available now is the application of laser to the damaged cells, but this again has an adverse effect. In cases of viral and bacterial infections, Ayurveda's preventive methods are highly helpful. It tries to disable the environment con-



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ductive for the organisms to thrive.

There are surgical as well as non-surgical treatment procedures in Ayurveda. Surgical management includes procedures like *chedana* (excision), *bhedana* (incision and drainage), *lekhaṇa* (scraping), *kuttana* (pricking), *agnikarma* and *kshāra karma* (cauterization).

Besides internal use of Ayurvedic herbal preparations, ocular therapies including *sarṁsodhana* (cleansing process which includes *kayarechana*, *śirorechana* and *rechanānjana*), *samśamana* (curative and palliative measures) and *parivarjana* (preventive treatments) too are put to use.

Samśamana or curative therapy employs treatment processes such as *kashāyadhāra*, *tarpanam*, *nasyam*, *shashtikā sweda*, *netradhā*, *putapāka*, *anjanam*, *purampada*, *śirodhara*, *śirovasti* and *aschyothana*.

Kashāyadhara, with its cleansing property, marks the beginning of the treatment for many diseases. Specified herbal decoctions are poured into the eyes from a

specific height for a specific period.

Tarpanam involves placing medicated ghee over the eyeballs using a border made with black gram powder for a specific period. It improves vision and is useful in the treatment of diseases such as myopia. It is also effective for eye diseases in children.

Nasyam or instilling medicated oil into both nostrils is done to clean up the passage, nourish the organs and improve the nervous system.

Netradhāra involves pouring of herbal decoction through the inner corners of the eyes and letting it flow through the entire eye. The process is repeated for both eyes. This cleansing treatment is generally done prior to other treatments.

Shashtika pinda sweda (*njavara kizhi*): This is effective in people with acute astigmatism, and weak and small eyeballs. Rice cooked in medicated milk, along with certain herbal infusions, is bundled into a bolus and massaged over the eyes for a prescribed time under con-

For beautiful and healthy eyes

- Dip a cotton pad in rose water mixed with 2-3 drops of castor oil. Place it on the eyelids for 15-20 minutes. Eye burning and other problems will reduce.
- Dip cotton pads in cold tea solution for an hour, and keep on the eyelids for 10 to 15 minutes.

To remove dark circles



- Grate cucumber, squeeze and sieve them through a muslin cloth and extract the juice. Dip cotton pads in it and place them on the eyelids and darkened areas. Relax for 15 minutes. For best results, continue this for 2-3 days.

- Make a paste of one teaspoon of tomato pulp, one pinch of turmeric powder, half teaspoon of lime juice and one teaspoon of gram flour. Apply it gently on the eyelids and darkened areas and let it remain for half an hour. Remove the paste gently with moist cotton pads after half an hour. Do this for a week.

For those with deep sunken eyes

- Mix one teaspoon of honey with half teaspoon of almond oil. Apply the mixture gently on the eyes at bedtime. Do this for a week.
- Soak five almonds overnight. Peel and have them with a glass of milk, chewing the almonds well. Do this for 21 days.

To reduce puffiness

- Keep potato slices around your eyes or squeeze the juice out of grated potato and apply. Relax for 15-20 minutes.
- Place cotton pads dipped in chilled milk (before boiling it) on the eyelids for 10-15 minutes.
- In a small bowl of chilled water, add a few drops of vitamin E oil. Dip cotton pads in this for five minutes and place them on the eyes for 20 minutes every day.



Netradhara

trolled pressure

For diabetic retinopathy: Pacifying the vitiated pitha is the first process involved in the treatment of eye diseases. Through various treatments like tarpanam, nasyam, takradhara and netra dhara, Ayurvedic treatments effectively re-establishes retinal nutrition, prevents the growth of fragile vessels, reverses the metabolic changes manifested by diabetes, stops bleeding and its chances of recurrence, and thus improves quality of vision.

Ayurvedic treatment attempts to restore the efficiency of blood vessels, thereby preventing the formation of new blood vessels. For this, the priority is to bring diabetes under control. Once this is done, treatment begins for improving the functioning of blood vessels. It involves both intake of medicines as well as external application. The treatment chosen will depend on the nature of the patient, and the severity of the disease.

Eye care

There are certain conditions that upset the tridoshas, causing eye diseases. These include exposure to excessive heat, cold or smoke; observing distant/minute objects for long periods; disturbed and improper sleep; long bouts of weeping, anger, sorrow and exertion; trauma and infections and regular use of black gram, horse gram and fermented drinks.

Reading, writing or working in poor light is not good for the eyes. This can cause refractive error, especially near-sightedness. Working conditions and exposure to pollution could also affect the eye. Such complaints are more in metros.

Many software professionals have the problem of dry eyes. Staring at the screen for hours on end cuts

down the number of times you blink and affects normal lubrication of the eye. Dry air-conditioned interiors can add to your woes.

All foreign objects including unclean water, sweat and dust are harmful to the eye. Sudden changes in temperature can also be harmful. For instance, taking bath in cold water soon after exercise, working near fire or being out in the sun for too long can harm the natural functioning and elasticity of the optic nerve, veins and arteries.

Sleeping during the day, working at night, insomnia or getting up frequently in between sleep are not good for the eye. Remaining awake at night can cause dryness in the eye, while sleeping during the day can cause excessive exudation. Dryness and exudation are systemic problems that contribute to many eye diseases.

Since the eyes are the seat of pitta dosha, it faces threat from kapha dosha that has an opposite quality. Applying anjanam (collirium) once in seven days will help in expelling the accumulated kapha dosha. This should be followed by naavanam (nasal drops), gandoosham (retaining medicated decoctions or oil in the mouth), dhoomapaanam (inhaling medicated smoke) and thaamboolacharvanam (betel chewing).

Do's and don'ts

There are many diseases you can prevent by giving your eyes a little bit of care.

A diet high in liquids and/or taking excessive liquids such as milk, tea or coffee at night should be avoided. This can cause abnormal pressure in the eyeball which is full of water. Also, the lacrimal glands that are usually less active at night can secrete excessively and disturb sleep.

The habit of withholding the natural urge to defecate or urinate is detrimental to health in general, especially for the eye. It can be the cause of vata dosha, which is related to refractive errors.

Tension, an angry or aggressive temperament, deep grief, etc., is also bad. The negative effects of these emotions can affect the functioning of the optic nerve, veins, arteries and lacrimal glands. Withholding the emotional urge to cry can affect the lacrimal glands, causing either dryness or epiphora.

If there is any brain injury, functional disorders may affect the optic nerve, veins and arteries. It could lead to paralysis of the eye, loss of visual field, optic nerve ischemia and haemorrhage. Excessive use of alcohol can affect blood circulation in the eye.

The outbreak of epidemic eye diseases like conjunctivitis is related to weather conditions; it could also be due to problems in ventilation.

Physical and emotional stress, poor diet and chronic progressive diseases can damage the optic nerves. Cataract and refractive error are commonly related to these circumstances. Over-indulgence in sex is also not good for the eye. This can impair functioning of the optic nerve. According to Ayurveda, preservation of semen plays a major role in strengthening the functioning of the nervous system.

Eating too much of sweet food also is harmful for the eye; it could cause diabetic retinopathy. Any eye disease that is not properly treated or neglected can cause other problems. Neglect of conjunctivitis can weaken the optic nerve. Also, one should avoid taking bath if suffering from any eye disease.

“Samkshepathah kriyāgo nidānasya varjanam.”

(The best method of treatment is to avoid the causative factors)

- Always wash the eyes with clean water. Do not use hot water.
- Do not wash your eyes when the body is sweating, especially after strenuous physical exercise.
- Do not wash your face immediately after being out in the sun.
- Wash your eyes with *thriphala kwātham* (decoction

of the *thriphala* powder, made of three myrobalans: *Āmalaki* (*Emblia officinalis*), *Bibhitaki* (*Terminalia bellirica*), and *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*). To make this, add one teaspoon of the *thriphala* powder to a glass of clean water, keep it overnight, strain it in the morning and wash your eyes with it.

- In case of dryness, wash your eyes by using water boiled with fennel seeds. (Boil one cup of water with about half teaspoon of fennel seeds).
- Washing the eyes with a concoction prepared with coriander or applying a paste of babool leaves over the eyes before going to sleep will help in reducing conjunctivitis.
- A drop of *thulasee swarasa* (juice of Holy basil) in the eyes will help in preventing conjunctivitis.
- Avoid washing your hair if you have conjunctivitis, and if there is excess of redness and edema.
- *Pādābhyangam* or application of oil on the sole can do wonders by inducing good sleep and strengthening the eyes.
- Regular application of medicated oil on the head before bath improves eyesight.
- Keeping a slice of cucumber or potato over the eye for a few minutes can reduce tiredness.
- Lots of ghee in the diet can improve vision in children.
- It is a must to have a good night's sleep to relax your eyes after a strenuous day.
- The best way to smoothen the eyes is to rub your palms till you feel the warmth, and cup your eyes with the palms.
- Use sunglasses to avoid direct sunlight. They should preferably cover the entire eye..
- A healthy diet, especially rich in vitamins A, C and E, can do wonders in improving eyesight. Intake of vitamin C can reduce the risk of cataract. Carrots are a great source of vitamins A and E.
- Dark green leafy vegetables like spinach are rich in carotenoids like leutin and zeaxanthin which act as antioxidants, neutralising free radicals that can cause cell damage.
- Eating vegetables lightly cooked is better than eating them raw as it makes the absorption of leutin and zeaxanthin easy.
- Orange, grape, mango, papaya, peach, pumpkin, sweet potato, dried apricots, lettuce, spinach, green beans, broccoli, etc., are good for the eye.
- Dairy products, eggs, fish and poultry will also augment eye health.
- Have food containing low saturated fat and rich in Omega-3.
- Smoking is bad for the eyes.



