

Ayurveda for Her
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Ayurveda, the ancient holistic healing system of India, is a complete approach to health and lifestyle management. This system incorporates diet, exercise, life activity routines, psychotherapeutic practices, massage, and, of course, botanical medicine, which is the foundation of Ayurvedic therapeutics.

People of ancient cultures experienced the natural world in which they lived, and sought to develop a way to systematically understand their relationship to it. They reasoned that they were made of the same stuff as the rest of the natural world, and were subject to the effects of circumstances in their living environment. In culture after culture, often widely separated by distance and time, people came to remarkably similar conclusions about how their bodies responded to changes in the climate, diet, season of the year, and so forth.

Healers in these cultures put together systematic metaphors for how medicines interact with the body and mind, based on centuries of patient observations of their patients. Gradually a consensus emerged. To understand Ayurvedic treatment and health management, we need to understand the underlying physiological concepts that form the Ayurvedic world view.

Fundamentally, therapists concluded that “like increases like”. In other words, an external factor, when introduced to the body, will create a similar reaction in the body of the person experiencing the change. For example, going out into the cold weather will make your body cold. Eating heavy food will make your body heavy. This seems obvious on the surface, and it is ultimately pretty easy to grasp intuitively, but putting together all the intricacies of every possible effect of every possible natural medicine on every possible person is a daunting task. This metaphor of *energetics* creates a system that is complex enough to represent the tremendous complexity of the human being, yet simple enough in concept to be useful.

Energetic evaluation of the body is based on experiencing the body with the human senses. Since everyone experiences the world in subtly different ways, it takes centuries, potentially, for a consensus to develop among practitioners about any given remedy. It creates a structure in which herbs can easily be identified and understood. According to energetic systems, including Ayurveda, the sum total of a medicine, say an herb, is the important consideration.

For example, we may know from modern science that an herb contains antibacterial activity. We want to give that herb to treat an acute bacterial infection. But we also know that the herb tends to increase body temperature- it is “hypermetabolic, or “hot”. If the patient has a fever, or is a person who is particularly prone to develop inflammation that is difficult to control, we would think twice about using that specific herb. It might kill the bacterium very nicely, and treat the infection, but the whole person would be worse off as a net total than before we started. Instead, we would seek out an herb that would kill the infection, but which had a “cooling” energy. This difference in approach can make a world of difference in clinical practice, and gives us an invaluable tool in managing a case for the best in the long term, and in treating the person as a whole human being. We don’t want to make people worse.

Using an energetic model, the properties of herbs are collated systematically according to their taste, temperature, effect before and after digestion, and similar factors.

While the modern method of analysis is to isolate and identify key active ingredients, which is incredibly complicated, and is far from complete, considering how recent the effort is, the art and science of energetics creates an impression from the whole, allowing us to grasp the overall nature of the food or herb, and predict with great accuracy the expected consequences of its use. This system of herbal energetics allows the practitioner to match the actions and nature of the herbal medicine to the individual patient.

Ayurveda assigns all matter/energy interactions in the world to a scheme of five primal elements (metaphorical concepts that describe physiological processes and environmental interactions): earth, water, fire, air and ether.

Element	Characteristics	Pharmacological effects
Earth	Heavy, tough, hard, dry, stable, dense, gross, smelly	Plumpness, heaviness, compactness, stability
Water	Liquid, oily, cold, dull, soft, slimy, strong taste	Stickiness, oiliness, compactness, softness, moisturizing, contentment
Fire	Hot, sharp, subtle, light, oily, vision promoting	Heat, oxidation, metabolism, luster, radiance, color
Air	Soft, light, cold, oily, rough, dry, subtle, touch promoting	Roughness, dryness, lightness, aversion
Ether	Soft, light, subtle, smooth, sound promoting	Softness, porosity, lightness

To simplify the understanding of the actions of these energies, for therapeutic application, diagnosis and treatment, the five elements are further condensed into three primal metabolic forces, called *doshas*. These forces underlie all of the foundation of Ayurvedic diagnosis and therapeutics.

Elements	Dosha	Characteristics	Actions	Problems
Earth and Water	Kapha	Cold, wet, heavy	Stability, solidity, lubrication, tissue building	Mucus, lung diseases, high cholesterol, lethargy
Water and Fire	Pitta	Hot, wet, light	Metabolism, digestion, assimilation, body heat, glandular secretion	Inflammation, heartburn, skin rash, hemorrhoids
Air and Ether	Vata	Cold, dry, light	Movement, nerve regulation, respiration, circulation, excretion	Constipation, anxiety, fatigue, insomnia, dry skin

As each person is viewed as an individual in the ways we've mentioned, so, too, can we understand how each person should conduct their life, according to the dosha they are seeking to balance. Your schedule, your relationships, your choice of exercise, all can be calculated using Ayurveda.

