



THE UNIVERSITY OF TRANS-DISCIPLINARY  
HEALTH SCIENCES & TECHNOLOGY

# Heritage Amruth

A Magazine for Healthy Living. The Natural Way



# SENIOR HEALTH



SOURCE OF LIFE

Amruth is a sanskrit word meaning 'immortal', local name for *Tinospora cordifolia*, a plant used in India for its rejuvenating properties

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#### APRIL 2021

##### MENTAL HEALTH

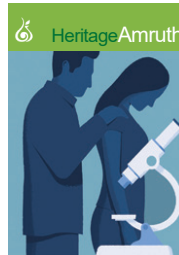
Psychological and somatic maladies are invariably interlinked with each other. Most of the physical ailments can be well averted by achieving a higher state of consciousness and a healthy mental state. Ayurveda advocates comprehensive, safe and effective approaches for prevention and management of Mental Health.



#### AUGUST 2021

##### INFERTILITY

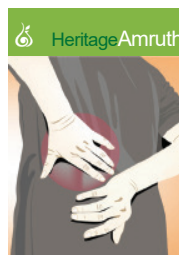
According to Ayurveda, a healthy conception takes place in the presence of a healthy sperm and ovum in a healthy womb at proper time with proper nourishment. Any discrepancy among these factors results in infertility. Read this issue for more....



#### DECEMBER 2021

##### BACK PAIN

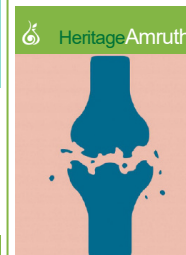
Extended hours of sedentary work, without any physical activity, is more than enough to offer an array of back pain problems, with each of them having a different twist to the spine. Explore this issue for the natural and effective cures for the pain in your back....



#### JUNE 2021

##### BONE HEALTH

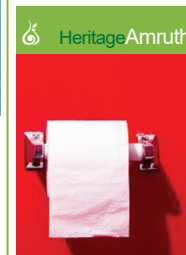
Bones build the frame of your body. They are the basic tools that help you in performing every single task, be it walking, sitting, playing or typing etc. Ayurveda offers potent natural supplements and advices that are safe and efficient.



#### OCTOBER 2021

##### ANO-RECTAL DISEASES

Due to change in life style, anorectal diseases like piles, fistula in ano, fissure are becoming quite common. Ayurveda has a very effective and easy treatment for anorectal diseases without any complications. Ayurveda texts explain about Arshas (piles), Bhagandara (fistula) etc. as that which trouble the person like an enemy.



#### FEBRUARY 2022

##### SKIN CARE

Ayurveda is a perfect combination of art and science for natural beauty. In Ayurveda, it is all about inner wellness which will then reflect a healthy glow on your skin. Read this issue for the best treatments for most of the skin ailments....



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Dr Prasan Shankar

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# Relativity of Ageing



**“The mind must be kept free of negative and poisonous emotions like greed, envy, jealousy, revenge, anger and lust. It must give unconditional love...”**

**Y**ogis are known to live for a few hundred years without appearing to be physiologically aged. Ageing is normally associated with advanced age starting around 60. It need not however be always related to the age of a person. There are rare cases when due to dysfunction in nutrient signaling pathways, alteration in mitochondrial function and energy metabolism, a young person may also display signs of ageing. Similarly an accomplished yogi of 100 years of age may look half his age. The biological processes that cause ageing to occur in all bodies irrespective of their age are to do with the efficiency of the metabolic process. They essentially involve accumulation of cellular damage, altered metabolic pathways, neuroendocrine signaling and a variety of genetic changes.

In Ayurveda terminology, ageing is characterized by systemic malfunctioning of 13 agnis (metabolic processes at various levels of anabolism/catabolism), clogging of body srotas, i.e. various channels of the body for circulation, nutrition and so on, decline in memory, cognition, confidence and other aspects of mental and emotional functioning. The typical symptoms of ageing are seen in decay of various tissues like muscle, fat, bones, reproductive tissues, organs, neurological system, skin wrinkling as well as impaired functioning of mental and emotional aspects.

Humans in all cultures have dreamt of remaining ever young and of rejuvenation. There are legendary stories of queens like Cleopatra, Roman and Greek emperors, Chinese monks, Indian sages like Chyavan rishi who designed the rejuvenating product called Chyavanprash in order to remain sexually potent for some ethical purpose.

Modern medicine in recent years has started the exciting journey towards regeneration via stem-cells and the new modern science of regenerative biology and medicine has come into being. Ageing tissues experience a progressive decline in homeostatic and regenerative capacities, which has been attributed to degenerative changes in tissue-specific stem cells, stem cell niches and systemic cues that regulate stem cell activity. Maintenance of stem cell functionality is essential for tissue homeostasis, a failure of which leads to organ impairment and premature ageing. Regenerative medicine is a distinct major advancement in medical treatment which is based on the principles of stem cell technology and tissue engineering in order to replace or regenerate human


tissues and organs and restore their functions. After many years of basic research, this approach is beginning to show a great promise for treatment of ageing related conditions.

Ayurveda for centuries has developed a science and practices for rejuvenation. It has a category of herbal formulations for Vayasthapana, which means products that can retard ageing. This rejuvenation can also happen through yoga and diet without the aid of herbs. Ayurveda has profound nutritional concepts and strategies called rasayana. Rasayana means that process even behavioral (Acharya rasayana) which facilitates production of an excellent quality of Rasa: the primordial tissue of the body which further metabolizes into higher tissues like blood, muscle, fat, bones, marrow and reproductive tissues. Furthermore it has seasonal measures like Panchakarmas to keep the body young. It has extra ordinary measures like Kutī praveshik which involves taking individualized Rasayanas whilst staying in a specially designed abode; a kind of short hibernation for a few months away from light, wind, sun and human interactions. This process to be administered by an experienced physician is observed to miraculously transform tissues clearly visible in skeletal tissues like new hair growth, new teeth and also in tone of skin. It makes an ageing body young.

I believe that a new regeneration science combining stem cells biology and Ayurveda rasayana tantra can achieve big breakthroughs in regeneration. Laypersons however need not await the big breakthrough in integrative health sciences. They can remain relatively young by healthy habits of eating food compatible to one's unique phenotypic constitution, (prakruti) doing regular yoga and keeping the mind in a healthy state.

The mind must be kept free of negative and poisonous emotions like greed, envy, jealousy, revenge, anger and lust. It must give unconditional love. Simple Rasayana practices can be adopted by all age groups

**Such self-conscious living can also go a long way in keeping one's body and mind young.**



***Darshan Shankar***

## Gerascophobia

# The fear of Growing Old



“Nothing makes us grow old faster than constantly thinking about growing old.”

*G. Shital*

“Yayyati” was the first novel that I read’. After reading it, I used to wonder that why Yayyati had no satisfaction in his life even though he had THE kingdom of Hastinapur, beautiful, loving wife Sharmishtha, friend Kacha and so many other things. Though I was feeling pity for him, his thoughts continued to be mysterious to me! However, that puzzle was unveiled later when I came across the word Gerascophobia, which means fear of getting old and eventually I got the answer for Yayyati’s sorrowful life. Of course, everyone may feel Gerascophobia in one or the other way in their life! Indeed, everyone wants to overcome this fear through various means especially by maintaining the youthfulness! In spite of knowing the fact that ageing is the natural process, man puts lots of efforts to keep himself young!

**In recent years, there has been a widespread of plastic surgeries with which people attempt to hide wrinkles. But what if we accepted ourselves as we are and enjoyed the moment instead of thinking so much about how we look?**

**Obviously we have to take care of ourselves, eat healthy, and exercise, but we have seen celebrities change their faces so much to avoid growing old that they look like another person. They have completely lost their identity. Why are we so afraid of growing old?**

## What is Gerascophobia and Geriatrics?

Gerascophobia is an emerging geriatric problem. This term is derived from the Greek word gerasko, "I grow old" and phobos, means "fear". Everyone has fear in one or other manner; problem comes when one is unable to overcome from that within time. According to American psychiatric association there are three types of phobia:

### *Specific phobia:*

This is an intense, irrational fear of a specific trigger.

### *Social phobia:*

It can be named as social anxiety, e.g. stage fear.

### *Agoraphobia:*

This is a fear of situations from which it would be difficult to escape if a person will experience extreme panic. Some people feel panic in lifts, some have fear of elevators. People with agoraphobia have an increased risk of panic disorder.

Gerascophobia is a specific phobia, it is a fear of growing old, sufferers of this phobia experience anxiety about ageing, even though they may be physically, economically good. They may worry about the loss of looks, the loss of independence, inactivity after retirement, the onset of diseases. Every person has fear about these, it is considered as a syndrome only when sufferer shows the following symptoms:

- \* Persistent thoughts about death.
- \* Breathlessness, sweating, anxiety, and panic attacks with the thinking of getting old.
- \* Obsessive fear about losing appearance and independence with the growing age.
- \* Self-withdrawal and isolation from others. Or excessive talks and interference to prove self-importance.

The branch of medicine which deals with problems of ageing and diseases of old age is known as Geriatrics. It is the newly emerging branch for modern medicine but it is an integral and inseparable part of Ayurveda.

Common geriatrics problems in elderly include cataract and visual impairment, arthritis and locomotory disorders, cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, neurological problems, respiratory diseases and digestive problems.

It is important to note that any research/development or any advanced technology of medical science cannot prevent ageing. The old age group is recognised as a group with so many physical and psychological changes. Ayurveda can provide better life to this age group by increasing immunity and positive attitude about life; it will slow down the ageing process, since elderly people will enjoy growing rather than getting old.