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Black is beautiful

Indigenous practices in many cultures prescribe eye salve for the protection of eyes. They also help the eye look healthy and beautiful. Ayurveda classics have elaborate description about the preparation and application of 'anjana'



The eyes are susceptible to infections since they are often exposed to smoke and dust. Sudden changes in weather too can have an adverse effect. To reduce irritation caused by environmental factors, drops or salves are often applied in the eye; they act as cleansing agents.

Ayurveda employs the use of drops and salves in the treatment of eye diseases like itching, burning sensation, pain, redness, etc.

Regular use of *anjana* (collyrium), a medicinal eye liner, would also make one's vision more clear. It will add to the sparkle in the eyes, and enhance their ability to withstand bright light.

Anjana is basically of three kinds -- scarifying (*lekhana*), healing (*ropaṇa*) and eye-invigorating (*dṛṣhti-prasādana*).

The *lekhana* kind is prepared from drugs having astringent, sour, salt or pungent taste, and hot potency. *Ropaṇa anjana*, which is made from bitter drugs, has a cooling effect and lends strength and colour to the eye. The third variety is made from sweet drugs that have cold potency. This tones and improves vision.

The excess of doshas in the eye, eyelids, eyeballs, capillaries, and in the nose gristle is drained out through the mouth, nostrils and corners of the eye by applying the

scarifying salve. Application of *prasādana* salve to eyes that have become fatigued by application of strong collyriums is known as counter- collyrium (*pratyanjana*).

Anjana vidhi (method of applying collyrium): *Ashtāṅgahṛdaya* says that "application of collyrium is suitable for a person who has his body purified (through emesis, purgation, etc.), in whom doshas are localised in the eyes; when there is slight edema, severe itching and sliminess; when eye excretions are thick; and in those troubled by Pitha, Kapha, Rakta and especially Vata" - (AH Soo. 23.8-9).

A metallic eye-liner, ten *angula* (finger units) in length, which is thin in the middle and tips resembling a flower bud is the best for applying *anjana*. An eye-liner made of copper is good for *lekhana*; an iron eye-liner or the finger for *ropaṇa*; and one of gold or silver for *prasādana*.

Kinds of anjana

Eye salve can be in the form of pill or dragee (*pinda*), gel or confection (*rasakriya*) or powder (*choorna*), and are used in conditions of profound, moderate and mild increase of doshas respectively.

The amount of salve to be applied, when it is in the form of a hard pill and prepared from strong drugs, is one harenu. And if prepared with mild drugs, it should be

two *hareṇu* (a kind of pulse).

When in the form of a gel, the amount should be that of *vi-danga* (*Embelia Ribes*). If it is in powder form and made from mild drugs, you should use more of the *anjana* than when it is made from strong drugs. **Persons unfit for eye salve (*anjana anarhah*)**

Eye salve should not be applied in many situations – if you are in a state of fear, anger or grief, if you have been administered emesis or purgation, if who are thirsty or hungry, etc. It should be avoided also when you are down with fever or headache, when the eyes are tired and if you have not had enough sleep.

It should be avoided soon after washing your hair, smoking or drinking wine or if you are fatigued after too much exposure to fire or the sun. The salve should not be too strong or mild, and the quantity used not very little or too much. It should neither be too cold or hot, and the consistency not very thin or thick.

After applying the salve, eyeballs should be moved up and rotated slowly; eyelids should also be moved by gently massaging over it. This will help the *anjana* to spread. You should not open or close the eyes, or squeeze or wash the eyelids.

After the activity of the drug stops and when the eyes have regained strength, they should be



How to apply

The eyelids are kept wide open with the fingers of the left hand, and *anjana* applied with the right hand. It is applied from the sides to the corners, and back along the inner portion of the eyelids. This is repeated two or three times.

An eye-liner is used for applying *anjana* in the inner portion of the eyelid, and the finger used for the outer portion. The eyes should be washed only after the doshas are reduced. Otherwise, the symptoms may get further aggravated.

The eye is first washed with water. *Pratyanjana* is then applied depending upon the nature of the imbalanced dosha or one's constitution.

washed gently with water suitable to the disease, the *doshas* and the season.

If not washed away, the salve remaining in the lids will excite the doshas, causing diseases. In case of itching or weakness in the eye, one

should apply a strong salve or inhale strong medicated smoke.

When the eyes are fatigued by the use of strong eye salve, apply *pratyanjana* (counter eye slave) which is in powder form and cold in effect.

Anjana kāla (Time to apply anjana)

Anjana should not be applied at night, during sleep or in the middle of the day when your eyes are fatigued by the strong rays of the sun. It could lead to eye diseases because the doshas would increase, spread to other areas and get liquefied. To mitigate the doshas, *anjana* should be applied

before sunrise or after sunset.

Strong eye salve should not be applied during the day on eyes that have become weak with purgation. It will debilitate further if the atmosphere is hot.

It is fire (*āgneyi*) that is predominant in the eye; it regains strength during sleep and is nour-

ished by the coolness of the night.

In conditions of high increase in kapha or in diseases that require *lekhanānjana*, strong collyrium (*tikshṇa anjana*) can be applied even during the day if it is not very hot.

When there is severe cold, application of strong eye salve is not good even at nights because it may help in eliminating the doshas, but could cause itching and weaken the eye.

For a healthy pair of eyes



The eye is the most vital sense organ and it reflects your energy levels. But often, it is not given due care.

Eyesight can be adversely affected due to malnutrition, faulty reading habits, too much exposure to heat or light, lack of sleep, high levels of stress, pollution, etc.

The most common defects which are caused by faulty eye muscle action or accommodation are myopia (short sight), hypermetropia (long sight) and presbyopia (vision problem due to ageing). A lot of eye problems in later life are due to loss of tone in the eye muscles. Simple yoga exercises can keep tone up the muscles and make

them elastic, keeping impaired vision and spectacles at bay.

Yoga aims at the well-being of the body and the mind. One can maintain perfect health with regular and systematic practice of yoga, breathing and meditation. There are special exercises for improving or stabilising vision in yoga.

Jala neti: This is the practice of cleansing the nasal passage with water. Slightly salty lukewarm water is poured into one nostril and ejected through the other nostril or through the mouth. A special pot with a pointed spout is used for this. *Neti* keeps the sinuses, nasal tract and the throat free from infection. It

also keeps the eyes free from strain, and improves vision. However, *neti* should not be done without the guidance of an experienced person.

Prāṇāyāma

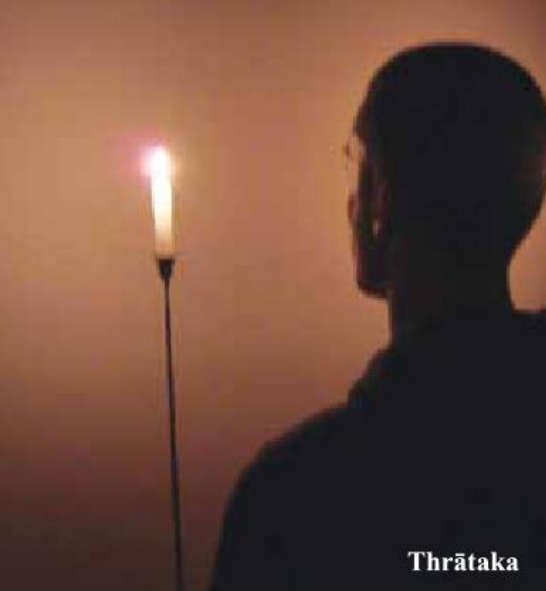
Prāṇāyāma, a controlled breathing practice, includes inhalation, exhalation and retention of air in various frequencies and quantities. This too should be practised only under proper guidance. It purifies all energy channels and nerves in the body, and enhances the flow of *prāṇa*, the vital energy behind all body functions. Proper pranic flow improves vision too.

Dhyāna

Meditation is the uninterrupted flow of mind towards a single object, the key to ultimate tranquility. Through meditation, one can achieve mental as well as physical health.

A beginner can start by focusing on breath. Sit comfortably and concentrate on the movement of your breath. Watch each and every moment carefully. Thoughts may come up, but do not allow your mind to get carried away. With some practice, one can learn the art of focussing and can explore the healing effects of meditation.