When Kapha dominates, people are slow and lethargic. They like a lot of sleep, and tend toward obesity. When Pitta dominates, people are hot, intense, aggressive, and demanding. When vata dominates people are spaced-out, flighty, erratic, anxious and insomniac. Through Ayurveda, the ultimate self-care system, we can adjust all these factors with careful lifestyle choices.

Ayurveda and Women

Ayurveda aims to nourish, restore and balance the body functions that have been taxed by the wear and tear of daily life. Signs of aging are all marks of lack of "juice," from arthritis with lack of joint fluids, to fatigue with lack of endocrine hormones, to menopause difficulties with vaginal dryness.

Ayurveda compares this process to old leaves that dry out and blow away: "bodies become shorter, smaller, and stringier as they age." Ayurvedic practices are directed toward strengthening, purifying and nourishing body tissues to bring back the glow of youth - replacing that "juiciness." Ayurveda enhances health, produces the finest bodily tissues, reduces senility and other diseases of old age, lengthens life and promotes memory, intelligence and beauty. These regimes act to increase body tissues, digestive power, endocrine function, elimination of wastes, brain function, immunity and homeostasis.

Generally, compared to men, women tend to be colder (think those cold feet under the covers), drier (remember all those bottles of moisturizers?), and lighter- all vata characteristics. Over a lifetime, the goal for a woman is to stay warm, juicy and grounded.

Rejuvenation in Ayurveda comes in two forms - lifestyle and medicine. "Hot" activities, such as passion and anger, age the body more rapidly, so calming behavior is suggested. To live longer and have better health, speak the truth, avoid becoming angry, practice meditation, avoid conflict, and steer away from drugs and alcohol.

Each of us is unique. As different as our body type is, so, too, are our nutritional requirements. Ayurveda recognizes this, and emphasizes the correct diet for each individual.

For example, if you are a thin framed, always cold person with dry skin, you have a Vata constitution, and should eat a Vata-balancing diet as your lifetime program. However, if this week you are retaining water, feel sluggish, and have a chest full of mucus, you are experiencing a Kapha imbalance, and should use a Kapha balancing diet until your body is again balanced and healthy.

The Woman's Diet

Diet is the first and most basic building block of good health in Ayurveda, and can be an effective treatment for disease, even when used alone. It is the safest therapy,

and can be used by anyone as self care. Of course, the results can materialize more slowly than more directed methods, such as herbal medicine.

Improper diet is the main underlying physical factor that induces disease. So, when we modify the diet, we also get at one of the underlying problems.

That said, women generally do better with a diet of mainly cooked, easy to digest, moist food.

Sweet taste (not white sugar), contained in whole carbohydrates and good quality fats, is the most rejuvenating, so sweet food, including milk, ghee (clarified butter), and especially honey, is recommended to rebuild body tissues and restore sexual juices.

According to Ayurvedic authority David Frawley, O.M.D., the diet that promotes health and sexual rejuvenation is a “nutritive vegetarian program, emphasizing whole grains like wheat and rice, seeds, nuts, milk products, and natural sugars, such as honey.”¹

Rice is a very basic, yet very effective rejuvenating food. Easily digestible, it increases juiciness, moisturizing the tissues. Maya Tiwari, Ayurvedic nutritionist, singles out basmati (literally “queen of fragrance”) as the premier variety.² An aromatic, nutty flavored rice, basmati has a scent that has been compared with jasmine mixed with walnut. This rice is used in Ayurveda as a cleanser and healer for all types of people.

Noted Ayurvedic physician Robert Svoboda makes a powerful argument for using honey to rejuvenate your body.³ He points out that honey is made from pollen, the sperm of plants. Plant reproductive tissue increases human reproductive function, according to the Ayurvedic principle of “like increases like.”

Honey is innately rejuvenating, with its sweet taste, and is considered predigested, allowing it to nourish all parts of the body with ease. For these reasons, honey is considered to be the best enhancer, or “vehicle” for all Ayurvedic rejuvenating medicines. Dr. Svoboda recommends mixing raw, unfiltered honey into your herbal tea to allow the honey to act as a vehicle for the active principles of the herbs.

Ghee (clarified butter) contains the nutritive essence of milk. It is a prime revitalizing food. David Frawley, O.M.D., and Vasant Lad, Ayurvedic physician, promote ghee for enhancing tissue lubrication, increasing digestion and liver health.⁴ While ghee is a fat, it is unique, according to Ayurveda, in supporting, rather than stressing the liver. Ghee is an important building remedy for the brain and intellect, bone marrow, and reproductive tissue.

Onion and garlic increase sexual energy, libido, and sexual secretions. They are good aphrodisiacs.

Woman’s Herbs

Shatavari root (*Asparagus racemosus* - “hundred husbands”) is the main Ayurvedic sexual rejuvenating tonic for women, with much the same role as the famous Chinese tonic, dong quai. Considered a builder and balancer for the female reproductive organs, it increases milk and sexual juices in general. This herb is said to increase fertility, and balance female hormones, making it valuable in treating menopausal complaints, such as vaginal atrophy.