## Ayurveda and Geriatrics

Ayurveda is the art and science for healthy living. Change is the only truth of life; one who is born will eventually die. The physiological and psychological changes during life span is inevitable and unavoidable, it is estimated that on an average, 30 brain cells die every minute. Ayurveda has positive approach towards these changes; there are two branches which deal with ageing: Rasayana and Vajeekarna. These two branches were meant to tackle the problems of ageing. Rasayana (rejuvenation) is the focused branch of medicine which is exclusively meant for problems related to ageing and treatment modalities for the same. Vajeekarna deals with enhancement of sexual vigour.

Kshut (hunger), Pippasa (thirst), Nidra (sleep), Jara (old age) and Mrityu (death): these five are categorised under Swabhavik roga (natural diseases). Among these, mankind has no hold on mrityu, kshut, pippasa and nidra can be regularised by man's own efforts but jara (old age) can be slowed down with the help of Jara Chikitsa in Ayurveda.

While explaining rasayana, Acharaya Charaka mentioned two types: one is 'Urajaskara' which increases life span by slowing down the ageing or enhance the general immunity, and another one is



*Terminalia chebula*

'Roganut' which is used according to diseases.

Elderly people can include 'Urjaskara Rasayana Dravyas' (immunity enhancing drugs) in their daily routine for maintaining their physiological and psychological well-being. Some of them are:

## Haritaki

(*Terminalia chebula*)

In English it is called chebolic myrobalan, in Hindi Harre, in Telugu Karakkaya or Karakkaya, Tamil name is Kaddukkai, in Marathi Hirada or Balhirada, in Kannada it is known as Alale Kayi or Anile, botanical Name is Terminalia chebula from Combretaceae family.

This is the magical plant, which is the first and most important rejuvenating plant explained by Acharya Charaka. It can be used throughout the year in combination with different adjuvants according to seasons to maintain health, such as:

- \* During monsoon (July- August) - Haritaki churna 5gms + rock salt 1gm
- \* During autumn (September-October) - Haritaki churna 5gms + desi khanda (traditional/ natural Indian sugar) 2gms
- \* During early winter (November-December) - Haritaki churna 5gms + dried ginger powder 2gms
- \* During winter (January-February) – Haritaki churna 5gms + long pepper 2 pinch
- \* During spring (March- April) – Haritaki churna 5gms + honey 5ml
- \* During summer (May-June) - Haritaki churna 5gms + Fresh jaggery 2gms

People who have persistent indigestion, engaged in excess carnal activities, starve, have heat stroke, and are alcoholic and those who take very dry and spicy food and pregnant women should avoid intake of Haritaki.

## Amalaki



*phyllanthus emblica*

English name is Indian gooseberry and in Hindi, it is Awala/ Amla, in Telugu it is called Usiri Kaya, Tamil name is Nellikai or Perunelli, in Malayalam Nelli, Kannada name is Nellikay, in Marathi it is known as Avalakati or Avala. Botanical name is Phyllanthus emblica, family is Euphorbeaceae.

This is well-known plant for entire mankind and is used extensively as food as well medicine. Amalaki churna promotes longevity, induces nourishment and prevents ageing. Consuming excess of Amla fruits can cause skin or hair dryness in some people; this is due to the cold property of Amla; to avoid this; such people should take it with cow ghee. It can be used in different forms such as Amla murrabba, candy, pickle, chutney, mouth freshener, etc. which can be stored throughout the year.

For healthy mind, one should have healthy body; use of Haritaki and Amalaki will provide healthy body by enhancing immunity.

Following four plants are grouped under Medhya Rasayana (psychotropic drugs). In these drugs, modern scientists found the bioactive constituents which act as memory enhancers, anti-convulsant, and anti-depressant, anti-oxidant, anti-bacterial and wound healing. Use of these plants manage risk of duodenal and gastric ulcers, takes care of central nervous system and enhances skin complexion.

## Mandukparni

(*Centella asiatica*)



In English it is called Indian pennywort, in Hindi Bingsag, Telugu name is Sarasvathy Aku, in Marathi Karivan, and Kannada name is Ondelaga soppu. Botanically it is Centella asiatica from Apiaceae family.

Intake of 15ml to 20ml of freshly prepared juice (swarasa) in the morning followed by cow milk is advised.



## Yashtimadhu

(*Glycyrrhiza glabra*)



In English it is called Liquorice, in Hindi Mulethi, Kannada, Telugu and Tamil name is Atimadhuram, in Marathi Jashthmadh. Botanically it is *Glycyrrhiza glabra* from Fabaceae family.

5 gms of yashtimadhu churna (powder) along with cow milk in the morning is advised.

## Guduchi



(*Tinospora cordifolia*)

In English it is called Indian Tinospora, Heart-leaved tinospora, in Hindi Giloy, Telugu name is tippatige, in Marathi Gulvel, and Kannada name is Amrutaballi. Botanically it is *Tinospora cardifolia* from Menispermaceae family.

15ml to 20ml of fresh juice is advised in the morning along with cow milk.

## Shankhpushpi



(*Convolvulus pluricaulis*)

In English it is called English speedwheel, in Hindi Shankhahuli, Telugu name is Shankapuspi, in Marathi Shankhvel, and Kannada name is Bilikanthi soppu. Botanically it is *Convolvulus pluricaulis* from Convolvulaceae family.

5gms of freshly prepared paste prepared from whole plant having flowers advised in the morning along with cow milk.

Person can choose any one of these according to the availability. These can be used as single or in combination of two or three, all together! For better results, one should follow healthy diet, regular exercise. Day-time sleep, spicy and heavy food should be avoided.

**Let's all start growing with Jara chikitsa rather than living with Gerascophobia!**

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# Geriatrics in Ayurveda



Life and death are the two facets of the cyclic process called evolution. A lively life and painless graceful death is what Ayurveda basically aims at. Ayurveda equates health with sukha (Su-conducive, kha-space, meaning conducive space or environment, equated to happiness in a superficial way) likewise disease with misery in its absolute form (dukham eva).

## *S Raneesh*

Speaking about Geriatrics, the word is built upon the Greek root - Ger, Gero, Geronto meaning Old age. Thus, geriatrics deals with the problems of ageing and diseases of elderly. The former aspect talks about the normal physiological changes and the later aspect reflects the morbid changes in the elderly respectively.

At present, Old age is categorized as the age above 65 years. Reviewing the Ayurvedic classics too, we find that there was a broad understanding of old age. Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata considered vardhakyam or old age as above 60 years and Acharya Sushruta considered vardhakyam as above 70 years.

Understanding Ageing - A natural process of life characterized by gradual changes with passage of time neither due to disease nor accident, which finally terminates in death.

### Ayurvedic Perspective

The basic two-fold aim of Ayurveda is to maintain health in healthy and management of the disease in the sick.

The term management of disease is to stress that the best possible approach is employed to alleviate the disease. Ayurveda being a very practical science, classified disease as per the prognosis into curable and incurable ones and hence the above statement is justified.

Speaking about the later aspect, emphasis is given not only to the disease, but also to the diseased.

### Geriatric care

Old age is considered as a natural disease Swabhavaja vyadhi – Jara – a Vata dominant state

Jara –from the root word “*Jrush - vayo haanau , jeeryanti anayo angaani iti jaraa.* – meaning destroys life, as all the body parts become deteriorated.

### Old Age Challenges

Considering the facts about old age, it is not a criterion for easily curable disease, as most physiological functions decline and also there are very less energy reserves and hence diminished ability to deal with stressors.

## Vruddho Yaapyaanaam

Yaapya roga are those diseases which are managed the rest of the life by conducive food and lifestyle and which have opposite characteristics of easily curable disease in general. Old age stands foremost among those characteristics of Yaapya roga.

## Old Age Problems

(Physiological Changes)

In general - there is loss of appetite, lowered assimilation and hence decreased nutritional state and decreased sleep. All these factors contribute to the weakness and thus they are more prone for falls.

- \* **The Senses** – visual changes, hearing impairment, skin atrophy ...
- \* **Musculoskeletal** – myalgia, arthritis...
- \* **Psychological** – insecurity, memory loss ...
- \* **GIT** – constipation...
- \* **Neurological** – gait and balance ...

Sage Sarangadhara beautifully depicts that for every successive decade, there is deterioration of the following: baalya (childhood), vridhhi (growth), glow and complexion, intelligence, skin, vision, reproductive tissue, valour, power of discrimination, motor

organs, consciousness and life. (prathama kanda 7/20)

## Old Age Diseases

(Pathological Conditions)

- \* **Nervous system** – Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinsonism ...
- \* **CVS** – Angina pectoris, HT, IHD, atherosclerosis etc
- \* **Liver and Gall bladder** – acute hepatitis, gall stone, cirrhosis...
- \* **GIT** – IBS, Crohn’s, Diabetes, obesity...
- \* **Psychological** – depression
- \* **Lungs** – Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- \* **Musculoskeletal** – RA, OA, gout, osteoporosis...
- \* **Urinary** – calculi, pyelitis, BPH in males...
- \* **Endocrine** – hypo and hyperthyroidism, impotence, menopausal syndromes...
- \* **Senses** – glaucoma, senile cataract, partial and complete deafness, vertigo etc

To summarize, the following aspects are seen:

- \* Intellectual impairment
- \* Immobility
- \* Instability
- \* Incontinence
- \* Insecurity
- \* Iatrogenic drug reactions

## Common Geriatric Presentations

Arthritis, General debility, Asthma, Spondylitis, Menopausal syndromes, Cataract, Deafness, Dental problems, Vertigo, Insomnia, Memory loss - depression

## Geriatric care

Basically, the aim of geriatrics is to “add life to years” than adding “years to life”.

