

Ayurvedic Perspective of Stress Management

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10 Practical Steps in Ayurveda for Healthy Living

1. Understanding **Ayurveda** with its values
2. Understanding your **prakruti** (**dosic**, mind-body constitution)
3. Living in tune with your constitution
4. Selecting diet in relation to your body type
5. Following vedic routine (**dina carya**)
6. Following seasonal routine (**Ritu carya**)
7. Exercise (**vyayama**), etc.
8. **Abyangam** (oil massage) as preventive measure
9. **Sat vrttam** (life style and behavioral pattern), **Daiva vyapasraya chikitsa** (spiritual and religious therapies as per classics)
10. Nitya rasayanam - intake of herbal medicines for prevention.

Stress

- Stress is physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension. Tension is mental or emotional strain, suspense, anxiety, or excitement. Anxiety is a reaction to a real or imagined threat, a general feeling of uneasiness or dread.
- Stress can be brought about by a traumatic accident, death or emergency situation
- Stress can also be side effect of a serious illness or disease.
- There is also stress associated with daily life, the workplace and family responsibilities
- Scientists know that many types of stress can activate the body's endocrine system, which in turn can cause changes in the immune system

Stress in General

- Can't cope, can't concentrate, feel hopeless, helpless, depressed and tired
- Often irritable and angry, can't control your temper
- Eat too much or too little, eat erratically
- Have trouble in sleeping, don't get enough sleep, or sleep too much and still feel tired
- Smoking in excess, more than normal intake of alcohol, caffeine or drugs
- Have frequent headaches, backaches and stomach aches
- Cut back on exercises
- Family tensions run higher than usual. You and your spouse fight more often
- Not interested in sex
- Get cough and colds and allergies

Ayurveda

- Ayu + Veda - science of life, oldest healing art and mother of all medical sciences that is continuously in practice for more than 5000 years.
- It treats the person as a whole and stresses on prevention over cure without neglecting the cure.
- Ayurveda defines a person as the replica of the macrocosm and advise him to live in tune with the nature.

Health in Ayurveda

- Health in Ayurveda is defined as "svasta" means established in the self
- The health in Ayurveda is the state of harmony experienced by the self in physical, mental and spiritual levels
- Fundamental principle that govern the health are called as tridosas
- They are - vata, pitta and kapha

Tridosas

- The tridosas are the representatives of the five great elements namely, Akash (Space), vayu (Air), agni (Fire), ap (Water) and prithvi (Earth)
- Vata is of air and ether element
- Pitta is of fire element
- Kapha is of earth and water element

Ayurvedic View of Stress

- According to Ayurveda stress affects the agni or the internal metabolic fire which in turn affects digestion and metabolism, so the circulatory rasa dhatu (plasma), raktha (blood), mamsa (muscle tissue), medas (fat and adipose tissue), asti (bone and cartilage), majja (marrow and nervous tissue); sukra (reproductive fluids) will be affected.
- Above all the ojas or body's entire defense mechanism will be affected.
- Hidden stress affects agni (digestive fire), dosa., dhatu, ojas, produce degeneration, depletion and accelerates aging process.
- This produces cellular damage and produces wide range of diseases either chronic or acute.
- Vata is the dosa which react very much to the stress which in turn vitiate other factors. There is a close relationship between respiratory rate and restlessness.

Features of vata prakruti

- Thin lean personality with dry skin and hair
- Erratic digestion and metabolism
- Highly restless
- Disturbed sleep
- Short term memory
- Insecure and unpredictable emotional state, fearful and anxious
- Earns well and spends quickly and unwisely
- Likes oily, sweet, sour and salty foods

Prone Diseases - Physical

- Body pain - myalgia
- Weight loss
- Cold intolerance
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Constipation
- IBS
- Other diseases affecting brain, heart and nervous system

Prone Diseases - Psychological

- Dementia
- Insomnia
- Fear and phobias
- Anxiety
- Delirium

Features of Pitta prakruti

- Moderate body weight and strength
- Hot intolerance
- Sharp hunger
- Aggressive and irritable
- Likes cool atmosphere
- Judgmental
- Intelligent

Prone Diseases - Physical

- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Acid peptic disease
- Excess sweating
- Dizziness
- High B.P.
- Auto immune diseases

Prone diseases - Psychological

- Anger
- Aggressiveness
- Intolerance
- Disturbed sleep

Features of Kapha Prakruti

- Obese and gains weight easily (can't loose easily)
- Good strength, oily skin and dense hair
- Calm, steady and agreeable
- Long time memory
- Stable
- Logical and likes spicy foods

Prone Diseases - Physical

- Diabetes
- Weight gain
- Cholesterol
- Cholesterol
- Indigestion
- Respiratory problems
- Allergies
- Hypo thyroidism

Prone Diseases - Psychological

- Depression
- Laziness
- Excess sleep, etc.