This cooling herb acts as a blood cleanser, supports the immune system, improves the intellect, and enhances digestion and physical strength. A recent study found that a medicine containing shatavari reduced stress effects substantially.⁵

Drs. Lad and Frawley further propose shatavari as a soothing treatment for dry or inflamed membranes of the lungs, stomach, kidneys, and sex organs. They suggest preparing it as a milk decoction (simmer in milk, strain) combined with ghee, raw sugar, and honey.

Shatavari is related to the Western asparagus root, which has similar properties. Women in Asia start shatavari at puberty, and often take 1-2 grams per day for a lifetime. In many ethnic groups in Asia, menopausal complaints are almost unknown. To treat a wide variety of female hormonal symptoms (PMS, menstrual cramps, mood changes, menopausal hot flashes, etc.), higher doses can be used. Work up gradually to the dose that is effective, to about 7000 mg per day.

Amla fruit (*Emblica officinalis* - Indian gooseberry) is a small, very sour fruit that is the most widely used general rejuvenative in Ayurveda. This fruit is a spectacular source of vitamin C, with 20-30 times the amount, pound for pound, of oranges. The vitamin C in amla is heat stable, so it survives cooking and drying. No wonder it is such a well know rejuvenator. Due to its vitamin C content, amla is a superbly powerful antioxidant. It is a superb tonic for the eyes, having been shown to improve nearsightedness significantly in recent studies.

Amla is a tonic for the blood, bones, liver, and heart. It enhances production of red blood cells and strengthens the teeth, hair, and nails, as well as improving eyesight and regulating blood sugar.

An animal study recently found that garlic, onion and amla, separately and together, reduced blood fats that had been pumped by feeding a diet of 21% butter and beef.⁶

Indian gooseberry is the basis for “Chyavanprash,” the most famous Ayurvedic rejuvenating jelly. As a mild all around health tonic, chyavanprash can be used by people of all ages. Dr. Frawley offers this remedy as being good for almost any weakness or as a general energy supplement.

Into a base of fresh amla fruit, over two dozen other herbal ingredients are added for their synergistic effects, including ghee, sugar cane juice, honey, clove, and cinnamon.

Modern scientists say that chyavanprash protects the liver from damage⁷ and reduces blood sugar and cholesterol significantly.⁸

For sexual rejuvenation, stir chyavanprash into warm milk or spread on toast, and consume 1-2 Tbs. every day.

This is the most widely used herbal blend in Ayurveda is *Triphala*. This blend is the most compatible medicine for all the doshas, and will benefit literally anyone who takes it. Since it balances all three doshas and contains all six tastes in proper proportion, it is suitable for all women from childhood to elderhood. The name means “three fruits” in Sanskrit. The formula contains the fruits of amla (*Emblica officinalis*), bibitaki (*Terminalia belerica*), and haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*). The fruits are dried, powdered, mixed together, and encapsulated.

The uses for triphala fill volumes in the Ayurvedic literature. Besides being a general tonic, it is a light laxative, skin, eye, and liver nourisher, and a general detoxifier. It is used as a cleansing throat gargle, and as a dry massage powder.

A study from 2002 found that triphala is strongly protective against radiation damage.⁹

Amla is the best single herb for generally controlling Pitta. Bibitaki is the best single herb for generally controlling Kapha. This herb nourishes the lungs, throat, voice, eyes, and hair. It excels at removing stones and accumulations of toxins (mucus, cholesterol, mineral deposits) in the digestive, urinary, and respiratory tracts. It is unique in being both laxative and astringent, so it purges the intestines, while simultaneously toning the tissues.

Haritaki is the best single herb for generally controlling Vata, and is considered by some to be the single most important Ayurvedic herb. Widely used in Tibetan medicine, it is called the “king of herbs” there. Since Vata promotes constipation, the gentle laxative qualities of haritaki are perfect for balancing that dosha. It nourishes the brain and nerves. It is strongly astringent, contracting tissues, and is therefore used for various ulcers, prolapses, and fluid discharges. In Ayurveda, haritaki is called “the mother,” and is thought to increase mental/spiritual awareness. It is given to children upon the premature loss of a parent.

According to recent scientific reports, haritaki prevents cancer¹⁰ and helps wounds heal faster.¹¹

Use triphala every day for life, at 1 gram per day.

Through moderate and consistent lifestyle and health building practices, it is clear that women can enjoy life at a level that is far beyond what most people have learned to tolerate. Happiness, in all areas of your life, including the bedroom, is your birthright. With five thousand years of experience in helping people stay happy, healthy, and sexy, Ayurveda can show you the way.