Rasayana (Rejuvenation Therapy)

The modern term Geriatrics is only a subset of Rasayana. The objectives of rasayana are broad and manifold, in the sense - qualitative and quantitative. (Dirgham ayu smriti ... A.H.U.39 / 1)

## Who is eligible?

Personally, one who is self-disciplined and one who adheres to the principles of swastavritta and achara rasaayana is eligible.

Clinically – one who has undergone purificatory therapies with proper Agni: metabolic fire.

## When?

Ayurveda, in spite of advocating swastavritta also speaks about rasayana to prevent senility, right from youth / middle age onwards, as the body is subject to wear and





# Rasayana

tear and also the body undergoes degeneration over the passage of time (siryate anena iti sareeram). If this is the case, what about the extent of damage the aged ones are afflicted with, in the present times?

But still, the episode of Chyawan maharshi rejuvenated by the rasayana therapy during old age itself provides answers to the present old age problems and diseases in the best possible way.

## Which are the components taken care of?

Both the psychic – somatic aspects are addressed with the usage of rasayana.

Rasayana stresses on both lifestyle (achara rasayana) and specific rejuvenating drugs. The concept of rejuvenation is one of the unique contributions to medical science by providing a congenial environment for the tissue elements rasaadi dhatus (labhopayo hi shastanam rasaadinam ...).

The objectives of rasayana therapy are achieved only after correcting the Agni or the metabolic fire.

Thus, the broad objectives of rasayana can be viewed as follows:

- \* Prevent premature ageing (akalaja jara)
- \* Attain graceful ageing
- \* Improve the general immunity
- \* Management of illness - best possible way
- \* Curative as well as promotive solutions (Rejuvenative)

## Rasayana Prayoga

- \* *Vatatapika* – with minimum restrictions
- \* *Naimittika* – disease oriented
- \* *Aajasrika rasayana* – addressing nutrition aspects

We need to consider the social, cultural and economical aspects too

- \* In dimness of vision – *Matsyakshi*
- \* In Vata vyadhi – *Bala ksheera paka*
- \* Similarly, the usage of rejuvenating drugs such as *Punarnava, Indravalli, Kokilaksha Bringaraja, Guduchi* and *Gokshura*.

Availability of either single or compound drugs which can be herbal or mineral or both could be of immense help in addressing geriatric issues.

## Few Single Drugs

*Amalaki, Mandukaparni, Guduchi, Shatavari, Shankhapushpi, Shilajatu, Aswagandha Vidari . . .* the advantages are such that the physician can make his/ her own combinations.

## Special Treatments and Nutrition

- \* *Snehana* both *bahya* – *abhyantara* is of immense help to slow down ageing process (manda jara ...A.H.S.16)
- \* Milk and ghee can be ideal as nutritional supplements.
- \* External *Abhyanga* to *snigdha sweda* is of prime importance.

Other specific treatments such

as *Netra Tarpana, karna poorana, nasya* appropriate to the age and condition should be employed.

The advantages of *Vasti* are never to be underestimated.

As *Vasti* has no agewise contraindication and it is the prime therapy for *vata*, it is to be implied that there is no other factor greater as *Vasti* in addressing the geriatric problems also. The approach should be wholesome and hence the approach should be multi-dimensional.

## To conclude

Rasayana can be *dravya* and *achara rasayana* (disciplined lifestyle)

Counselling – consoling and words of trust work as ambrosia. Most of the elderly people are left alone. We need to spend time with the elderly.

Nutritional needs are also to be fulfilled.

**The present is based on the past and the future lies in the present. Thus, besides taking care of the elderly, Ayurvedic principles if lived, can potentially address the future geriatric patients, it is better we target the youth and the middle aged men, which might help the youth in upbringing healthy children and themselves entering a healthy old age.**

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# Prostate Health in Aged Men

It's true that prostate problems are common in old age males. The good news is, Ayurveda can help....

*Sharad Kulkarni*

**P**rostate is an accessory male reproductive gland and an exocrine gland. The word 'Prostate' is derived from Greek meaning 'One who stands before' which describes the position of prostate gland. The prostate gland measuring about 4 cm wide 3 cm high 2 cm thick and weighing around 25- 30 gms is located below the urinary bladder and above the muscles of the pelvic floor. The prime function of prostate gland is secretion of about 70% of the seminal fluid. This secretion provides lubrication and nourishment to sperms. The fluid secreted is alkaline and does lubrication of seminal plug and helps neutralize the acidic environment of vagina. The prostatic secretion is important for the proper functioning of the sperm cells and therefore also fertility in men. The thin, milky liquid contains many enzymes such as the Prostate-specific antigen (PSA).

## Diseases of prostate in Aged Men

### 1. Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)

Benign prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) is extremely common condition in men over 80 years. It is

associated with symptoms of lower urinary tract.

### Pathophysiology

The prostate gland increases in volume by 2.4 cm<sup>3</sup> per year on an average from 40 years of age. The process begins in the peri- urethral zone. It involves both glandular and stromal tissue to a variable degree. The cause is unknown however; it might be due to imbalance in sex hormones.

### Clinical Features

- \* Difficulty in voiding urine due to obstruction of urethra and prostate.
- \* Poor urinary flow
- \* Sensation of incomplete emptying
- \* Increased urine frequency
- \* Urgency of micturition
- \* Incontinence

Severity of symptoms can be ascertained by using the International Prostate Symptom Score-questionnaire, which serves as a valuable starting point for assessment of the patient.

## The International Prostate Symptom Score

Symptom	Question	Example Score
<b>Straining</b>	How often have you had to push or strain to begin urination?	1
<b>Urgency</b>	How often have you found it difficult to postpone urination?	2
<b>Hesitancy</b>	How often have you found that you stopped and started again several times when you urinated?	1
<b>Incomplete emptying</b>	How often have you had a sensation of not emptying your bladder completely after you finish urinating?	3
<b>Frequency</b>	How often have you had to urinate again less than 2 hours after you finished urinating?	1
<b>Weak stream</b>	How often have you had a weak urinary stream?	2
<b>Nocturia</b>	How many times did you most typically get up to urinate from the time you went to bed at night until the time you got up in the morning?	1
<b>Total Score</b>		<b>11</b>

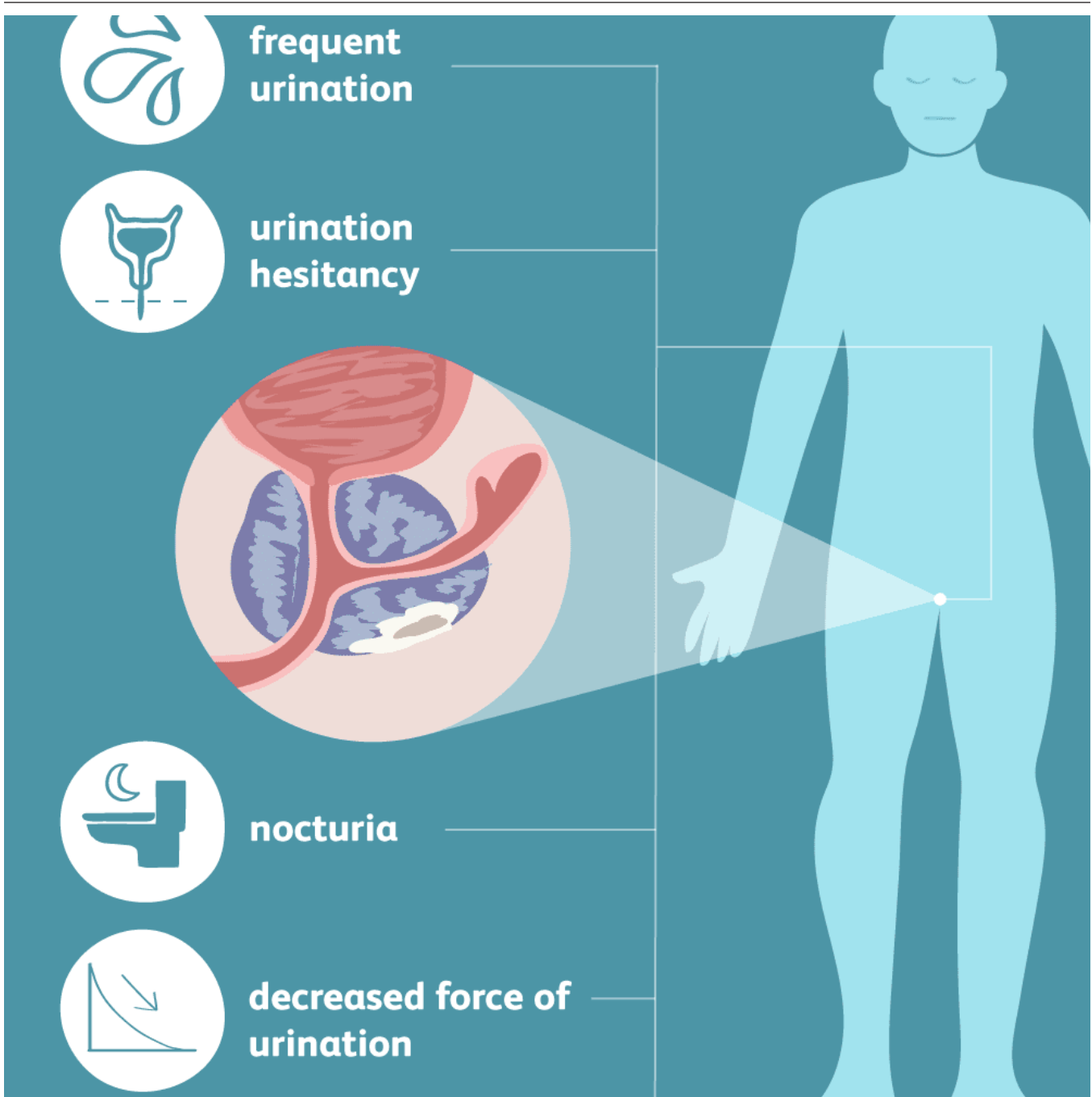
- \* 0 = not at all,
- \* 1 = less than one-fifth of the time
- \* 2 = less than half the time
- \* 3 = about half of the time
- \* 4 = more than half of the time
- \* 5 = almost always