Sit comfortably and bring total attention to your eyes. With your mind, touch each and every part, and tissues of your eyes. Touch them with deep compassion and mentally tell them to relax. Imagine that with each inhalation you are energising and revitalising your



Thrātaka

eyes totally; and with each exhalation, you are pushing all the toxins out of the body. If practised properly, this simple technique can bring wonderful results.

Thrātaka

Thrātaka involves gazing intently at any small object without blinking until tears well up in the eyes. This cleanses the eyes deeply and improves the power of concentration.

- Light a candle or an earthen lamp on a small table. Place it around 3 to 4 feet in front of you and sit in a comfortable posture looking at the direction of the candle. Keep the spine erect. Make sure that the flame is at the level of your eyes.
- Take a few deep breaths, relax and anchor yourself in the present moment. Now, gaze at the flame and continue without getting distracted.
- Keep your gaze anchored on the flame, not on the candle or the wick. When thoughts arise, ignore them and maintain your awareness and concentration on the flame. Do not blink.
- Continue to gaze at the flame till the point where you cannot keep your eyes open and tears start flowing. Once this happens, close your eyes and start visualising the after-image of the flame with closed eyes -- at the point between the eyebrows

at the centre of the forehead.

- When the image begins to fade out completely, you can open your eyes and repeat this. Initially, you may practise this up to 10-15 minutes.

According to yoga tradition, *thrātaka* will activate the third eye, the centre of intuition.

Benefits:

Improves concentration, memory and confidence; corrects minor eye defects; and enhances vision.

Other exercises

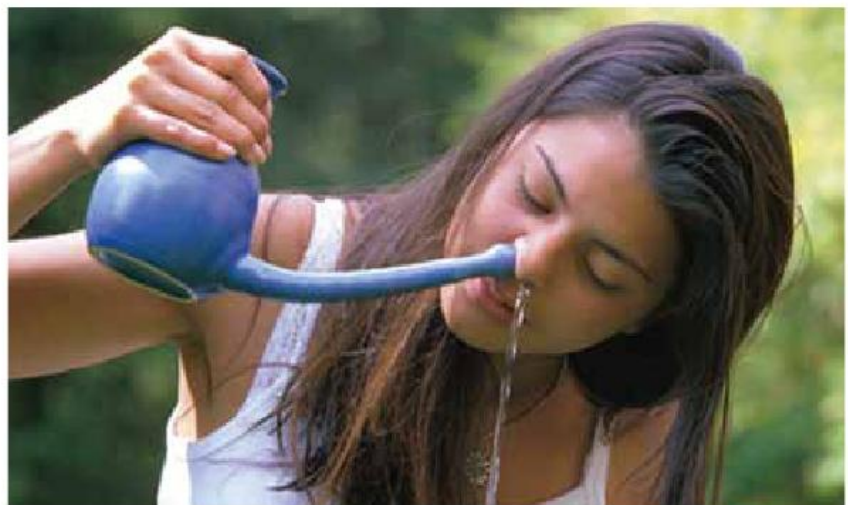
Any tension in the eye will tend to produce a general feeling of tension because the eye is connected to the brain via the optic nerve. Eye exercises reduce tension in the eye muscles as well as bring down general tension.

Stand straight with your feet one foot apart. Do the following movements with eyes.

- Vertical movement 10 times, relax
- Horizontal movement 10 times, relax
- Diagonal movement 10 times, relax
- Circular rotation clockwise/ counter-clockwise 10 times each, relax
- Hold thumb straight ahead, eye level, and bring it close to the eyes (3-4 inches away), first

with both eyes open, and then alternately with one eye closed.

- Hold right thumb straight ahead and move it slowly to the far right (inhale) and bring it back in front (exhale). Keep the head in the centre and follow the movement of the thumb with the eyes without moving the head. Repeat with the left thumb too.
- Stretch both thumbs straight in front. Keep the head in the centre and start moving both arms to either side. Follow the movement of the thumbs through the periphery of the eyes.
- Bounce a ball in V shape from one hand to the other and follow the movement of the ball with the eyes.
- Take a sculpture/picture and look at it for about 30-45 seconds. Close the eyes and visualise the object with the eyes closed and relaxed. To improve memory, imagination and vision, use a different object each day.
- Look at a tree for 30 seconds, then look at the palm, all the lines on the palm, for 30 seconds, blink and see (five times).
- Rub your palms vigorously and cover eyes with palms. This will give total relaxation to your eyes. Stay in this position for 3-5 minutes.



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

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Beauty zone





Warm up for cold weather



Dr Shaji Varghese

The winter season is referred to as *hemanta ṛtu* and *śiśira ṛtu* in Ayurveda. *Hemanta ṛtu* starts from mid-November and ends in mid-January. This period is called *visārga kāla* or *dakṣiṇāyana* (southern solstice). *Śiśira ṛtu* starts from mid-January and lasts till the middle of March. It falls in *ārdra kāla* or *uttarāyana* (northern solstice). *Hemanta* (beginning of winter) and *śiśira* (late winter) seasons are almost similar. Together, they are referred to as *śeeta kāla* (cold season).

Seasonal regimen

During winter, the cold atmosphere blocks the dissipation of body heat

which, in turn, increases digestive power. In other words, the metabolic rate goes up, increasing the need for food and accelerating digestion. But in the absence of adequate food, this strong digestive fire persuaded by Vāta breaks down body tissues. Therefore, it is advisable to consume sweet (*madhura*), sour (*amla*) and salty (*lavaṇa*) rasas.

During this season, as the duration of the night is long, one would feel hungry early in the morning itself. Hence, the following regime is advised after ablutions:

Oil embrocation (*abhyanga*), oil application on head (*moordha thaila*), body massage with palms (*vimardana*) using oil prepared

Symptoms of Vāta aggravation

- Dry skin and lips
- Constipation
- Gas trouble
- Bloating
- Little or low appetite
- Hiccups
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Scattered mind

from drugs that pacify Vāta. This practice nourishes and strengthens the body, encourages regular sleep patterns, stimulates internal organs, enhances blood circulation and can significantly reduce Vāta.

After exercises, one should have a bath using powders of astringent drugs (*kashāyārāsa*) to remove the oil applied on the body. A mixture of flours of yellow gram (*channa*), green gram (*moong*) and fenugreek seeds (*methi*) in equal proportion is the best herbal scrub to remove oil. This will prevent washing away of natural oil from the skin. After bath, apply a paste of saffron and musk on the body and fumigate with agar.

The kind of food that can be consumed during this season include hot meat soup topped with ghee, meat, beverages prepared from molasses and rice flour, pastries prepared from wheat, rice flour, black gram, sugarcane juice, milk products, rice, sesame oil and marrow. These are all Vāta-balancing food.

Using hot water in the toilet, wrapping the body with warm, light blankets, using bed sheets made of cotton (*pravara*), hide of antelope (*ajina*), silk (*kouseya*), braided woollen (*praveṇi*) and basking in the sun and wearing shoes are advised during winter.

Winter blues

Chilly weather, long nights and short days make many people depressed. This is referred to as winter depression or winter-time blues, a seasonal disorder. The symptoms include a tendency to overeat and a craving for carbohydrates and sweets that result in weight gain.

Winter-time depression is noticed mostly in Vāta-dominant people. Because of the cold and dry atmosphere, the Vāta in the body gets vitiated, causing problems. Ayurveda suggests exposure to sunlight, moderate exercises like *yoga*, *abhyanga* and application of oil along with Vāta-pacifying drugs on the head to tide over the cold.

Ayurveda does not impose any restrictions on sexual activity during winter; *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* says this would help in keeping the body warm and in elevating moods. Mingling with friends, listening to music and meditation are the other ways to keep winter depression at bay.

Staying in a cellar, warmed up with burning charcoal, will never be affected adversely by intense cold. The same protocol has to be followed in later winter also.



The dos and don'ts

Have

- Food that is naturally sweet, sour and salty
- Freshly cooked food that gives energy
- Legumes like green gram, well-cooked tofu and warm soya milk spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg
- Warm spices like ginger, black pepper, cinnamon and cumin, but not extremely hot spices like cayenne pepper
- Drinks which are warm
- Dairy products which are not very cold. Avoid drinking milk with meals. It is best to have it warm and spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg, at least an hour before or after food
- A generous amount of high-quality oils or ghee
- Ensure regular timing for meals. Have them in a peaceful environment

Avoid

- Bitter and pungent food
- Food that has cooling effect
- Dry and light food like popcorn and crackers
- Too much raw food, especially in the mornings and evenings
- Fresh fruits and vegetable juices
- Most beans and cold soya products
- Highly processed foods like canned or frozen food
- Cold or carbonated drinks
- Caffeine, nicotine and other stimulants
- Overeating or eating very heavy meals
- Food or drinks that contain refined sugar or corn syrup
- Deep-fried food
- Hard alcohol

The Moonshine in the Garden

Jasmine flowers have enjoyed great importance in the cultural history of both India and China on account of their pleasant fragrance and therapeutic properties.

It enjoys the status of national flower in a number of Asian countries including Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines. In Thailand, India and Syria, it is symbol of love and compassion.

There are approximately 200 different species of jasmine native to China, north India and west Asia. The most important among them are Poet's jasmine (*Jasminum officinale* L.) and Royal jasmine (*Jasminum grandiflorum* L.).