Supplement to Ayurveda for Her article

Andrea-

My only concern is a slight one about the distinction between the use of the terms defining the doshas when describing constitution and everyday dosha levels. The question, “What’s Your Dosha?” is problematic. We should talk about it.

--KP

References for amla:

Lad and Frawley, Yoga of Herbs, p.157

Todd Caldecott, Triphala, <http://www.wrc.net/phyto/triphala.html>

<http://www.ayurveda.com./materiamedica/Embllica%20officinalis-Amalaka-Indian%20Gooseberry.htm>

<http://www.wrc.net/phyto/Amla.html>

The Amazing Amla Berry - by Rama Kant Mishra,
<http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/Mishra7.html>

I can give you as much more of either of these as you might need, but I know space is tight.

Aloe (Aloe vera)

You might think of aloe as a remedy for sunburn, but Ayurveda takes a different tack. Called “kumari” (“virgin”), this herb is said to restore the energy of youth and to renew the female nature. It is a main tonic for the female reproductive system, and it also nourishes the liver, spleen and blood.

Aloe balances blood sugar and fats¹² and promotes digestion. You may use aloe to encourage a menstrual period and balance the menstrual cycle.

Aloe can be used by anyone, as it balances all three doshas. Since it is sweet, bitter and cooling, it especially benefits pitta dosha. This valuable herb combines well with Shatavari.

Guggul gum (Commiphora mukul)

Ayurvedic herbs can help a woman lose weight and lower her cholesterol. Guggul gum is a standout for managing blood fats, where it rivals any natural substance. In studies, guggul has lowered total cholesterol by over 20 percent, while increasing good HDL cholesterol by 36 percent, without dietary adjustments.¹³

Guggul can also help to reduce overall body fat. It affects the thyroid, which accounts for its fat loss benefit.^{14,15,16} Take a dose of 1,500 mg, three times daily.

The combination of guggul and triphala recently showed a startling advantage in controlling body fat. Forty eight obese people took 500 mg of this Ayurvedic combination three times a day for three months, with no attempt to control their diet. The consequent weight loss averaged almost 18 pounds, and their total cholesterol reduced 18 points.¹⁷

Another placebo-controlled study from 1999 combined guggul extract with *Garcinia cambogia* extract and tyrosine. Over six weeks, twenty obese persons had a significant decrease in body fat mass and average body weight. The subjects lost body fat, but not lean mass. People had more energy, and there were no adverse effects.¹⁸

What to Take

Herb	Form	Daily Dose
Shatavari	capsules	1-2 grams
Amla	capsules	1-2 grams
Triphala	capsules	1-2 grams
Guggul gum	Capsules	4,500 mg
Aloe	Gel or juice	1-3 Tbs.

Sidebars

To Balance Kapha	To Balance Pitta	To Balance Vata
<i>Be Active</i>	<i>Be Calm</i>	<i>Be Moderate</i>
Stimulating activities	Rest and relax	Adequate sleep
Physical labor	Cut down the schedule	No staying up late
Stay warm, stay active	Cut down striving	Disciplined schedule
Sunbathing	Stay cool	Regular hours
Less sleep (shorter nights rest, no naps)	Take in cool breezes	Consistency
Mix it up (variety of activities)	Gardens and gardening, flowers	Take in the sun
Avoid cold and damp	Contentment	Sexual moderation
Cultivate physical challenges	Forgiveness	Mild physical effort
Mental stimulation	Simplify your life	Avoid wind and cold
Promote travel	Avoid the sun	Avoid overwork
Avoid “couch potato” behavior	Moonlight	Avoid all types of stress
		Avoid intense travel
		Avoid excess stimulation (TV, etc.)

Personalize Your Love Life with Ayurveda

Your relationship can improve if you understand the doshas. Ayurveda suggests a spouse of a different constitution. This helps you balance each other in the relationship, and prevents your offspring from being too extreme in anyone dosha. Two Vatas produce a child who is doubly Vata, for example.

For balancing Kapha	For Balancing Pitta	For Balancing Vata
Marry Vata	Marry Kapha or Vata	Marry Kapha
Active family life	Soothing conversations	Slow and Steady
Stimulating conversations	No confrontation	Less thinking, more acting
Encourage talking	Relaxing massages	Careful managing money
Go out and get interested	Take “cool off” breaks	Commitment
Encourage sexual interest	Slow down and cool off to take time and care for sex	Consistent and supportive behavior Caution with sexual experimentation
		Don’t overtalk and overanalyze

Sidebar

Personalize your Exercise Routine with Ayurveda

For Balancing Kapha	For Balancing Pitta	For Balancing Vata
Get hot	Don't overheat, cool air	Stay warm
Sweat	Don't be fanatical - take a break	Mild only - don't overdo
Vigorous aerobic	Drink plenty of water	Regular routine - stick with a program
Work up to pushing your limits	Vary the routine to avoid boredom	Slow, gradual progress
Discipline	Varied overall fitness program	Walking
Powerful calisthenics		Stretching, yoga

Sidebar

Energetic Characteristics

Temperature. This implies body temperature, but also is generally construed to mean metabolic rate. The spectrum is from hot to cold.