A score of

- \* 0-1 indicates mild symptoms,
- \* 8-19 moderate symptoms
- \* 20-35 severe symptoms

### Investigations

- \* Ultrasonography
- \* Trans rectal ultrasonography



- \* Prostate specific antigen
- \* Per- rectal examination
- \* Prostatic biopsy
- \* Urodynamic test
- \* Cystoscopy

### Treatment

- \* Alpha 1 adrenergic blocking agents such as terazosin
- \* 5- alpha reductase inhibitor such as finasteride
- \* TURP – Transurethral resection of prostate

## 2. Prostatitis

Prostatitis is the inflammation of prostate gland. Causative organisms of prostatitis include *E.coli*, *Klebsiella*, *Proteus*, *Staphylococcus*, *Streptococcus faecalis* and *Gonococcus*. Prostatitis presents with clinical features like pain, fever with chills and

rigors, urine retention, perineal heaviness, pain on defecation, tender prostate on per rectal examination. It is managed with antibiotics, avoidance of alcohol and sexual intercourse.

## 3. CA Prostate

Carcinoma prostate is the most common malignant tumor in men over 65 years. Its mode of spread is through blood and lymph. Clinical features of CA prostate include obstruction of bladder outlet and retention of urine, hematuria, pelvic pain, back pain. Prostate feels hard, nodular on per rectal examination. Radical prostatectomy, bilateral subcapsular orchidectomy, TRUP, radiotherapy is done as management.

## Ayurveda Aspect

The aggravated Vata produces distension between bladder and anal canal. This produces a movable raised

gland in the bladder. Acharya Vagbhata has described this gland as solid and fixed. This produces obstruction to micturition and defecation.

The aggravated Vata induces obstruction to urinary and fecal passage by distending the bladder and rectum with severe pain is called Ashthila. Ashthila is stony mobile mass which is elevated and exerting pressure over the urinary passage and fecal passage.

Acharya Sushruta opines that cobble stone like hard tumor, extended to upward, protruded and obstructing the out passages should be considered Vatashtila.

### Nidana:

Vata prakopaka ahara vihara

### Samprapthi:

- \* Prakupita vata
- \* Takes sthanasamshraya between basti and guda
- \* This produces dense fixed firm glandular swelling and distension of bladder
- \* Exhibits symptoms like vinmutra sanga, adhmana, ruja of basti
- \* Leading to Vatashtila

### Lakshana:

- \* Vinmutra sanga – obstruction of feces and urine
- \* Adhmana – distension
- \* Ruja of basti pradesha

### Treatment:

- \* Virechana with proper Snehana and Swedana
- \* Basti/ Vasti/ Enema
- \* Uttara basti with Ushiradya taila

### Case Study

44 years old male complained of dribbling urine, increased frequency of nocturnal urination, feeling of incomplete micturition, urgency of urination since 2 years was advised ultrasonography of pelvis and abdomen. Ultrasonography reports revealed Prostatomegaly. Enlargement of prostate gland is termed as Prostatomegaly. The prostate is considered enlarged on imaging when its volume measures beyond 30cc. This was treated with

- \* URAL BPH (Vasu) 1 – 1 – 1 After food
- \* NEERI (Aimil Pharmacy) 1 – 1 – 1 After food for 45 days

There was considerable reduction in symptoms. He was advised ultrasonography after 45 days.

### Discussion:

Even though it is said that BPH occurs in men aged 80 and above it is not uncommon even at 60s. Various modalities of treatments for the prostate pathologies in general and BPH in particular can be seen in Ayurveda with strong research backgrounds. One such modality is Uttarabasti. Many researchers are being carried out

## PROSTATE CANCER TREATMENT IN AYURVEDA



on the same. One more such modality is Matra Basti.

### Probable mode of Matra Basti

As per study conducted by Department of Shalya Tantra, I.P.G.T & R.A., Gujarat Ayurved University, Jamnagar on management of Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia with Bala Taila Matra Basti – A case study, the following mode of action was explained.

The selected Bala taila contains Atibala, which has Madhura rasa, Snigdha guna, sheeta virya, Rasayana, Balya, Vatahara properties which are helpful to normalize vata dosha. Hence deranged function of Apana vata might have corrected. Bark and leaves of Atibala is used as diuretic. The plant also possesses anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties due to which Bala taila might have controlled hyperplasia of prostate gland. Tila taila has linoleic acid and oleic acid. These are inhibitors of both 5- $\alpha$  reductase and  $\alpha$  blockers activity. The inhibition of 5- $\alpha$  reductase controls the conversion of testosterone to Di hydrotestosterone (DHT). Regularization of DHT ultimately controls the further growth of prostate gland and provided the relief in the sign and symptoms of BPH. Due to properties of Madhura rasa, Madhura vipaka, Balya, Rasayana, Vata- kapha shamaka it nourishes and strengthens all the Dhatus, pacifies vitiated vata and regularize the function of Apana vata.

### Concluding Remarks

Prostate health is equally important in men whether it is young, middle aged or aged. In order to maintain prostate health and treat the diseases associated with it which is usually seen in aged men, the role of Ayurveda is vital. Though modern surgical practice is coming up with minimally invasive robotic techniques to treat conditions like BPH it is still somewhere lacking palliative medicines without adverse effects. The above-mentioned procedures can be a good alternative for solving this issue.

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# Health in Golden Years

*Prasan Shankar*

In the autumn of one's life, health can be a senior citizen's only wealth! Biological age creeps up on all living beings but if the biology of ageing is better understood it is possible to live well even as the years roll on.



If you are an elderly adult, ageing might be weighing heavily on your mind. But getting older does not have to take a toll on your health or happiness. Adopting a few simple secrets from Ayurveda can help you stay healthy and strong for as long as you live. Conventional system of medicine has little to offer in the core area of geriatric care except the medical management of the diseases of old age. Ayurveda, on the other hand, has a broad spectrum of preventive and promotive measures for combating the ageing process.

## Senior Health Scenario

Some facts according to the latest census and demographic reports:

- \* By the year 2050, every 1 in 5 persons will be above 60 years.
- \* Within only 10 years, there will be 1 billion older people worldwide, out of which, a significant proportion of the elderly would be victims of neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's disease, Dementia etc.
- \* Today, India's NCD's (non-communicable diseases) burden i.e., cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes, obesity etc. is amongst the highest in the world.
- \* As the current Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) and its mutant's pandemic continues to spread across the globe, the elderly population (60 years and above) is particularly vulnerable.

The good news is that the life expectancy of the world population has increased from 42 years in 1960 to 69.6 years respectively in 2011-2015, thanks to better health survival infrastructure, faster diagnosis, access to acute disease management, better drugs against life threatening infections!!

But not so good news is that the long life often piles one up with a burden of age-related health problems compounded by social isolation. This is often accompanied by comorbid health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, joint pains, loss of sleep, loss of memory, decline in cognitive abilities, neurological diseases like parkinsonism, strokes etc. due to wrong diet, lifestyle and stress which are some common age-related problems. Furthermore, the truth is that there is a lack of healthcare knowledge in mainstream medicine for the care of the elderly.

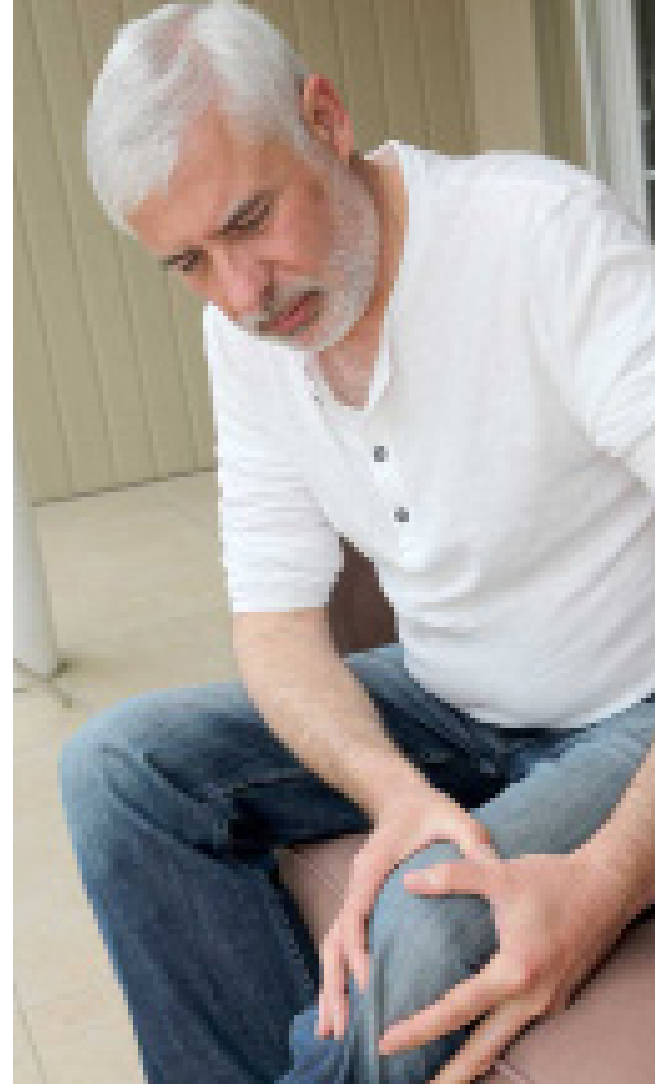
## Geriatric Care in Ayurveda

The texts of Ayurveda have described eight sub-branches. Jara Tantra is one amongst the eight branches which literally means: Care of the elderly or Geriatrics. Both Jara and Geriatrics have the common root: Jara!! Ayurveda was probably the first medical science to exclusively dedicate a branch for the care of the elderly!!