Poet's jasmine, also known as white jasmine, is native to the Himalayas in western China. The vine-like plant reaches a height of 10 meters, has ovate leaves

and clusters of fragrant white flowers that bloom in summer and fall.

Royal jasmine, also known as Catalan or Spanish jasmine, grows in a similar fashion, but has bigger flowers, shorter branches and leaves of a different size. This variety is valued for its fragrance and is the most extensively cultivated.

Jasmine is grown in France, Spain, Italy and several north African and middle eastern countries too. The reported life zone of *Jasminum officinale* is 11 to 27 degrees centigrade. Poet's jasmine is much more cold tolerant than royal jasmine.

The plant can be grown on almost any soil type, with ample water supply and good sunlight. Full production begins after grafting in the second year. The flowers are borne in clusters in summer, and are picked in the early morning since they are the most fragrant at day-break. Those grown in higher altitudes are of a finer quality.

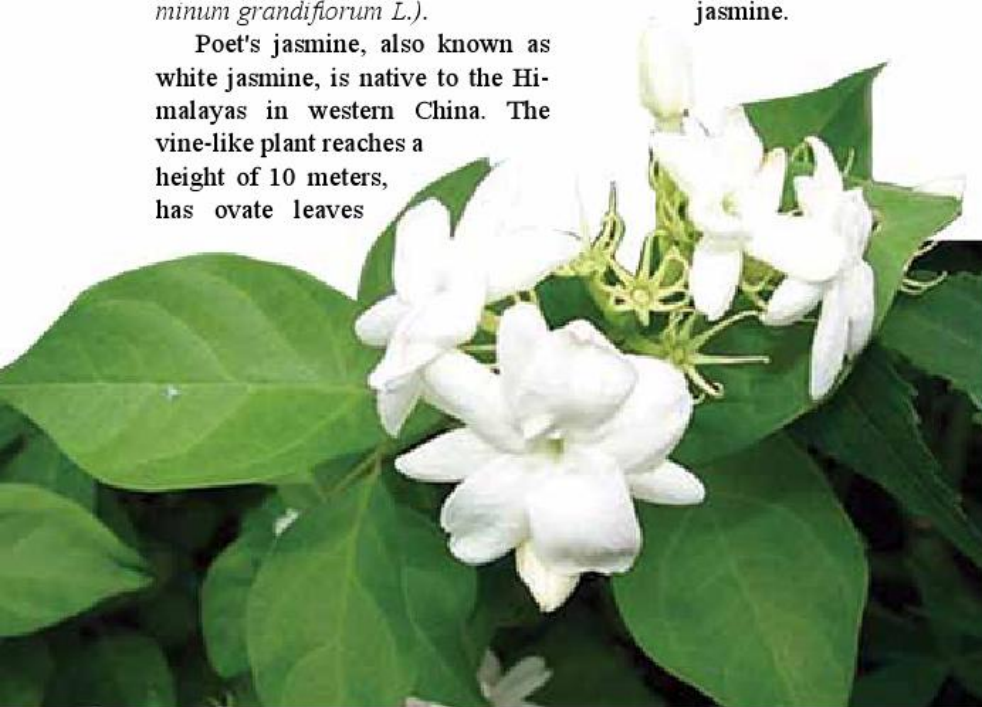
Jasmine oil

Jasmine essential oil is a highly valued aromatic, known for its effect as a relaxant, anti-depressant and aphrodisiac.

The oil is extracted immediately after the flowers are collected by effleurage or the use of volatile solvents. The process to obtain high-quality oil is delicate and laborious. The benefits of this oil are due to the rich blend of phytochemicals including benzoic acid, benzaldehyde, creosol, eugenol, linalool and gamma terpineol. It is extensively used in the production of perfumes and incense.

Jasmine oil is good for treating dry, irritated and sensitive skin, muscular spasm, sprain, depression, nervous exhaustion and other stress-related conditions. It is non-toxic and does not cause any irritation, but it is not advisable to use the oil during pregnancy.

In Ayurveda, jasmine oil is used for treating excessive thirst, aggravation of Pitha in the head, mental



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Jasmine

Family: Oleaceae

Species: *Jasminum officinale*

Persian name: Jasmine (gift from God)

Other names: Mālathee or Mallika (Sanskrit), Jāti, Chameli (Hindi), Yasmine

Parts used: flowers, roots and leaves

Dosha effect: lowers Kapha and Pitha; increases Vāta

Energetics: bitter, astringent/cooling/pungent

Dhatu: plasma, blood, bone, marrow

Indications: emotional disturbance, headache, fever, sunstroke, conjunctivitis, dermatitis, burning in urethra, bleeding disorders, bacterial or viral infections, cancer of lymph nodes, bone cancer, Hodgkin's disease

Action: it is a mild analgesic, anti-depressant, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, carminative, expectorant, galactagogue, parturient, sedative, as a tonic for the uterus and has cicatrizing property.



illness, anger, etc. It is *sātvic* in quality, and symbolises love and compassion.

Jasmine flowers have a blood-cooling effect. With its anti-bacterial, anti-viral and anti-tumor action, they can also help in stopping bleeding. They strengthen the lymphatic system and are helpful in treating different kinds of cancer including breast cancer. The oil helps in relieving the effects of sunstroke, and is useful in treating fever.

Jasmine flowers have astringent properties too, which aid in treating inflamed eyes and skin. It can be used as a gargle in case of sore throats and mouth ulcers. The whole flower is used to deal with the problem of worms in the intestine, and to treat jaundice and venereal diseases. The flower buds are used in treating ulcers, vesicles, boils, skin diseases and eye disorders. The leaf extracts act against breast tumor.

In aroma therapy, jasmine flowers are used to calm emotions, and as an aphrodisiac. They are a valuable remedy in cases of depression because they instil a feeling of confidence, optimism and euphoria. They can also revitalise and restore the balance of energy in the body.

In China, one variety of jasmine is used to treat hepatitis, cirrhosis of the liver and dysentery, and the flowers of another variety for conjunctivitis, dysentery, skin ulcers and tumors. The root is used to treat headache, insomnia, dislocated

joints and rheumatism. It can also help when there is cough or difficulty in breathing.

Jasmine cultivation

Jasmine stems should be planted during the June-November period. Plough the land first to remove weeds, then dig pits of 30-cm depth and fill them with manure. The plants should be kept at least eight feet apart from each other so that they grow into their full size. Fertilizers should be used every spring.

Younger plants should be tied with the stems for support. Tips of the plants should be pinched to stimulate lateral growth and frequent pruning has to be done. If the vine is to be grown as a ground cover, the upward twining stems will need trimming. There is need for watering immediately after planting and also at an interval of seven to ten days. Stem cutting and sowing of seeds are the best methods for propagation of the plant.

- Mild fertilizers are required for best growth
- Temperature should be controlled
- Jasmine needs regular pinching and shaping to control growth
- If not planted at a proper distance, there will be crowding
- Containerised plants should be planted during fall
- Fully developed buds should be picked early in the morning

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FOR A GLOWING FACE



Dr Rekha SJ

*“Śrothraṁ na thīpthaṁ
bahugeethavādyai
Chakshu na thīpthaṁ
bahuroopadruṣṭyā
Ghrāṇaṁ na thīpthaṁ
bahupushpavāsai
Jihva na thīpthā shadbhojanena”*

“Ears are not satisfied after listening to good music and eyes not satisfied even after seeing all the beautiful things. Nose is not satisfied after smelling good things and tongue not satisfied after feeling good tastes. Man’s attempt to improve his beauty never ends.....”

Ayurveda’s concept of beauty is founded on a holistic approach. Only when the body and the mind remain healthy does one’s *ojas* (vitality) emanates the force needed to keep the inner

as well as the outer selves radiant. However, Ayurveda offers scores of beauty solutions for all skin types.

According to Ayurveda, the skin has seven layers that are derived from *raktha dhātu* (blood) : *avabhāsini, lohitha, swetha, thāmra, vedini, rohiṇi* and *māṁsadhara*. It elaborates on the diseases that can affect each of these layers and the treatment procedures. The humour (*dosha*) predominant in skin is *Pitha*, specifically *bhrājaka pitha*. Aggravation of doshas can cause skin problems -- *Vāta* dosha can cause cracks on the skin, and pimples/acne may erupt due to *Kapha* dosha.