Weight. This is an observation of body weight, and also general density of the tissues.

Moisture. This is an observation of the lubricious nature of the body fluids, and the degree of fluid retention.

Taste. Taste is essentially a measure of biochemical composition.

Sidebar

Diets for the Doshas

To achieve balance, the diet for treating each dosha will have the characteristics that are opposite that of the dosha that is dominating and causing the problem.

Dosha	Qualities	Diet Should Be
Kapha	Cold, Wet Heavy	Warm, Dry, Light
Pitta	Hot, Wet, Light	Cool, Dry, Heavier
Vata	Cold, Dry Light	Warm, Moist, Heavier

Foods for Balancing Kapha

Energy	Warm, Dry, Light (Avoid cold, oily, heavy)
Tastes	Pungent, Bitter, Astringent
Strategy	Eat less total food, lowfat, low calorie, hot spices, occasional fasting, less frequency, largest meal midday
Emphasize	Dry and astringent fruits (apple, raisin) Vegetables, especially raw Dry grains (rice cakes) Hot spices (black pepper, chiles) Cooked beans with warming spices Spicy herbal teas (ginger)
Avoid	Sweet fruits Nuts Milk products Oil

Foods for Balancing Pitta

Energy	Cool, Dry, Heavier (Avoid Hot, Wet, Light)
Tastes	Sweet, Bitter, Astringent
Strategy	Mild, bland food, served cool, raw, no hot spices, low oil, eat when calm, three regular meals
Emphasize	Sweet fruits Sweet and bitter vegetables (greens) Beans in general Natural sweeteners (maple syrup) Mild cheeses (cottage cheese) Sweet and cooling drinks (apple juice)
Avoid	Sour fruits Pungent vegetables (onion) Nuts Hot spices (chiles) Fermented milk products (yogurt) Oils

Foods for Balancing Vata

Energy	Warm, Moist, Heavier (Avoid Cold, Dry, Light)
Tastes	Sweet, Sour, Salty
Strategy	Nourishing, easy to digest, warm, filling, heavy, moistening, strengthening, small frequent regular meals, mild warming spices, calm and concentrate while eating
Emphasize	Sweet fruits Cooked vegetables Cooked grains (oatmeal) Nuts Natural sweeteners Mild warming spices (basil) Milk products in moderation, especially warm
Avoid	Dry fruits Dry grains (rice cakes) Raw vegetables Cabbage family (broccoli) Beans in general Any food which causes gas

Personalize Your Lifestyle with Ayurveda

To Balance Kapha	To Balance Pitta	To Balance Vata
<i>Be Active</i>	<i>Be Calm</i>	<i>Be Moderate</i>
Stimulating activities	Rest and relax	Adequate sleep
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Stay warm, stay active	Cut down striving	Disciplined schedule
Sunbathing	Stay cool	Regular hours
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Sidebar

Ayurvedic Tips for Staying Young

Moderate lifestyle habits - regular meals and elimination, sound sleep

Keep your digestion working well

Regular massage with oil

Oil your feet, scalp, and face daily

Positive emotions in your life (love, compassion)

Meditation

Foods

Hot, moist foods (soups)

Balanced diet containing a broad range of tastes - sweet, sour, salty, spicy, bitter, astringent.

Use less dry or raw food.

Good quality raw vegetable oil (almond, sesame)

Ghee (clarified butter)

Figs

Dates

Onion, Garlic, ginger

Rice

Eggplant

Sidebar

Rejuvenating Drink

8-10 oz. milk

1-3 tsp. grated fresh ginger root

1-3 tsp. black sesame seed (or white sesame seed)

1-3 tsp. ghee

Cinnamon and clove to taste.

Honey to taste if desired.

Warm milk to comfortable drinking temperature. Blend ingredients in blender. Drink daily as a restorative for sexual function.

Sidebar

Rejuvenating Stew (Kicharee)

1/2 cup basmati rice

1/2 cup lentils or mung beans

6 cups water

2 Tbs. ginger root, peeled and grated

3 cloves garlic, chopped

1/4 cup onion, chopped

1/2 tsp. coriander seed, powder

1/2 tsp. turmeric powder

1/8 tsp. fennel seed

1/8 tsp. cumin seed

1 cup assorted vegetables (carrot, zucchini, broccoli, etc.), chopped.

1 Tbs. ghee

Salt to taste, if desired.

Place rice, lentils, water, and spices in soup pot. Bring to boil. Cook covered on medium heat. After 30 minutes, add vegetables. When very soft and mushy, stir in ghee and serve.

References

¹ Yoga International, January/February 1996.

² A Life of Balance, Healing Arts, 1995.