**Almost 50% of patients who visit our university facility, the I-AIM Healthcare Center, a leading**

**Ayurveda hospital in Bangalore, India, are between the age group of 40 to 70. This surely is an indication of the fact that Ayurveda is being sought by word of mouth to solve and improve health related problems of the ageing.**

## Jara Tantra/ Rasayana Tantra



Geriatric care aims to promote strength, immunity and longevity. It also advocates methods to treat and cure diseases of ageing (Charaka Samhita).

A key understanding of Rasayana Tantra is the method of clearing blocked body channels. Blockages may be plaques in the brain, heart or the numerous other micro channels in the body. These blocks occur essentially because of improper diet, lifestyle and inability to cope with stress.

*रसानां रसरक्तादीनामयनमाप्यायनं रसायनं, तदर्थं तन्त्रं रसायनतन्त्रम्; अथवा रसानां रसवीर्यवपिकादीनामायुःप्रभृत्किरणानामयनं वशिष्टलाभोपायो रसायनं, तदर्थं तन्त्रं रसायनतन्त्रम् | ( Susruta Samhita).*

Rasayana has a two-fold strategy viz. firstly to optimize metabolism and bio-assimilation and secondly to ensure proper tissue nutrition and clearing of blocks in the various bodily channels. The metabolic

fire needs to be at its best to achieve the first goal of proper metabolism and bio-assimilation. Improper agni or metabolism can have multiple downstream effects and lead to buildup of metabolic wastes.

Similarly the transport of bio-assimilated foods is also as important. If the transportation routes

are impaired( blocked) then, tissue nutrition is compromised.

Thus, all of Rasayana tantra is about Ayurveda health science guided strategies to promote health, rejuvenate, invigorate or revitalize the body as a whole.

## Scope of Geriatric Care

- \* Disease Management
- \* Preventive Geriatrics

Common Health conditions of the ageing	Scope of Geriatric care	Medical Terminology
Knee pain, Back pain, Neck pain, skin disorders, difficulty in sleeping, constipation	Common diseases of the ageing	Constipation, Insomnia, Degenerative joint diseases, skin disorders,
Hemiplegia or reduced strength in one half of body	Neurological diseases	Cerebrovascular diseases
Memory loss, hallucinations, slurred speech, tremors in the hand, leg etc.	Neurodegenerative diseases	Mild cognitive impairment, Dementia, Parkinsonism,
Supportive cardiac treatment	Cardiovascular diseases	Preventive cardiac care, supportive cardiac care,
Supportive cancer treatment	Cancer Care	Preventive cancer care, Complementary cancer care, Palliative cancer care
Wellness and how to maintain health while ageing	Preventive geriatrics	Preventive geriatrics

## Pain Management in Elders

Crackling sound from joints, walking with bowed legs, lower back pain, neck pain, difficulty in squatting, difficulty in climbing steps, waking up in the morning with joint stiffness, requirement of walking aids, use of kneecaps or lumbar belts are not uncommon as one starts to age. Pain is often the most troubling symptom and an outcome of degenerative joint disease. These are all signs of aggravated Vata according to Ayurveda. Vata aggravation is synonymous with degenerative changes, which occur in the body.

Alleviation of pain and improving quality of life is the primary objective, which is achieved effectively by vata-alleviating interventions.

**Here is a “summary of case report” from a patient suffering from joint pains:**

*“Patient aged 75 years walked in with severe joint pains, difficulty in walking, needed support to climb steps and happened to be overweight, 112 kgs to be precise. X-ray revealed knee joints, which were suitable for surgery. The patient decided to take Ayurveda treatments. She took vata alleviating herbal formulations and underwent panchakarma therapies such as oil massage (Abhyanga), Poultice massage*

*(Patra pinda Sweda), internal oleation (snehapana), purgation (Virechana) and oil enemas (Vasti) along with physiotherapy and suitable diet. After completing the course and 3 months of followup, the patient’s health improved greatly. She is currently able to walk up the steps without support, joint pains have reduced, and her weight has reduced to 95 kgs”.*

There are numerous such individuals who have been serviced by and Ayurveda and benefited immensely.

## Herbs for Pain Management

Some of the commonly recommended Ayurvedic herbs are: Guggulu (*Commiphora wightii*), Shallaki (*Boswellia serrata*), Rasna (*Alpinia galanga*), Vishamusti (*Ageratum conyzoides*) and Gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris*).

## Recommended Treatments

Some of the most commonly recommended Ayurvedic treatments are: Patra Pinda Sweda, Sastika shali pinda sweda, Abhyanga, Janu Vasti, Kati Vasti and Lepam along with Acupuncture and Physiotherapy

## Neurodegenerative Problems in the Elderly

### Parkinson's Disease

Parkinson's disease was first described by James Parkinson way back in 1817. He wrote 'An Essay on the Shaking Palsy' describing his observations of this disease in detail. Detailed understanding of the disease was established in the mid-20th century. Parkinson's disease (PD) is the most common form of progressive neurodegenerative disorder.

Even before James Parkinsons, Kampavata or tremor dominant diseases have been described in the Charaka Samhita. Kampa means tremor and Vata means disease caused by the vitiation of vata dosha or the neuro-motor function. References of the term Kampa are found in Brihatrayi's and Laghu Trayi's (the major texts of Ayurveda).

The following clinical features characterize it:

- \* Bradykinesia (a paucity and slowness of movement)
- \* Rest tremor
- \* Muscular rigidity
- \* Shuffling gait
- \* Flexed posture

#### Whom does Parkinson's disease affect?

- \* Most commonly- elderly
- \* Early onset < 40 years of age

#### Limitations of Standard Allopathy treatment for Parkinson's disease (PD):

There is little doubt about the definitive role modern medications have on symptoms management of parkinson patients. Despite these benefits, over 50% of patients develop drug induced side effects which can be very troubling and challenging to deal with. It is also clear that the medications have very minimal effect on progression of neurodegeneration.

#### Alternative strategies for management of Parkinson's Disease:

### Can Ayurveda play a role?

Clinical observations of holistic management of PD patients involving herbo-mineral formulations, diet, lifestyle, yoga, meditation, and therapeutic procedures, exercise therapy have shown very encouraging outcomes. Research throwing new light on understanding and treatment of PD supports and revalidates the Ayurvedic approaches in treating the disease.

### Details of the treatment

The physician examines the patient to determine the stage and status of disease. Followed by this, a very careful selection of formulations and treatments

are done. The components of management will be as follows:

- \* *Shodhana chikitsa* (Cleansing or unblocking clogged channels therapy)
- \* *Shamana chikitsa* (Palliative herbal medication to optimise metabolism)
- \* *Rasayana chikitsa* (Rejuvenation by improving bio assimilation )
- \* *Nasya* (Trans nasal medication)
- \* *Vasti* (Medicated enema to improve nutrient transport)
- \* *Bahya chikitsa* (External therapies: *Lepam*, *Abhyanga* and *sweda* (massage and steam), *shirodhara* (gentle pouring of medicated oil on forehead), *shiropichu* (application of cotton pad soaked with medicated oil on vertex of head).
- \* Yoga, acupuncture and physiotherapy based on necessity.

Commonly used internal medications described in the texts for Parkinson's are:

Herbs used internally are *Kapikacchu* (*Mucuna pruriens*), *Bala* (*Sida cordifolia*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Brahmi* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Lahsuna* (*Allium sativum*), guggulu etc.

Parkinson's disease is a progressive disease, which cannot be reversed. At the same time it is not a life threatening disease. The objective of treatment for Parkinson's disease is therefore to prevent and slow down the progression of the disease and improve quality of life. Integrative strategies involving Ayurveda treatments will have an important role to play in the near future.

### Cancer Care

Cancer is called "King of all maladies." A diagnosis of cancer can bring panic, fear and great mental turmoil to both the sufferer and caregiver. It's almost as if all hope is lost. To add to the complexity, for a common middle class Indian, there is also a great economic impact.

The best centers for cancer in the world today have a department dedicated to Traditional systems of medicine. In India thus, there is a great opportunity to harness the wealth of Ayurveda knowledge. Ayurveda physicians who have been practicing this science for centuries have demonstrated the important role of Ayurveda and yoga in cancer management. While Ayurveda herbs can help reduce physiological and physical symptoms, Yoga can greatly reduce the intense psychological distress associated with the disease.

Despite all the advancements in modern medicine, cancer brings with it many challenges. What can one do for prevention of cancer? Can Ayurveda medication be taken during standard allopathic treatment?

Can Ayurveda help for palliative care? What kind of nutrition should one have? These many such questions are often encountered in clinical practice.