Acharya Śārngadhara talks about *varṇya lepaṁ*, a paste for improving skin complexion. Applying *mukha lepa* (face pack) is one of the best ways to moisturise and nourish

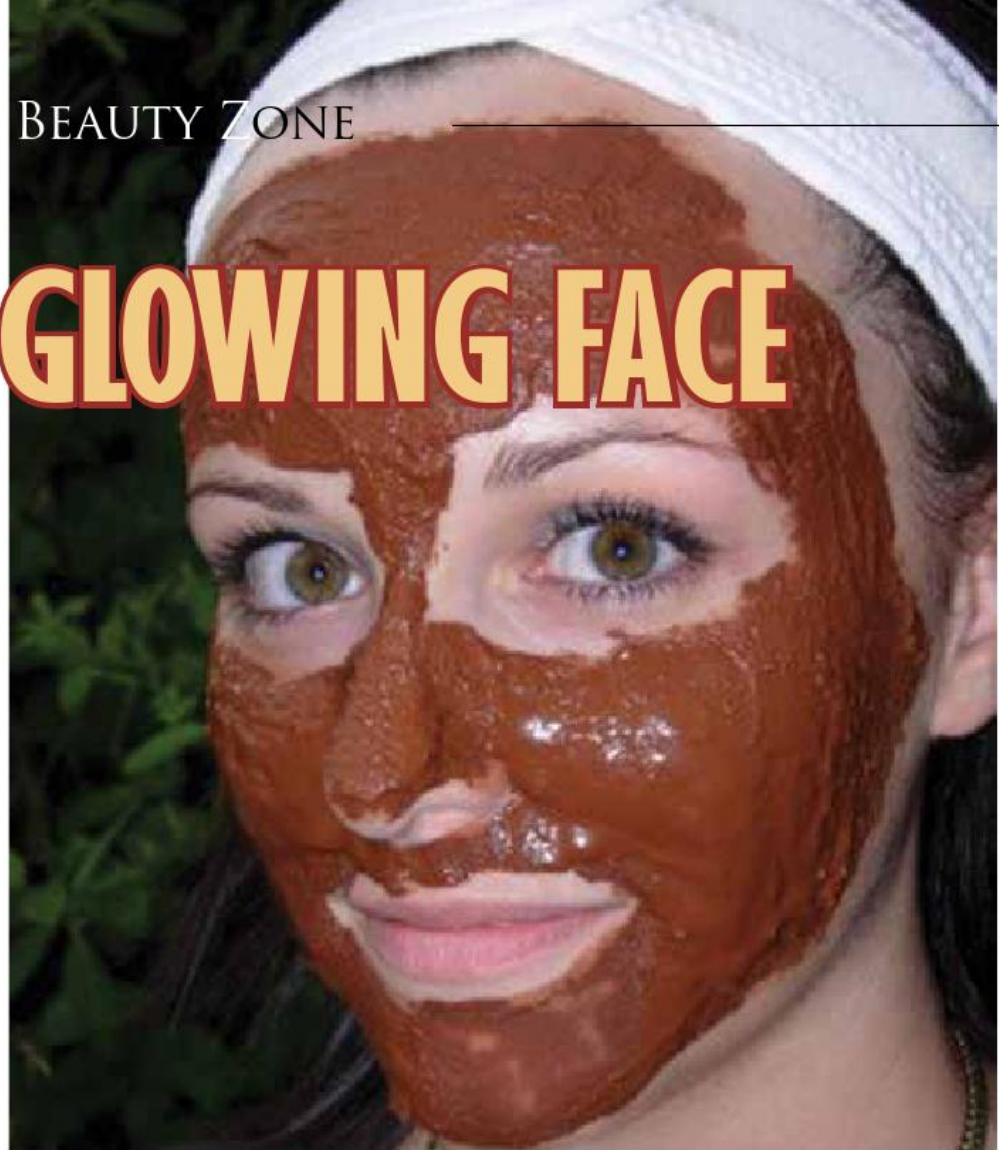
the skin. The combinations of the ingredients vary depending on the skin condition.

*“Dravyamārdraṁ shilāpishtaṁ
śuṣkaṁ vā sadraṇaṁ thanu
Dehe pralepanārdhaṁ thallepa
ithyuchyathe budhāḥ”*

“Wet medicines are made into a paste, and the dry ones mixed with water or other suitable liquids and made into a paste. This paste which is applied externally is called *lepa*”

The ingredients in face packs can detoxify and supply micro-elements that help in removing wrinkles and softening the skin. They penetrate deep, cleanse the skin and removes dead cells.

Lepa should be applied with gentle upward strokes to make its action quick and more effective. Its



Herbs for good complexion and reducing black marks

Sanskrit name	Botanical name
Sthoola elam	Amomum sabulatum
Kushtam	Sassurea lappa
Jadamamsi	Nardostachys jadamansi
Thwak	Cinnamomum tamala
Jathiphalam	Myristica fragrans
Naaga	Messua nagassarum
Devadaaram	Cedrus deodara
Sookshma elam	Elettaria cardamomum
Priyangu	Callicarpa macrophylla
Hreeveram	Coleus vetiveroides
Shati	Kaempferia galangal
Punnagam	Calophyllum inophyllum
Vyaakhranakha	Ipomoea pes-tigridis
Kumkumam	Crocus sativus

For oily skin

Sanskrit name	Botanical name
Chandanam	Santalum album
Lodhram	Symplocos cochinchinensis
Vacha	Acorus calamus
Rakthachandanam	Pterocarpus santalinus
Dhanyakam	Coreandrum sativum
Manjishta	Rubia cordifolia

Powders of all these or a few are to be made into a paste with cucumber juice or orange juice.

For dry skin

Sanskrit name	Botanical name
Devadaaram	Cedrus deodara
Chandanam	Santalum album
Laksha	Lac
Agaru	Aquillaria agalocha
Usheeram	Vetiveria zizanioides

Powders of all these or a few should be made into a paste with aloe vera juice or egg white.

thickness should be one *angula* (approximately the thickness of the person's thumb). It enters the body through *roma koopari* (hair roots) and gets absorbed through *swedo-vaha srothas* (sweat pores). Oil or ghee should be added to the pastes in 1/4, 1/6 and 1/8 parts for vata, pitta and kapha respectively.

Treatments like *abhyanga* (oil massage) and *udwarthana* (powder massage) are highly effective against premature ageing and help in improving complexion.

Tips

- A spoonful of lime juice with half teaspoon of honey and a few drops of milk is good for oily skin.
- Apply one teaspoon turmeric powder mixed with sandal

powder, gram flour and honey one hour before bath for keeping the face fresh and soft.

- For pigmentation and acne, use powders of red sandal, *Rubia cordifolia*, *Symplocos cochinchinensis*, *Sassurea lappa* and *Callicarpa macrophylla*.
- A paste made of *shashtika sali* (a variety of rice harvested in 60 days) cooked in cow's milk, sandal powder, badam paste, turmeric and a little of *Mentha arvensis* acts as a good rejuvenator.
- A face pack is effective only until it is moist. Hence wash off once it gets dry. Otherwise, it will harm the skin.

The author is working as: Resident Medical Officer, Nagarjuna Ayurvedic Centre, Kalady.



CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN AYURVEDA AND SIDDHA
Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
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- * Three Journals namely "Journal of Research in Ayurveda and Siddha (JRAS)", "Journal of Drug Research in Ayurveda & Siddha (JDRAS)" and "Journal of Indian Medical Heritage (JIMH)".

Projects of National Importance

- * Feasibility of Introducing Indian Systems of Medicine (Ayurveda & Siddha) in the National Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme at the Primary Health Care (PHC) Level: ICMR – CCRAS collaboration in Himachal Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa.
- * Execution of Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme initiated in Himachal Pradesh
- * Validation of Clinical Safety of Ayurvedic and Siddha Herbomineral Drugs.
- * Multicentric clinical trials of Ayush-QOL-2C in Cancer patient are initiated in three Cancer Research Centers - AIIMS, New Delhi; St. John's Cancer Hospital, Bangalore & Bhagwan Mahavir Cancer Hospital, Jaipur.
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- * Reverse Pharmacology of selected classical Ayurveda and Siddha Drugs for Anaemia.
- * Golden Triangle Partnership (GTP) Project.
- * Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia Committee (APC) & Siddha Pharmacopoeia Committee (SPC).
- * Extra Mural Research (EMR) Projects on Ayurveda/Siddha and related topics.

National Campaigns on:

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|--|---|
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| • Ayurveda & Siddha for Geriatrics Health Care | • Management of Chronic Disease through Ayurveda |
| • Anaemia Control through Ayurveda & Siddha | |