³ Prakruti, Your Ayurvedic Constitution Geocom, 1989

⁴ The Yoga of Herbs Lotus, 1986

⁵ Bhattacharya SK, Bhattacharya A, Chakrabarti A. Adaptogenic activity of Siotone, a polyherbal formulation of Ayurvedic rasayanas. *Indian J Exp Biol* 2000 Feb;38(2):119-28
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Siotone (ST) is a herbal formulation comprising of *Withania somnifera*, *Ocimum sanctum*, *Asparagus racemosus*, *Tribulus terrestris* and shilajit, all of which are classified in Ayurveda as rasayanas which are reputed to promote physical and mental health, improve defence mechanisms of the body and enhance longevity. These attributes are similar to the modern concept of adaptogenic agents, which are, known to afford protection of the human physiological system against diverse stressors. The present study was undertaken to investigate the adaptogenic activity of ST against chronic unpredictable, but mild, footshock stress induced perturbations in behaviour (depression), glucose metabolism, suppressed male sexual behaviour, immunosuppression and cognitive dysfunction in CF strain albino rats. Gastric ulceration, adrenal gland and spleen weights, ascorbic acid and corticosterone concentrations of adrenal cortex, and plasma corticosterone levels, were used as the stress indices. *Panax ginseng* (PG) was used as the standard adaptogenic agent for comparison. Additionally, rat brain levels of tribulin, an endogenous endocoid postulated to be involved in stress, were also assessed in terms of endogenous monoamine oxidase (MAO) A and MAOB inhibitory activity. Chronic unpredictable footshock induced marked gastric ulceration, significant increase in adrenal gland weight and plasma corticosterone levels, with concomitant decreases in spleen weight, and concentrations of adrenal gland ascorbic acid and corticosterone. These effects were attenuated by ST (50 and 100 mg/kg, p.o.) and PG (100 mg/kg, p.o.), administered once daily over a period of 14 days, the period of stress induction. Chronic stress also induced glucose intolerance, suppressed male sexual behaviour, induced behavioural depression (Porsolt's swim despair test and learned helplessness test) and cognitive dysfunction (attenuated retention of learning in active and passive avoidance tests), and immunosuppression (leucocyte migration inhibition and sheep RBC challenged increase in paw oedema in sensitized rats). All these chronic stress-induced perturbations were attenuated, dose-dependently by ST (50 and 100 mg/kg, p.o.) and PG (100 mg/kg, p.o.). Chronic stress-induced increase in rat brain tribulin activity was also reversed by these doses of ST and by PG. The results indicate that ST has significant adaptogenic activity, qualitatively comparable to PG, against a variety of behavioural, biochemical and physiological perturbations induced by unpredictable stress, which has been proposed to be a better indicator of clinical stress than acute stress parameters. The likely contribution of the individual constituents of ST in the observed adaptogenic action of the polyherbal formulation, have been discussed.

⁶ Augusti KT, Arathy SL, Asha R, Ramakrishnan J, Zaira J, Lekha V, Smitha S, Vijayasree VM. A comparative study on the beneficial effects of garlic (*Allium sativum* Linn), amla (*Embllica Officinalis* Gaertn) and onion (*Allium cepa* Linn) on the hyperlipidemia induced by butter fat and beef fat in rats. *Indian J Exp Biol* 2001 Aug;39(8):760-6

Department of Medical Biochemistry, School of Medical Education, M.G. University, Kottayam, India. Three months feeding of butter fat (BUF) and beef (BF) separately as components of diet at a level of 21% by weight for albino rats, significantly raised their serum and tissue lipids, lipid peroxidation and activities of certain enzymes. BUF was found to be more atherogenic than BF. On incorporation of 5% garlic, amla or onion separately in the above diets, each of them ameliorated the deleterious effects of the animal fats. A higher hyperlipidemic effect of BUF as compared to that of BF may be due to the fact that the ratio of unsaturated to saturated fats is lower for the former (0.56) than for the latter (0.75) and also that the former is richer in cholesterol content than the latter. The order of the curative effects of the vegetables are garlic>amla>onion. The better hypolipidemic effects and correction of elevated levels of certain enzymes shown by garlic and amla may be due to the facts that they contain comparatively better active principles than that found in onions.

⁷ Jose JK, Kuttan R. Hepatoprotective activity of *Embllica officinalis* and Chyavanaprash. *J Ethnopharmacol* 2000 Sep;72(1-2):135-40

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Hepatoprotective activity of *Embllica officinalis* (EO) and Chyavanaprash (CHY) extracts were studied using carbon tetrachloride (CCI(4)) induced liver injury model in rats. EO and CHY extracts were found to inhibit the hepatotoxicity produced by acute and chronic CCI(4) administration as seen from the decreased levels of serum and liver lipid peroxides (LPO), glutamate-pyruvate transaminase (GPT), and alkaline phosphatase (ALP). Chronic CCI(4) administration was also found to produce liver fibrosis as seen from the increased levels of collagen-hydroxyproline and pathological analysis. EO and CHY extracts were found to reduce these elevated levels significantly, indicating that the extract could inhibit the induction of fibrosis in rats.