Dina carya (Daily regimen)

- Get up at *brahma muhurta* (3 am to 6 am)
- Attend to your calls of nature (urination, defecation)
- Clean the teeth with twigs and occasional gum massage with herbal tooth powders
- Clean the tongue with the scrapper to remove mucus to enhance taste
- Do gargling with cold water and splash the eyes with the same
- Do nasya with anu taila followed by gargling with warm water and inhalation of smoke.
- Daily usage of nasya will give strength to the shoulder muscles, prevent sinusitis, spondylosis, produces clarity of senses, hair growth and good voice.
- Do oil massage to mitigate vata, to promote strength, sleep, growth, etc..
- Do regular exercises as per your personality
- Do prayers and meditation
- Have regulations over sex and sleep

Diet

- Pay attention to calls of nature before eating
- Bath or at least wash your hands, face and feet before you eat
- Sit in an isolated clean area
- Face the direction of the sun
- Pray and thank nature for providing you food
- Approach each items with reverence and love and chew them well.
- Feed others
- Concentrate and eat with confidence. Avoid seeing T.V, conversation during eating
- Consider eating as a yagna (sacrifice) you are offering havis to the internal fire who is Bhagavan (God)
- Utilize rice, wheat, barley, tender radish, grapes, green gram, jaggery, ghee, milk, honey, pomegranate, triphala daily

- Half of the stomach should be filled with solid food
- One quarter by liquids and the other quarter should be kept vacant for air
- Avoid curd at night
- See that all the six tastes are present in the menu.
- Foods which are preserved from the previous day should not be taken except curd ,ghee, honey, butter milk
- Eat sweet, oily food first; sour, spicy in the middle and bitter, astringent at the last
- The food should be warm
- Eat always accustomed food (in relation to body, age, season, dosa and diseases)

Activities after meals

- Take tambulam (betel leaves) , walk about hundred steps and lie on the left side
- Avoid driving, swimming and exertion immediately after meals.

Six Seasons

Sisira	Late Winter	Mid January to March
Vasantham	Spring	Mid March to May
Grisma	Summer	Mid May to July
Varsha	Rain	Mid July to September
Sarad	Autumn	Mid September to November
Hemanta	Early Winter	Mid November to January

Season and Taste (For utilization)

Season	Taste
Spring	Sweet, sour, salt
Winter and rainy	Bitter, astringent, pungent
Summer	Sweet
Autumn	Sweet, bitter, astringent

Strength and Seasons

Strength	Seasons
Maximum	Early and late winter
Moderate	Autumn and spring
Minimum	Summer and rainy

Oil massage

- Application of oil on head and body parts is one of the daily routine in Indian culture.
- Processed sesame seed oil is used generally for Vata and Kapha
- Coconut oil is good for Pitta
- For Vata people it is advised every day, for Pitta alternative days, for Kapha people once in a week
- Oil bath is avoided in cases of indigestion, cough, cold, diarrhoea, fever, menstrual cycle, conjunctivitis, post emesis therapy, purgation and infectious diseases etc.
- Application of oil on the head, ears and feet is necessary.
- Warm water bath after fifteen to thirty minutes is advised.
- Avoid cold water bath, ice creams, curd, sex, day sleep, alcohol, exposure to sun and exertion during the day of massage

Benefits of oil bath

- It controls Vata, promotes strength and sleep, overcomes fatigue, provides growth, prevents old age, mitigates pain, promotes hair growth and vision.

Qualities of Rasayana

- Improves appetite, digestion and assimilation; enhances serum proteins, fat and carbohydrate metabolism
- Improves muscular tone and retards the changes in the skin that develop with age, promotes regeneration of epidermal cells
- Assures normal sleep
- Reestablishes regular bowel habits
- Relieves vague aches and pains
- Promotes healthy vigour and a sense of well being

Special Treatment for Management of Stress

- If the guidelines adopted by the person fails he should consult an ayurvedic doctor and he does treatment like **shirodhara** (pouring medicated oil in a continuous stream over the scalp of a person), **shirovasti** (allowing the oil to stand on the scalp of a person by fixing a cap), nasya (nasal application of medicines are done) special medicines like **manasamitram**, **brahmi**, **asvagandha**, **vaca**, **sankapuspi**, **jadamamsi** are highly effective in these conditions.