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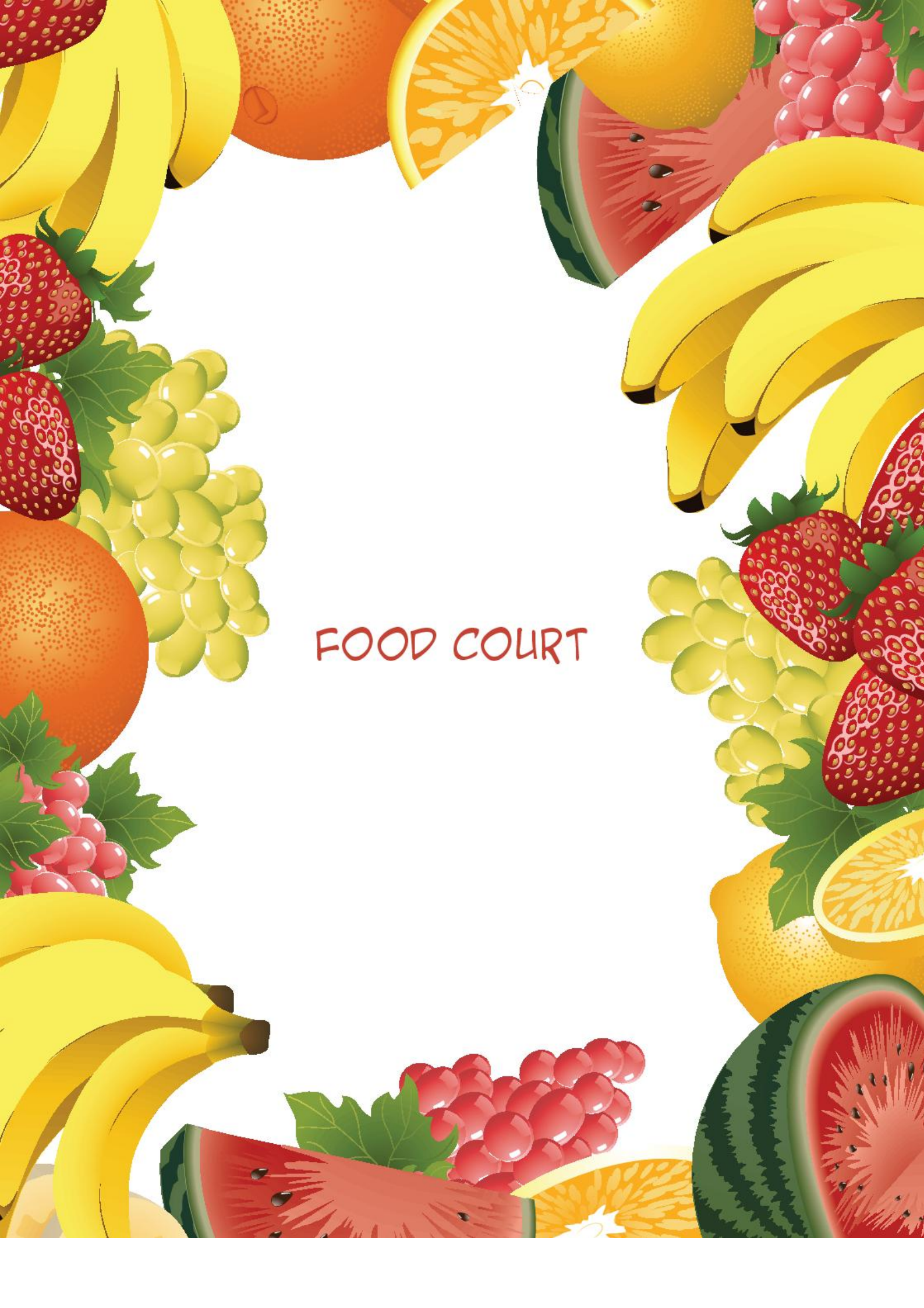
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FOOD COURT

MEAT NOT TABOO

It's generally believed that Ayurveda treatments require a person to stick to a purely vegetarian diet, but this is a misconception. Ayurveda prescribes medicines and diet on the basis of the three doshas (humours) and five elements.



Dr. Jayalakshmy T.R.

The *daśa vidha pareeksha* (ten-point examination) and *ashta sthāna pareeksha* (eight-point examination)* help a doctor in assessing the physiological and pathological condition of a person. The medicines and diet regimen are then decided, depending on the basis of the person's constitution, age, sex, lifestyle and dosha imbalance.

One need not be unwell to abide by the regimen that Ayurveda suggests. A healthy person too can follow it. Ayurveda lists various types of food (cereals, pulses, milk products, vegetables, poultry, beef, mutton, meat, etc.), their effect on doshas and therapeutic qualities. There is no mention of vegetarianism in any context.

Vegetarianism evolved as part of a religious custom; it has little to do with Ayurveda. The human digestive system can digest meat proteins too and not just vegetarian food as many people think.

Many meat or meat products like *ajamāṁsa rasāyanam* (mutton concoction), *mutta tailam* (oil from boiled egg) and *netra putapaakam* (ophthalmic nourisher) are used as part of therapy in Ayurveda. The dietary regimen prescribed for those who have undergone therapeutic cleansing includes *māṁsa rasa* (meat soup). This substantiates the fact that Ayurveda does not advocate vegetarianism.

Ayurvedic treatises like *Ashtāṅgahridaya*, *Charaka Samhita* and *Sūsruta Samhita* talk

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about many meat preparations like *vesavāra* (boneless kheema).

Dietary regimen

Wherever there is reference to the cause, treatment and prevention of a disease, Ayurveda talks about “*āhāra*” (food). Food intake has a direct bearing on health and disease, it says. The regimen it prescribes is not based on the taste of any dish. Ayurveda follows a rational method to choose the food regimen, on the basis of parameters like age, sex, body constitution, geographical region in which a person resides, his physical condition, etc. The analytical conclusions are arrived at after *daśa vidha pareeksha*.

The seventh chapter of *Ashtānga samgraha sootrassthāna* is *Annasva-roopa vijnāneeya* (knowledge about the nature of food). It has answers to many questions such as the following: What is food? What items can be considered as food and why? How does it differ from medicine? What influence can they have on the three doshas? Which among them are best, which are worst and why?

Non-vegetarian dishes find place along with other food items. They are mentioned as being a part and parcel of diet. The choice is between different types of food and not between vegetarian and non-vegetarian.

According to Ayurveda, those who should consume non-vegetarian food include people who are thin, lean and emaciated; those who have undergone therapeutic procedures or purification therapy; and those with digestion problems and defective tissue development. Non-vegetarian food is also good if you



A simple mutton recipe

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1. Mutton - 200 g chopped and washed | 7. Pomegranate peels - 100 gm |
| 2. Long pepper | |
| 3. Dry ginger | |
| 4. Purified fire plant root (<i>Plumbago rooseae</i>) | |
| 5. Coriander - (items 2 to 5, 20 g each crushed) | |
| 6. Water - 4 litres | |

Mix the above ingredients in 4 litres of water. Keep on low flame in an earthen pot, and reduce it to one litre. Strain the fluid and add asafoetida powder, cumin seeds and rock salt to taste. Serve hot.

are suffering from diseases due to Vāta or have fractures, wounds and ulcers. However, anyone can have non-vegetarian dishes that are best suited for the body constitution. It can be had daily as part of normal diet. Generally, there are no restrictions.

Among the non-vegetarian food items that Ayurveda talks about, meat soup finds mention first because it is the most light and palatable preparation. All preparations are required to have a dash of spices since they have the capacity to kindle bio-fire. They also help in di-

gestion, and impart a special flavour and colour to the dish.

Among different types of meat, mutton is said to be the best because it is most similar to human flesh in quality.

The author is the editor of Kerala Ayurveda Vaidyam, the quarterly magazine of Kerala Ayurveda Ltd. She is the Consultant Physician at Sree Rama Krishna Ayurveda Hospital, Puliannoor, Pala.

*Ashta sthāna pareeksha

This includes examination of pulse (*nādee*), tongue (*jihvā*), voice (*śabda*), touch (*sparśa*), vision (*dṛk*), gait or structure (*akṛti*), stools (*mala*) and urine (*mootra*)

Dasa vidha pareeksha

This includes examination of pollutants (3 humors, 7 tissues and 3 wastes), region (geographical and physiological), strength (*balam*), Time (*kāla*), digestive fire (*anala*), constitution (*prakṛti*), age (*vayah*), mental strength (*satvam*), compatibility (*sātmyam*), and food (*āhāram*)



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- The Council has organized several All India level Seminars/Workshops on Yoga & Naturopathy.
- It is actively participating in various Arogyas and Health Melas.

(Prof. Dr. B.T. Chidananda Murthy)
Director



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FRUITS

Banana

The Golden Beauty

Kingdom: Plantae

Family: Musaceae

Genus: Musa

Common names:

Banana, Bananier Nain,
Canbur, Curro, Plantain.

Banana is one of the most common fruits. It's the fourth largest fruit crop after grape, citrus fruits and apple.

"Banana" is a generic term that embraces a number of species or hybrids in the genus *Musa* of the family *Musaceae*. Most edible bananas, usually seedless, belong to the species *M. acuminata* Colla or to the hybrid *M. Xparadisiaca* L.

Edible bananas are said to have originated in the Indo-Malaysian region. They are believed to have been first carried to Europe in the 10th century A.D. Early in the 16th century, Portuguese mariners transported the plant from the west African coast to south America. The varieties found in the Pacific region have been traced to eastern Indonesia from where they spread to the Marquesas Islands, and to Hawaii in stages.

There are over 400 varieties of banana which is the largest herbaceous flowering plant. Many of its varieties are perennial. The best

part is that one can find use for each and every part of a plantain. Some species such as *M. Basjoo* Steb. and *Zucc.* of Japan, and *M. ornata* Roxb. found in Pakistan and Burma are grown only as ornamental plants or for fibre. *M. textilis* Nee of the Philippines is grown only for its fibre, and used for making strong ropes and tissue-thin tea bags.

The term "banana" usually refers to soft, sweet "dessert" bananas. Its cultivars that have firmer, starchier fruits are called "plantains". In India, all cultivars are rated on the basis of whether they can be used as a dessert or for cooking.