Some of the common symptoms the individual suffers from are reduced appetite, constipation, diarrhea, fatigue, and weight loss, lack of sleep, anxiety and stress!! The various conditions can be categorized in the Table:

Scope of Complementary Cancer care	Adverse reactions of Chemotherapy: Loss of appetite, nausea, Anemia, Oral ulceration, constipation, diarrhea, hair loss, Peripheral Neuropathy, low blood counts	Ayurveda herbs and formulations
	Radiotherapy induced side effects: Radiation induced burns, oral ulcerations/mucositis	Ayurveda herbs and formulations
	Nutrition	Individualized and customized nutrition advice
	Anxiety and stress	Yoga
	Primary prevention of cancer: Family history of cancers	Diet, lifestyle, nutrition and Panchakarma
Scope of Adjunct Therapy	Immunomodulation therapies	Add on treatments for patients suffering from cancer
	Prevention of Relapse (Rasayana and Panchakarma Therapy)	Diet, lifestyle, nutrition and Panchakarma therapies, Rasayana herbs

Some Examples: Pretreatment with *Butea monosperma* significantly attenuated vincristine-induced painful neuropathy. It may be due to its potential of antioxidative, neuroprotective and calcium channel inactivation.

### Herbs for Immunomodulation and Adaptogenic effects

Some of the recommended herbs are: Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*), Aloe vera, ginseng, Kalmegh (*Andrographis paniculata*), curry leaves, guduchi etc.

### Summary of case report (for Cancer)

“Patient aged 60 years, diagnosed with stage 4 carcinoma of the right breast diagnosed in April 2018. Prior to visiting the I-AIM health care center, the patient had undergone surgery along with chemotherapy and radiotherapy. Six months after her surgery, she visited I-AIM with complaints of weight gain, joint pains, severe fatigue, a feeling of being unwell, confusion, anxiety, hot flashes and swelling in the whole left arm. The patient was treated for the above complaints using both Ayurveda and Yoga. She was administered Panchakarma therapy, namely Snehapana and virechana during the course of her treatments. After the treatment, the patient reported that there was significant improvement in status of health. She felt more energetic, reduced joint pains, better energy, feeling lighter, less anxious and most importantly, an overall feeling of well-being”.

### Cardiovascular Care

Amongst the various risk factors responsible for

cardiovascular or cerebrovascular events, dyslipidemia is amongst the foremost. Recent population studies are showing a growing trend of people with increasing mean cholesterol. A recent report suggests that the CVD burden reached its highest in India by 2020. The WHO-PROMISE study concludes that the largest proportion of the CHD (coronary heart disease) population below 50 is probably in India. The Million Death study reports that CVD is the leading cause for deaths in India.

### Summary of case report (Cardiovascular)

“Patient aged 64 years of age, presented with complaints of chest tightness and discomfort (Angina) 1 year after angioplasty. In consultation with the cardiologist, the patient was advised to repeat an angiogram. After the angiogram, the patient was suggested to get another angioplasty done. The patient decided to opt for Ayurveda management, as it was not an emergency. Within a month of the intervention, the intensity of chest discomfort and tightness reduced by more than 70 to 80% and over time it reduced completely. It has been 5 years since and the patient continues to be stable.”

There are several such patients who have benefited similarly.

Scope of Ayurveda and Yoga interventions for Cardiac care can be summarized as:

- \* Preventive cardiology - focusing primarily on preventive care
- \* Post angioplasty rehabilitation- focusing on secondary prevention

- \* Yogic intervention - Therapeutic Yoga for Cardiovascular conditions
- \* Cardio tonic herbal formulations focusing on improving cardiac health
- \* Case Specific Diet and nutrition advice

There are already several studies exploring the role of herbals for antioxidant activities in the context of atherosclerosis. Arjuna ksheera-paka, a classical Ayurveda remedy for cardiac ailments was tested for its anti-inflammatory effects recently and found to have potentially beneficial effects.

## Cardiotonic Herbs

Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*), Haritaki (harad), Draksha (grapes), Dadima (pomegranate), Hingu (asafoetida) and Sthira (*Desmodium gangeticum*).

## Preventive Care in Old Age

### What you can do at home?

Ayurveda advocates a simple set of daily routine practices referred to as Dinacharya for maintaining and promoting good health. If these practices are followed on a regular basis it can definitely help keep the body in good health, improve joint health, improve sleep, reduce dryness of the skin and tone and strengthen the muscles.

### Some simple practices, which can be done at home:

- \* Regular Oil Massage on body and head (Abhyanga) -Eg Sesame oil, Naryana taila, Balashwagandha oil, Ksheera bala oil. Gentle application of oil on your body 30 minutes before a bath.
- \* Oil pulling ( Kavala dharana) – With sesame oil, coconut oil to improve oral health.
- \* Nasal therapy ( Nasya)- 2 drops of sesame oil/ ghee/coconut oil applied to the nostrils on an empty stomach. Alternatively the same can be smeared. To improve respiratory immunity.

Here are a few tips for keeping you healthy in your old age:

## Exercise and Yoga

A recent research study found that exercise is the number one contributor to longevity, adding extra years to one's life, even if you do not start exercising until your senior years. But it's not just about adding years to your life, it's about adding life to your years. Exercise helps you maintain your strength and agility, increases vitality, improves sleep, gives your mental health a boost, and can even help diminish chronic pain. Exercise can also have a profound effect on the brain, helping prevent memory loss, cognitive decline, and dementia.

Exercise does not have to essentially mean strenuous activity or time at the gym. In fact, walking is one of the best ways to start exercising and staying fit.

Regular yogic asana, pranayama and meditation practice, is a simple yet very effective way to keep both the body and mind fit.

## Get Good Sleep

Between 10-30% of the global population suffers from Insomnia. Many adults complain of sleep problems as they age, such as daytime sleepiness and frequent waking during the night. But getting older does not automatically bring sleep problems. Developing healthy sleep habits as you age can help ensure you get enough quality sleep each night.

According to Ayurveda, disturbed sleep is a sign of Vata aggravation. Thus, incorporating yoga nidra practices, drinking a warm glass of milk at bed time, or medicated oil/ warm sesame oil application to the feet can greatly improve quality of sleep.

A glass of warm milk processed with Ashwagandha at bed time can help with better sleep.

## Eat Well

Just as infants need special attention with respect to nutrition, so also the elderly. It has thus been recommended that vata alleviating foods should be increased in one's diet and reduce intake of dry or vata aggravating foods. Regular intake of chyavanprash, milk, moderate consumption of ghee, seeds and nuts, seasonal fruits, vegetables and other Rasayana foods can help with maintaining cognitive function, bone health, gut health, energy etc.

*For example:* Regular intake of about 5gms sesame seeds helps keep your bones strong and healthy.

## Regular Panchakarma

Just like a vehicle needs to be serviced every once in a while, just like a house needs to be maintained every once in a while, so does the human body. Panchakarma is probably the best strategy to service the body and would require 7, 14 or 21 days of supervised care as required. If one invests time on one's health and follows the above methods, ageing will definitely be graceful.

## Concluding Remarks

The objective of geriatric care is to ensure healthy and joyful ageing. To achieve this goal, it is important that the individuals start taking their health seriously. If we start taking charge of our health early on, we will reap its benefits in old age.

**"And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years".**

~ Abraham Lincoln

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# Age Proof your Vision



**REKHA T.A.**

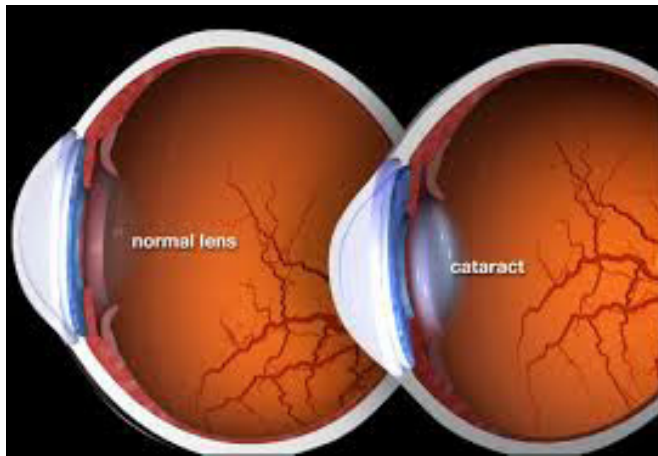
He that is struck blind, cannot forget the precious treasure of his 'Eyesight' lost  
 –Shakespeare

*‘Sarvendriyaanam Nayanam Pradhanam’*

**O**ur eyesight is the most perfect and most delightful of all our senses. It fills the mind with the largest variety of ideas, converses with its objects at the greatest distance and continues to be the longest in action without being tired or satisfied with its proper enjoyments. From birth to death, the most cherished and cosmetically recognised sense faculty are the 'Eyes'.

Senile years bring with it, their own challenges regarding- hearing, mobility, memory, cognition and of course the diminishing vision. But the most worrisome and disturbing is when the person has trouble seeing and recognising objects or persons. During the ageing years, when an individual starts facing difficulties with the eyesight, that is when he realises that he has not been caring for his eyes well enough. It is utmost important for an individual to take care of the eyesight even before the defective vision sets in. A proper and well informed, careful approach towards the Eye care is vital.

**The effects of ageing are hardly limited to wrinkles, creaky knees and gray hair. Just consider the plethora**



of age-related conditions that can affect your eyes, including cataract, age-related macular degeneration (ARMD) and glaucoma.

Individuals over 50 years of age should be aware of the common Eye disorders which can begin with the ageing years. Various eye diseases which can occur in an otherwise normal individual are:

- \* Uncorrected vision defects
- \* Cataract
- \* Age Related Macular degeneration
- \* Glaucoma
- \* Corneal degenerations
- \* Watering in the eyes and Dacryocystitis.
- \* Lid laxity (weakness in the lids)
- \* Blepharospasm
- \* Dry Eyes

On the other hand, there are few disorders in the eye which appear due to the pre-existing systemic and general health issues. The Eye conditions which affect people with pre-existing diseases are:

- \* Retinopathies due to Diabetes and/ or

Hypertension

- \* Vision defects after a stroke.
- \* Complications due to pre-existing high power (High Myopia)

## Uncorrected Vision Defects

Elderly individuals may have been suffering from a simple short sight which might have gone undetected and untreated which becomes very obvious due to ageing, the increase of power in the glasses can lead to serious vision impairment. Proper examination and evaluation are advised followed by usage of corrective glasses. Vision promotive and protective medications like Triphala, Yastimadhu, Shilajatu, Punarnava and other herbs are advised according to the person's temperament (prakruti) and extent of the impairment in the eyesight.