⁸ Manjunatha S, Jaryal AK, Bijlani RL, Sachdeva U, Gupta SK. Effect of Chyawanprash and vitamin C on glucose tolerance and lipoprotein profile. *Indian J Physiol Pharmacol* 2001 Jan;45(1):71-9

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Chyawanprash is an ancient Indian dietary supplement containing vitamin C (34 mg/100 g) derived from amla (*Embllica officinalis*). In addition, Chyawanprash also contains several other herbal products. The present study was designed to compare the effects of vitamin C with those of Chyawanprash. Ten normal healthy adult male volunteers (age 20-32 years) participated in the 16-week study. They were placed randomly in either the Chyawanprash group (n = 5) or vitamin C group (n = 5). Those in the former received 15 g/d of Chyawanprash while those in the latter received 500 mg/d vitamin C during the first 8 weeks of the study. For the next 8 weeks, no supplement was given. For each individual, an oral glucose tolerance test was performed, and lipoprotein profile in peripheral serum samples was determined at 0 weeks, 4 weeks, 8 weeks, 12 weeks and 16 weeks. In the Chyawanprash group, the 8 weeks Vs 0 weeks value (mean +/- S.D.) respectively for various indices which were significantly different were fasting plasma glucose (100.2 +/- 5.58 mg/dl vs 116.2 +/- 11.6 mg/dl), area under 2-h plasma glucose curve (245.9 +/- 15.13 mg.dl-1.h vs 280.8 +/- 37.09 mg.dl-1.h), HDL cholesterol (53.2 +/- 4.56 mg/dl vs 42.7 +/- 7.17 mg/dl), LDL cholesterol (82.4 +/- 8.80 mg/dl vs 98.26 +/- 12.07 mg/dl), LDL/HDL ratio (1.56 +/- 0.28 vs 2.38 +/- 0.63). In the Vitamin C group, only the LDL/HDL ratio was significantly lower at 8 weeks than at 0 weeks (1.99 +/- 0.44 vs 2.29 +/- 0.43). All the variables that changed significantly were no longer significantly different from the 0 weeks value at 16 weeks. Chyawanprash reduces postprandial glycemia in the oral glucose tolerance test and reduces blood cholesterol level to a significantly greater extent than vitamin C.

⁹ Jagetia GC, Baliga MS, Malagi KJ, Sethukumar Kamath M. The evaluation of the radioprotective effect of Triphala (an ayurvedic rejuvenating drug) in the mice exposed to gamma-radiation. *Phytomedicine* 2002 Mar;9(2):99-108

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The effect of 0, 5, 6.25, 10, 12.5, 20, 25, 40, 50 and 80 mg/kg b. wt. of aqueous extract of triphala (an Ayurvedic herbal medicine) administered intraperitoneally was studied on the radiation-induced mortality in mice exposed to 10 Gy of gamma-radiation. Treatment of mice with different doses of triphala consecutively for five days before irradiation delayed the onset of mortality and reduced the symptoms of radiation sickness when compared with the non-drug treated irradiated controls. The highest protection against GI (gastrointestinal) death was observed for 12.5 mg/kg triphala, where a highest number of survivors were reported up to 10 days post-irradiation. While 10 mg/kg triphala i.p. provided the best protection as evidenced by the highest number of survivors after 30 days post-irradiation in this group when compared with the other doses of triphala. Toxicity study showed that triphala was non-toxic up to a dose of 240 mg/kg, where no drug-induced mortality was observed. The LD50 dose i.p. of triphala was found to be 280 mg/kg b. wt. Our study demonstrates the ability of triphala as a good radioprotective agent and the optimum protective dose of triphala was 1/28 of its LD50 dose.

¹⁰ Saleem A, Husheem M, Harkonen P, Pihlaja K. Inhibition of cancer cell growth by crude extract and the phenolics of *Terminalia chebula* retz. fruit. *J Ethnopharmacol* 2002 Aug;81(3):327-36