India is the leading banana producer in Asia, with fruits of various sizes and colors. In south India, it is almost part of a staple diet; it is also considered a snack. It is among the solid food items given to infants.

Owing to its capacity to reproduce continuously, the banana plant is regarded by Hindus as a symbol of fertility and prosperity. Its leaves and fruits are kept on doorsteps of

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houses during the time of marriage. It is planted in the corner of rice fields as a protective charm.

Description

The banana plant is a large herb with a succulent, juicy stem which is a cylinder of leaf-petiole sheaths, reaching a height of 20 to 25 ft. and rising from a fleshy rhizome or corm. Suckers spring up around the main plant forming a clump, and the eldest sucker replaces the main plant when it fruits and dies; this process continues indefinitely.

The tender, smooth, oblong or elliptic, fleshy-stalked leaves, numbering 5-15, are arranged spirally. As the plant grows, they unfurl at the rate of one per week in warm weather, and extend upward and outward growing as long as 9 ft. in length and 2 ft. in width. They may be entirely green, green with maroon splotches, or green on the upper side and red purple beneath.

The inflorescence is a terminal spike shooting out from the heart at the tip of the stem. At first, it is a large, long-oval, tapering and purple-clad bud. As it opens, it is seen that the slim, tubular, white flowers are clustered in whorled double rows along the floral stalk. Each cluster is covered by a thick, waxy, hood-like bract, purple outside and deep-red within. Female flowers occupy the lower 5 to 15 rows. Above them may be some rows of hermaphrodite or neuter flowers. Male flowers are borne in the upper rows.

In about a day after the flower clusters open, the male flowers and their bracts are shed, leaving most of the upper stalk naked except at the very tip where there usually remains an unopened bud containing the last-formed of the male flowers.

As the young fruits develop from female flowers, the bracts are soon shed and the fully-grown fruits are formed. The fruit turns from deep green to yellow or red as they ripen. The commonly cultivat-

ed types are generally seedless with minute vestiges of ovules visible as brown specks in the slightly hollow or faintly pithy centre, especially when the fruit is overripe. Banana seeds are used for propagation only in breeding programmes. Corms are customarily used for planting.

Edible bananas are restricted to tropical or near-tropical regions, roughly the area between latitudes 30°N and 30°S. Within this band, there are varied climates with different lengths of dry season and different degrees and patterns of precipitation.

A suitable banana climate is a mean temperature of 80°F (26.67 °C) and mean rainfall of 10 cm per month. There should not be more than three months of dry season.

Medicinal use

According to Ayurveda, banana is sweet, astringent and cooling. Its post-digestive effect is sour. It is smooth, heavy and acts as a laxative if taken in excess. It increases Pitha and Kapha, and decreases Vāta.

In India, banana juice is extracted from the corm and used as a home remedy for jaundice, sometimes with the addition of honey, and for kidney stones.

It is a valuable source of vitamins A, C and B6, and potassium. The fruit averages 125 gm of which approximately 75% is water and 25% dry matter. Banana contains sucrose, fructose and glucose, and also a protein called tryptophan that is converted into serotonin in the body. This helps in overcoming depression.

Banana contains 116 kilo calories, 27.2 gm of carbohydrates, 1.2 gm of proteins, 0.3 mg of phosphorus, 0.36 mg of iron, 88 mg of potassium, and 36.6 mg of sodium per 100 gm edible portion.

It is the only raw fruit that can be taken in case of chronic ulcer. It neutralises the acidity of gastric juices and reduces irritation by coating the lining of the stomach.

All parts of the banana plant have medicinal applications -- the flowers help in case of bronchitis, dysentery and ulcers; cooked flowers are given to diabetics; the astringent plant sap is used in cases of hysteria, epilepsy, leprosy, fever, haemorrhage, acute dysentery and diarrhoea. It is applied on haemorrhoids and insect bites too. The young leaves are used as poultices to treat burns and other skin afflictions; the astringent ashes of the unripe peel and leaves are taken if there is dysentery or diarrhoea and used for treating malignant ulcers. The roots are administered to a patient suffering from digestive disorders or dysentery. Banana seed mucilage is used in the treatment of diarrhoea in India.

As food

The ripe banana is utilised in several ways. It is simply peeled and eaten, or sliced and used in fruit salads, sandwiches, custards and gelatins. It is mashed and used in ice-creams, bread, muffins and cream pies. Ripe bananas are often sliced lengthwise, baked or broiled, and served (perhaps with a garnish of brown sugar or chopped peanuts) as an accompaniment to ham and other meat. Ripe bananas may be thinly sliced and cooked with lemon juice and sugar to make jam or sauce, stirring frequently for nearly 30 minutes until the mixture jells.

Eat at least one banana a day. They are said to contain all the 8 amino acids the human body cannot produce on its own.

Keep bananas on a fruit dish in the living room at room temperature. If you want the bananas to ripen faster, place them in the sun. Never store bananas in the refrigerator like in the case of other tropical fruits, tomatoes and bell peppers. If the temperature is below 8 degrees Celsius, the fruit will decay from the inside. They will not ripen, but turn black if kept in a refrigerator.

*Courtesy: . Julia F. Morton, Miami, FL. (Fruits of warm climates-1987)

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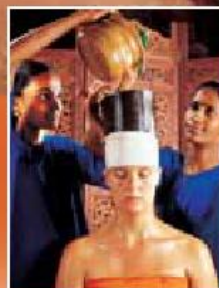
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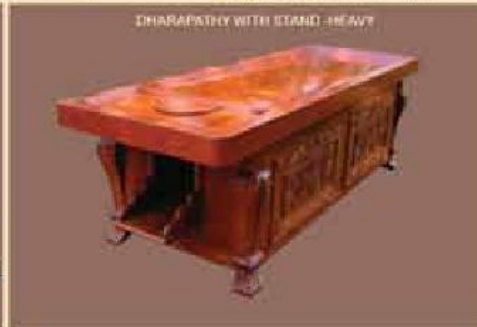
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Scent % divine

Sandalwood is considered the epitome of excellence, which impregnates with fragrance even the axe that attacks it.

Name: Sandalwood (East Indian Sandalwood)

Family: *Santalaceae*

Botanical Name: *Santalum Album*

Other Names:

Sandalwood, Chandana, White Sandalwood, White Saunders, Yellow Sandalwood, Chandan, Chandanam, Safed Chandan, Srigandha

The Sandalwood tree is one of the highest-yielding fragrant flora species on earth. It is also known as “wooden gold,” the epitome of excellence which impregnates with fragrance even the axe that attacks it.

The tree and its heartwood enjoy a pride of place in Vedic texts; it is considered sacred, and is used as a burning material during religious ceremonies by Hindus, Parsis, Muslims and Buddhists. Many Hindus apply sandalwood paste on their forehead, right in between the eyebrows. This is supposed to keep their “third eye” cool. Sandalwood is believed to enhance the effects of

spiritual practices, calm the mind and increase mental clarity.

An evergreen semi-parasite with slender branches, the sandalwood tree grows to a medium height of 30 feet. Its bark is reddish, dark grey or nearly black, and rough with vertical cracks in old trees. The leaves are thin, glabrous, ovate-lanceolate or elliptic-ovate.

Its unscented flowers are brownish purple, reddish purple, violet or straw colour. From the age of about three, the tree flowers twice a year during the period from March to April and September to October.

The trees flourish in regions with cool climate, moderate rain-



fall, plentiful sunshine and long periods of dry weather. They can be seen in the comparatively dry regions of peninsular India from the Vindhya mountains southwards, especially in Mysore and Tamil Nadu. Those seen in many other regions of India are usually of inferior quality.

It takes 60 to 80 years for the tree to reach full maturity, when the heartwood has its highest oil content. As it grows, the essential oil collects in the roots and heartwood; this process takes at least 15 to 20 years. The core of the dark heartwood gradually develops, and is covered by outer sapwood.

Properties

Sandalwood oil and paste have a calming and cooling effect on the body and the mind. It helps relieve the severity of fever and burns, and stops excessive sweating. In general, it relieves one of Pitha *dosha* and helps restore the balance in the body after over-exposure to the sun.

The oil or the paste can help heal skin diseases such as infectious sores, ulcers, acne and rashes. Sandalwood powder helps in smoothening and cooling the skin, and can be made into a paste, lotion or soap for cleansing, calming and hydrating sensitive or ageing skin.

Sandalwood acts as a disinfectant, diuretic, expectorant and sedative. It is light and rough in nature, and cold in action. It tastes sweet and pungent, but the after-taste is bitter. Sandalwood also balances the circulatory, digestive, respiratory and nervous systems. The essential oil is used in Ayurvedic medicine for the treatment of somatic and mental disorders.

The stem and the roots contain a fragrant volatile oil that is thick and yellow, with a sharp odour. The oil extracted from the seeds is red and stable. Unlike many other types of aromatic wood, sandalwood retains its fragrance for decades.

The medicinal properties of sandalwood are found in its oil, which



Mysore sandalwood

The Sultan of Mysore declared sandalwood a royal tree in 1792. Till 1916, the erstwhile princely state of Mysore used to export sandalwood to France and other European countries for extracting oil. But during World War I, when huge stocks of wood piled up in the state, two oil extraction units were set up: one in Mysore and the other in Shimoga. Since then, Mysore has become a synonym for sandalwood oil.