## Cataract

Cataract is the most common eye condition that almost all the elderly have to face. A Cataract is a condition where in, the natural, transparent convex lens in the eyes get cloudy and gradually becomes opaque obstructing the entry of light into the eyes. It is one of the top causes of blindness in India. About 66.2% of blindness cases in people above 50 years of age is due to cataract. Almost 74% of the visual impairment among the senior citizens is caused due to Cataract.

An individual with the starting stage of a cataract may experience the following:

- \* Difficulty in seeing objects at a distance or identifying people from a distance of more than 5-5 ½ metres
- \* Blurry vision or cloudy vision
- \* Glare due to bright and inability to drive in the night.

As the cataract progresses, the recognition of objects and the clarity of it reduces, to a shorter distance and the individual will have difficulty in seeing even close by objects clearly. The near vision and the reading ability will be not much affected initially but as



the cataract progresses, the reading ability also gets affected. Both the eyes are affected although in one eye, it progresses fast. The contemporary system of medicine has a surgical remedy for cataract, where in the opaque lens in the eye is extracted (removed surgically) and is replaced by an artificial lens.

Ayurvediya Netra Chikitsa (Ayurvedic Eye care) can effectively delay as well as prevent the onset of the cataract if the preventive care is started at a young age. There are time tested remedies to delay and prevent the onset of cataract, if the preventive care is started at a young age. These remedies are effective in arresting the progression of cataract in its early stage, in case of an already set-in opacity. Preventive measures for cataract are best started at an early age of 30-45 years. Following a proper routine, adopting healthy practices like Nasya, Anjana, Abhyanga, Mukhaprakshalana in dinacharya (daily routine), Rutucharya (practises according to the seasonal variations) and undergoing proper Panchakarma are the preventive measures one can adopt to take care of the eye sight. Rasayanas or herbs which are conducive and rejuvenative to the eyes can be consumed. Anjanas (collyriums and eyedrops) are also employed to avoid the onset of a cataract. Once the cataract has set in, the person desires of avoiding a surgical intervention can seek suitable Ayurveda formulations and therapies in order to prevent the progression of a cataract to a mature state.

## Age related Macular degeneration

ARMD is the second most common eye disease which often affects both the eyes in persons above 55-59 years of age. An individual afflicted with Age related Macular Degeneration mainly faces difficulty in reading ability and the distance vision usually appears distorted (out of shape). The lines appear wavy and central focus becomes blurred. AMD or ARMD most often occurs in elderly individuals who happened to have a good systemic and general health.

ARMD affects the Central area of Retina called the Macula. ARMD occurs in two forms.

- \* Wet type of ARMD- This type of ARMD is fast progressing and a serious variety which leads to a bleeding, swelling and scarring in the Macula. It is the less common type.



- \* Dry type of ARMD- It is the commonest type of Macular degeneration, usually slow in progression and less dangerous than wet AMD.

Modern system of medicine does not offer satisfactory treatment for the age-related degeneration in the macula. The wet type of ARMD is treated with injections to arrest the bleeding and swelling in the macula which are often short acting and needs multiple injections, whereas the dry type of AMD is treated with dietary supplements and antioxidants which are of a very limited value. Ayurvedic ophthalmology can effectively retain the vision in an elderly citizen affected by ARMD.

Netra kriyakalpa, shodhana and shamana oushadhas followed by chakushya dravyas are of utmost importance in improving and promoting the vitality of the macular area.

**Ayurvedic eye care recommends herbs which are protective and promotive to the eyesight**



Avoiding intake of curd, excessively fermented foods, oily and spicy food will help in avoiding eye ailments. Preparations like Brahma Rasayana, Chyawanaprash, Drakshavaleha, Narasimha Rasayana, Saptamrutha Loha and Vara churna can be consumed with proper guidance and supervision.

**'Eye' being the most complex, intricate and**



- \* Amalaki (Gooseberry) alone or as Triphala— Haritaki+Vibhitaki+Amalaki, 5gms of dry powder can be taken with equal portions of Honey and ghee daily on empty stomach.
- \* Yastimadhu (Licorice) can be had as a tea or 2-3 gms with honey.
- \* Shilajatu acts as vision protective agent, available in tablet and capsule form.
- \* Guduchi (Amruthaballi) can be had as a tea or the leaf paste can be consumed on empty stomach in the dose of 3-5 gm.
- \* Punarnava- entire herb along with the root, its paste can be consumed after food in 2-5 gm dosage.
- \* Saindhava lavana (pink salt/ Himalayan salt) can be substituted for table salt -to prevent eye ailments.

Daily intake of cow's ghee, cow's butter, cow's milk, moong dal, red rice and green gram are the recommended food items for a good eyesight.

**delicate of all senses is many a times the first to be affected by the aging process. Having a good eyesight is very crucial for an aged citizen in order to function well. The movement, reading, writing, recognising individuals, communication, enjoying the world around and every single task demands a good acuity in the vision. Every individual over 50 years of age should therefore undergo regular eye examination, maintain the vision, detect the possible eye conditions at an early stage and adopt safe, suitable and effective remedies.**

*“Chakshuhu Rakshaaya Sarvakaalam”*

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# Digestive Health in Elderly



## CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Lifestyle changes, along with getting older, can affect your digestive tract, and increase your risk of developing a digestive disorder.

### *Arun Bhanu K*

**A**geing puts the body at higher risk for an assortment of health ailments and conditions. With age, many bodily functions slow down, including your digestive tract: it just might not work as efficiently or as quickly as it used to. The muscles in the digestive tract become stiffer, weaker, and less efficient. Your tissues are also more likely to become damaged because new cells are not forming as quickly as they once did.

As a result, digestive tract problems that can occur as people age include:

- \* Heartburn
- \* Peptic Ulcers
- \* Diarrhoea
- \* Constipation
- \* Haemorrhoids
- \* Gas
- \* Stomach Pain
- \* Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- \* Diverticulus
- \* Faecal incontinence
- \* Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)

It is important that to seek help for any digestive discomforts and not simply brush them off as part of ageing.

Seniors may also have unusual symptoms of more serious digestive disorders that can easily be missed. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) tends to be more serious in seniors, but older adults may show less common reflux symptoms, such as coughing or wheezing.

Common Symptoms of Digestive Discomfort include:

- \* Abdominal pain
- \* Infrequent bowel movement
- \* Bloating
- \* Feeling more stressed
- \* Lethargy
- \* Subdued wellbeing
- \* Low mood

### Esophageal dysphagia

This is most commonly manifested as the feeling of food being stuck in the chest. It can be caused by mechanical obstruction inside the esophagus itself

(stricture, tumor) or compression from surrounding tissues (vascular compression or mediastinal masses). Neuromuscular causes include achalasia, scleroderma, or diffuse esophageal spasm. Finally, inflammatory and infectious causes can lead to esophageal dysphagia.

**Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)** - is a "condition that develops when the reflux of stomach contents causes troublesome symptoms and/or complications" unlike non-problematic gastroesophageal reflux which is a physiological event that occurs during and after meals. The typical sign of GERD is heartburn, but, in elderly people it usually associated with difficulty in swallowing and delayed digestion.

**Medication induced esophagitis (pill esophagitis)** - refers to the inflammation of the esophagus from harmful effects of medication due to their altered passage through esophagus and increased contact with esophageal mucosa. While it can occur at any age, it is more prevalent in elderly populations as they tend to consume many medicines due to the age-related ailments.

**Chronic atrophic gastritis (CAG)** - is more prevalent in the elderly and is associated with H. pylori infection. The hallmark of disease is the partial loss of glands in the gastric mucosa leading to hypochlorhydria or achlorhydria. H. pylori infection is common among elderly population in developed countries due to poor sanitation which is a known risk factor for contracting the infection. Chronic inflammation secondary to ongoing H. pylori infection may play a role in developing or worsening Alzheimer dementia and vascular dementia.

**Peptic ulcer disease (PUD)** - encompasses both gastric and duodenal peptic injury that leads to a break in gastric or duodenal mucosa. The pain starts after the digestion of food usually. Sometimes associated with severe bloating sensation and heaviness of lower abdomen. PUD is also happened with the infection due to H. pylori.

**Celiac disease (CD)** - is a chronic, systemic autoimmune disease that affects genetically predisposed individuals secondary to exposure to dietary gluten protein. The classic form of CD manifests as a malabsorption syndrome associated with chronic diarrhea, mineral deficiencies, failure to thrive, and weight loss. Many patients have only extra intestinal manifestations or even no symptoms at all.

**Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)** - is a common functional gastrointestinal disorder. It is associated with abdominal pain and alteration in bowel movements in the absence of any organic pathology.



Symptom-based criteria known as Rome criteria are the most widely accepted method of diagnosing IBS since there is no pathognomonic result or finding. Depending on bowel patterns, IBS can be diarrhea predominant, constipation predominant or IBS with mixed bowel habits.

### IBS Diagnostic Criteria

Recurrent abdominal pain on average at least 1 day/week in the last 3 months, associated with two or more of the following criteria:

- \* Related to defecation
- \* Associated with a change in the frequency of stool
- \* Associated with a change in the form (appearance) of stool

(These criteria should be fulfilled for the last 3 months with symptom onset at least 6 months prior to diagnosis.)