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A 70% methanol extract of *Terminalia chebula* fruit, was studied for its effects on growth in several malignant cell lines including a human (MCF-7) and mouse (S115) breast cancer cell line, a human osteosarcoma cell line (HOS-1), a human prostate cancer cell line (PC-3) and a non-tumorigenic, immortalized human prostate cell line (PNT1A) using assays for proliferation ($[(3)H]$ -thymidine incorporation and coulter counting), cell viability (ATP determination) and cell death (flow cytometry and Hoechst DNA staining). In all cell lines studied, the extract decreased cell viability, inhibited cell proliferation, and induced cell death in a dose dependent manner. Flow cytometry and other analyses showed that some apoptosis was induced by the extract at lower concentrations, but at higher concentrations, necrosis was the major mechanism of cell death. ATP assay guided chromatographic fractionation of the extract yielded ellagic acid, 2,4-chebulyl-beta-D-glucopyranose (a new natural product), and chebulinic acid which were tested by ATP assay on HOS-1 cell line in comparison to three known antigrowth phenolics of *Terminalia*, gallic acid, ethyl gallate, luteolin, and tannic acid. Chebulinic acid (IC(50) = 53.2 microM +/- 0.16) > tannic acid (IC(50) = 59.0 microg/ml +/- 0.19) > and ellagic acid (IC(50) = 78.5 microM +/- 0.24), were the most growth inhibitory phenolics of *T. chebula* fruit in our study.

¹¹ Suguna L, Singh S, Sivakumar P, Sampath P, Chandrakasan G. Influence of *Terminalia chebula* on dermal wound healing in rats. *Phytother Res* 2002 May;16(3):227-31

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The effects of topical administration of an alcohol extract of the leaves of an evergreen plant, *Terminalia chebula*, on the healing of rat dermal wounds, in vivo, was assessed. *T. chebula* treated wounds healed much faster as indicated by improved rates of contraction and a decreased period of epithelialization. Biochemical studies revealed a significant increase in total protein, DNA and collagen contents in the granulation tissues of treated wounds. The levels of hexosamine and uronic acid in these tissues, also increased upto day 8 post-wounding. Reduced lipid peroxide levels in treated wounds, as well as ESR measurement of antioxidant activity by DPPH radical quenching, suggested that *T. chebula* possessed antioxidant activities. The tensile strength of tissues from extract-treated incision wounds increased by about 40%. In addition, *T. chebula* possessed antimicrobial activity and was active largely against *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Klebsiella*. These results strongly document the beneficial effects of *T. chebula* in the acceleration of the healing process.

¹² Okyar A, Can A, Akev N, Baktir G, Sutlupinar N. Effect of *Aloe vera* leaves on blood glucose level in type I and type II diabetic rat models. *Phytother Res* 2001 Mar;15(2):157-61

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Aloe vera (L.) Burm. fil. (= *A. barbadensis* Miller) (Liliaceae) is native to North Africa and also cultivated in Turkey. Aloes have long been used all over the world for their various medicinal properties. In the past 15 years, there have been controversial reports on the hypoglycaemic activity of *Aloe* species, probably due to differences in the parts of the plant used or to the model of diabetes chosen. In this study, separate experiments on three main groups of rats, namely, non-diabetic (ND), type I (IDDM) and type II (NIDDM) diabetic rats were carried out. *A. vera* leaf pulp and gel extracts were ineffective on lowering the blood sugar level of ND rats. *A. vera* leaf pulp extract showed hypoglycaemic activity on IDDM and NIDDM rats, the effectiveness being enhanced for type II diabetes in comparison with glibenclamide. On the contrary, *A. vera* leaf gel extract showed hyperglycaemic activity on NIDDM rats. It may therefore be concluded that the pulps of *Aloe vera* leaves devoid of the gel could be useful in the treatment of non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus Copyright 2001 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

¹³ Verma SK, Bordia A. Effect of *Commiphora mukul* (gum guggulu) in patients of hyperlipidemia with special reference to HDL-cholesterol. *Indian J Med Res* 1988 Apr;87:356-60

¹⁴ Satyavati GV. Gum guggul (*Commiphora mukul*)--the success story of an ancient insight leading to a modern discovery. *Indian J Med Res* 1988 Apr;87:327-35

¹⁵ Tripathi YB, Malhotra OP, Tripathi SN. Thyroid stimulating action of Z-guggulsterone obtained from *Commiphora mukul*. *Planta Med* 1984 Feb;(1):78-80

¹⁶ Satyavati GV, Dwarakanath C, Tripathi SN. Experimental studies on the hypocholesterolemic effect of *Commiphora mukul*. *Engl. (Guggul)*. *Indian J Med Res* 1969 Oct;57(10):1950-62

¹⁷ Paranjpe P, Patki P, Patwardhan B. Ayurvedic treatment of obesity: a randomised double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial. *J Ethnopharmacol* 1990 Apr;29(1):1-11

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Seventy obese subjects were randomised into four groups. Ayurvedic drug treatments were given for three months while one group received a placebo. Physical, clinical and pathological investigations were carried out at regular intervals. A significant weight loss was observed in drug therapy groups when compared with the placebo. Body measurements such as skin fold thickness and hip and waist circumferences were significantly decreased. Decreases in serum cholesterol and triglyceride levels were observed. No side effects of any kind were observed during the treatment period.

¹⁸ Antonio J, Colker CM, Torina GC, et al. Effects of a standardized guggulsterone phosphate supplement on body composition in overweight adults: A pilot study. *Curr Ther Res* 1999;60:220-7.