All sandalwood trees, even those grown on private land, are still under the protection and ownership of the Government of India.

Mysore sandalwood is famous for its superb quality not only in India, but also abroad. Its quality is excellent and fragrance unparalleled. The price of sandalwood items is exorbitantly high because the tree is now an endangered species. Massive felling goes on because of the high demand.

Mysore sandal soap, made from pure sandalwood oil extracts, is free of harmful chemicals, and hence is very popular. Sandalwood incense too is in great demand. Sandalwood handicrafts are a big draw among the scores of tourists who visit Mysore every year.

Sandalwood oil

Sandalwood oil is obtained by steam distillation of chips and billets cut from the heartwood.

After 15-20 years, oil collects in the heartwood, or in the centre of the trunk. As the scent of sandalwood grows stronger, the wood turns more yellow. When harvested, the heartwood is ground into a powder and then steam-distilled into oil for use in cosmetics, soaps, candles,

medicines and perfumes. The main constituent of sandalwood oil is santalol.

The essential oil contains high amounts of alpha and beta santalol. These small molecules have antibacterial as well as sedative properties. The characteristic odour and medicinal properties of sandalwood oil are mainly due to the presence of santalol.

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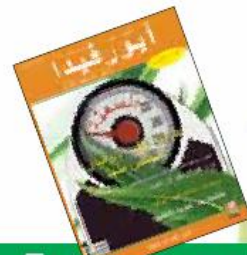
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can be squeezed from the wood or extracted with alcohol or water. It has antiseptic as well as disinfectant properties. The oil can be used for treating bronchitis and mucous tissue inflammation. A decoction of the wood can help in case of indigestion and fever, and bacterial skin infections.

Sandalwood is good in most inflammatory conditions and for cleansing the blood. The oil or paste is useful for infectious sores or ulcers if applied externally. Sandalwood energises your intelligence.

Uses

Its heartwood is used for carving. The powdered bark and spent wood (left after oil extraction) form an important raw material in the manufacture of incense sticks.

Sandalwood scrapings are powdered and sold in pouches. This makes an excellent face and skin pack. It is also used for making soaps, and cosmetic products like face powder and perfumes.

An ancient Indian remedy for the prevention of sunstroke is a glass of cold milk with a drop of sandalwood oil. This is also supposed to prevent boils and other skin ailments caused by excessive heat in the body.

Therapeutic Use

- Sandalwood powder combined with rose water and turmeric can be used to treat acne.
- A paste of sandalwood powder, camphor powder and turmeric roots out pimples, without leaving a scar. This paste should be applied to pimples before going to bed.
- Sandalwood acts as a natural cleanser and conditioner for the skin. It ensures a glowing complexion.
- Sunburns can be treated by mixing coconut oil and almond oil in sandalwood powder. Apply this oil on the affected areas for a fair complexion.

- Sandalwood paste is an age-old remedy for prickly heat. It prevents excessive sweating and heals inflamed skin.
- Temperature in common fevers can be lowered by applying sandalwood paste on the temples. It also relieves headache.
- Sandalwood powder with lime juice and a pinch of turmeric can decrease skin allergy.
- Sandalwood oil is used for massage in aroma therapy. It moisturises, hydrates and soothes itchy skin. Its astringent action balances oily skin conditions.
- Many ayurvedic formulations that contain sandalwood as the

main ingredient are prescribed in case of urinary disorders and cystitis. Sandalwood acts against the bacteria, decreasing pus cells in the urine. A decoction made by boiling sandalwood powder with sugar can be taken 3 or 4 times daily.

- The essence of sandalwood or sandalwood syrup can be taken regularly to get relief from the problem of unquenchable thirst.
- The symptoms of depression, anxiety and insomnia can be relieved using sandalwood because it acts as a relaxant
- Sandalwood oil is effective in curing bronchitis and laryngitis.

How to cultivate it

Sandalwood is a root parasite. It should be supported by other plants for growth.

- Make a soil bed mixing red earth, cattle manure and sand in the proportion of 2:1:1.
- Sow the sandalwood seed in the soil bed $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" below the soil and water it lightly every day.
- It takes 4 to 8 weeks for the seed to sprout.
- After sprouting, water the plant only on alternate days. After a month, the saplings can be transplanted to a larger area. Plant the sandalwood

seedlings along with the host seedlings.

- The preferable time for transplantation is between May and October. Each plant should be 2.5 to 4 metres away from the next plant. It needs great care in the first year and the host plant should not outgrow it. Sandalwood trees grow well with hosts such as acacia, albizzia, bambusa, cassia, pongamia and eucalyptus.
- The tree flourishes best in altitudes of 600 to 1,050 metres. The ideal temperature for its growth is between 12°C and 30°C.



Glossary



Abhyangam: An oil massage given for 45 minutes a day for 14 days; highly effective against obesity loss of skin luster, sleeplessness and fatigue

Agni: It is the form of fire and heat that is the basis of the digestive system; force residing within the body responsible for digestion; the transformation of one substance into another; metabolism. Agni is contained within pitha.

Āhāra rasa: The elemental form, or essence, of food
Ālochaka pitha : Subdosha of pitha. Digests light/visual impressions. On higher level, related to perception. Resides in eyes (pupils)

Ama : Toxic residue that is left behind as a by-product of poor digestion.

Āmāsaya : Stomach

Amla: Sour

Anna : Food

Annavaha srota: The channel that carries food; originates in the stomach; the first half of the digestive channel (from the mouth to the end of the small intestine)

aruci : Anorexia

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.

Asthi : Bone

Atisāra : Diarrhea

Atyagni : High agni; when the strength of the digestive fire is too high. Also called *tikshṇāgni*

Balya: Herbs which increase strength and are tonifying

Bhrājaka pitha : Subdosha of pitha. Digests touch, temperature, pressure, pain. Resides in skin

Bhoota : Element, "that which manifests as matter"

Bhoota agnis : The elemental agnis; there are five, one for each element (akashagni, vayuagni, tejagni, jalāgni, and prithviagni)

Bodhaka kapha: Subdosha of kapha. Moistens mouth; saliva. Protects mouth from heat of food and roughness of food and chewing. Responsible for aesthetic taste. Located in mouth.

Caraka Samhita : Considered the greatest of all the classical texts on Ayurveda. Written by Caraka

Churṇa (choorna) : Powdered herb; usually a

powdered formula of herbs

Dhātu : Tissue (structural units of human body)

Dhātu agni : Tissue agnis; there are seven, one for each of the major tissues of the body

Dinacharya : Daily routine prescribed for maintaining health

Grishma: The summer season

Hemanta: The winter season

Jatharāgni: The digestive fire; the most important of all the agnis

Kapha: The force behind the structure and stability of the body; the elements are water and earth; its qualities are heavy, cold, moist, static, smooth and soft; its root is in the upper stomach (mucous)

Kashāyam: Astringent taste or decoction

Kayāgni : Bodily fire; the digestive fire; the most important of all the agnis. Also called jatharagni

Kitta: The remains of food in the large intestine.

Kledaka kapha : Subdosha of kapha. Protects lining of stomach against acids. Located in stomach.

Majja : One of the Seven Dhatus, bone marrow, it is unctuous and soft, main function is to oleate the body, to fill up the bone, and to nourish the sukra

Māmsa dhātu : One of the seven "dhātus" or tissues; consists of muscles, ligaments and skin. Composed mainly of earth and some water and fire.

Medas dhātu : One of the seven "dhātus" or tissues; consists of fat (composed primarily of water). Lubricates tissues of body through oiliness.

Nādi: Nādis are subtle nerve channels; an energetic template of the nerves through which prāna (subtle energies) flow. These channels permeate the entire subtle body. The mind is the sum total of all the nādis. Classical yogic texts state that there are 72,000 nādis. Nādi bears different meanings in different texts; it is commonly translated to mean nerve, but can also mean subtle channels or channels in general. Other terms used synonymously with nadi include dhamini, sira and srota.

Nasyam : Nasal drops; clears nasal passages and sinuses. Alleviates all the doshas from the neck up, maximizes absorption of prāna, treats diseases of the head, sinuses and nasal passages.

Ojas : The subtle immune system; the essence that gives the tissues and the mind strength and endurance; the force that keeps the tissues healthy.



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Velankanni...

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Velankanni is located 12 km south of Nagapattinam on the Coromandel Coast, in Tamil Nadu. Thousands of pilgrims belonging to various castes and communities flock daily to this 'Lourdes of the East'. The church has an imposing facade with tall spires and the wings present the shape of a cross. A festival is celebrated for ten days every year and pilgrims from all over the country and even abroad flock to the site.

How to reach :

Air : Nearest Airport is Chennai & Trichy
Rail : Nearest railhead is Trichy, Thanjavur

What to do:

The Velankanni Church is the main attraction here. It is in honour of the Lady of Health who is also known as the Madonna of Velankanni. Besides the church, there is also the Sri Rangam Temple in Trichy, the Navagraha temples surrounding Thanjavur and the Darga at Nagore.

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