### Foods to maintain Digestive Health

The quality of food defines the quality of digestion. Health is the byproduct of healthy diet. Rather depending on taste, depending on quality gives comfort to both body and mind.

Adequate fiber in the diet encourages passage of material through the digestive system and provides bulk and the right consistency to stools for easy evacuation. Ideally, adults should consume at least 25g of fiber per day (for optimal health aim for 30-40g).

Many regular foods can be used in an orderly

manner to promote digestion and gut movement so as it will not alter the digestion.

Fruits	Vegetables	Cereals	Meat	Other Products
Apple	Carrot	Oats	Salmon	Curd
Avocado	Tomato	Quinoa	Sardine	Chia seeds
Blueberry	Beetroot	Barley	Pomfret	Kombucha
Kiwi	Cucumber	Red rice	Anchovy	Kefir
Papaya	Ginger	Ragi	Quail	Tempeh
Peach	Garlic			Miso
Banana	Sweet potato			Coconut oil
Musk melon	Spinach			Coriander
Water melon	Brussel sprouts			Cumin
	Broccoli			Buttermilk
	Peppermint			
	Kidney bean			

### The concept of Probiotics

Digestive system is very much dependent on the gut microbiome. So, it is very crucial to take care of the gut microbiota at any cost to maintain the digestive health. There comes the concept of probiotic foods

which help to keep the microbiota active and healthy. Several types of yogurt, kombucha, kefir, miso, tempeh etc. will improve the gut microbiome and thereby helps in digestion and protect the digestive system.

**The Ayurveda Way of Diet:** Food is the best medicine. So, Ayurveda always emphasize on the diet rather starting medicine. According to seasons and timings of day, foods are need to be changed. Seasonal diet holds high importance in this point to maintain proper digestive health.

Season	Diet advised	Reduce intake
Hemanta (Dec – Jan)	Maize, Bottle gourd, Ladies finger, Green gram, Onion, Sweet potato, Grapes, Date	Ragi, Barley, Drumstick, Brinjal, Chana, Guava, Jamun
Sisira (Feb – March)	Wheat, Jowar, Snake gourd, Amaranthus, Pumpkin, Apricot, Walnut, Date, Almond	Pearl millet, Ragi, Barley, Horse gram, Papaya
Vasanta (Apr – May)	Barley, Wheat, Fenugreek, Brinjal, Horse gram, Radish, Papaya, Coriander, Honey	Ladies finger, Ivy gourd, Banana, Custard apple, Curd, Tapioca
Grishma (June – July)	Ladies finger, Ivy gourd, Spinach, Tapioca, Black gram, Lentil, Orange, Potato	Ragi, Barley, Brinjal, Bitter gourd, Horse gram, Sweet pea, Onion, Hog plum, Buttermilk
Varsha (Aug – Sept)	Red rice, Wheat, Jowar, Brinjal, Bottle gourd, Horse gram, Onion, Garlic, Ginger, Mango, Date, Grape,	Ragi, Maize, Spinach, Cabbage, Tapioca, Potato, Jamun, Paneer, Water melon
Sharad (Oct – Nov)	Wheat, Pearl millet, Bottle gourd, Ladies finger, Sweet potato, Water chestnut, Paneer, Ghee, Amla, Pomegranate, Grapes	White millet, Maize, Black gram, Horse gram, Curd, Hog plum, Mulberry, Cherry,

### Some Helpful Remedial measures

Triphala boiled water – For drinking, water can be boiled with half a spoon a Triphala powder. This can reduce the GERD related issues

Buttermilk can be boiled with Asafoetida, Turmeric, Ginger, Black pepper and Rock salt. This will control abdominal pain caused by ulcer like issues

Chewing Mango leaves and Neem leaves together

before brushing teeth will reduce mouth ulcers and improve digestion at buccal cavity.

While the risk of developing digestive diseases and disorders increases moderately as people age, a well-balanced diet, exercise, and letting the personal physician know of any sudden changes in the digestive system can all go a long way in maintaining healthy function well into those wiser years.

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# Worrying Away Sleep v/s Sleeping Away Worries



Sleep is the enchantress which gives solace to the body systems each day and is responsible for regulating health, nutrition, strength, virility, knowledge and life itself. Yet, sleep is caught in the dark spells of anxiety, worry, crazy ambitions and negative emotions leading to unrelenting shortening of the lifespan. So, there is nothing in this world that is worth losing one's sleep over! This is more so in the elderly population, in whom sleep becomes an elusive goddess!

## *Chaithrika Hegade*

A multi-center, cross-sectional survey conducted from Kerala in 2016 revealed that 89% of the elderly population in India suffered from various degrees of insomnia. Insomnia in the elderly is frequent in primary care patients in India and has multiple negative health correlates.

### What Ayurveda says about Jara

Ayurveda has classified the diseases under different categories. Among them, Swabhavika Vyadhis are those diseases which come naturally or have natural occurrence.

- \* Kshut (hunger)
- \* Pipasa (thirst)
- \* Nidra (sleep)
- \* Jara (old age)

\* Mrityu (death) are the swabhavikavyadhis.

These five diseases are inevitable in all human beings. One who has taken birth in this universe has to undergo all these natural diseases. Jara or old age is especially characterized by impaired quantity and quality of sleep. Even though old age cannot be prevented, it can be slowed down by following the daily and seasonal regimens as explained in Ayurveda, starting from a young age only. There is also a branch of medicine in Ayurveda called "Rasayana" which helps to slow down the ageing process by maintaining the health of an individual.

According to Ayurveda an individual who is above 60 years is considered as jeernam/ vriddha, which means the person who is getting older. But nowadays, due to unrestrained exposure to free radicals and lifestyle

modifications we are witnessing early ageing. In old age, vata dosha in the body becomes predominant naturally.

Among various old age diseases, insomnia tops the list as it occurs more frequently. In this article, we shall briefly discuss this. The objective of this article is to refrain from worrying about sleep by understanding and stopping the causatives of insomnia and sleeping away the worry by following some easy and holistic remedial measures at home.

Before knowing about insomnia, let us understand what sleep is and why do we get sleep. According to Ayurveda, nidra or sleep is considered as one of the Trayaupasthmbha which means the three pillars (Upastambha=pillar) of the body which maintain the health of an individual. A person gets sleep when all the sense organs including Manas (mind) get exhausted and become inactive.

Insomnia or sleeplessness is a disorder wherein a person finds it hard to fall asleep or hard to stay asleep as long as desired. There are various factors which are responsible for lack of sleep and lack of sleep, in turn can also be responsible for the manifestation of various diseases. Some of the causes for insomnia are:

- \* Physical illness like pain
- \* Respiratory diseases
- \* Delirium
- \* Depression
- \* Anxiety
- \* Excessive usage of stimulants like coffee and tea
- \* Alcohol
- \* Withdrawal of sedatives

As mentioned earlier, Vata dosha takes an upper hand in old age. This in turn leads to depletion of body tissues (dhatukshaya) due to underlying diseases/ worry (chinta)/ grief (shoka). These again further increase the already aggravated Vata dosha and decrease the Kapha dosha which is a source of nourishment in the body. Imbalance of these two doshas is responsible for sleeplessness or anidra, That is, increased Vata and decreased Kapha.

Now let us review some of the easy to follow remedial measures to combat the problem of insomnia in the elderly:

### **Ashwagandha is a drug of choice for insomnia in old age people:**

- \* Ashwagandha is a very well-known drug told in Ayurveda classics.
- \* Botanically it is identified as *Withania somnifera* which belongs to the family Solanaceae.
- \* The word “somnifera” refers to that which induces sleep.
- \* The name Ashwagandha is given because the roots of Ashwagandha have the smell of horse urine.



- \* It also has the common name “Indian ginseng” because in Chinese system of medicine, ginseng is a plant which promotes strength and ashwagandha, which is native to India is found to have very similar properties.
- \* In Kannada it is called ‘Hiremaddu’, which means a prime medicinal plant. There is a saying in Kannada ‘Hesarillada Rogakke Hiremaddu’ which means, Ashwagandha can be used in diseases where the cause or causative organism is not known.
- \* Part used in the treatment is root.

### **How to identify the plant?**

Ashwagandha is an erect, hairy herb or under-shrub, which grows upto a height of 1.5 meter. The roots are stout, long tuberous, fleshy, whitish brown. Leaves are simple, alternate, ovate in shape measuring 7 to 10 cm long. Flowers are greenish-yellow and found in clusters. Fruit is a berry, globose, yellow and which turns red towards ripening.

### **Ayurvedic Properties and Uses**

Ashwagandha has **Katu** (pungent), **Tikta** (bitter) and **Kashaya** (astringent) tastes. It has the following qualities: **Snighdha** (unctuous) and **Laghu** (light for digestion).

In old age the digestive strength of the person gradually decreases. Ashwagandha being light for digestion makes it an ideal choice for treating insomnia in old age people.

It helps to nourish the body tissues and improves the physical and mental strength. It also acts on the nervous system by lowering anxiety and stress. This in turn brings down the increased Vata dosha and induces sleep or increases the quality of sleep.

Apart from insomnia, Ashwagandha can also be used in other geriatric complaints like joint pain, muscle pain, tiredness, numbness and dizziness.



## How to Administer?

5 g (one teaspoon) of this powder is mixed in 150 ml of warm milk, which is to be taken at bed time. Milk can be sweetened with 1tsf of candy sugar, if the person is non-diabetic.

NOTE: The above is a general information, not a prescription. One should consult an Ayurveda physician before taking Ashwagandha in case of individual conditions and specificities.

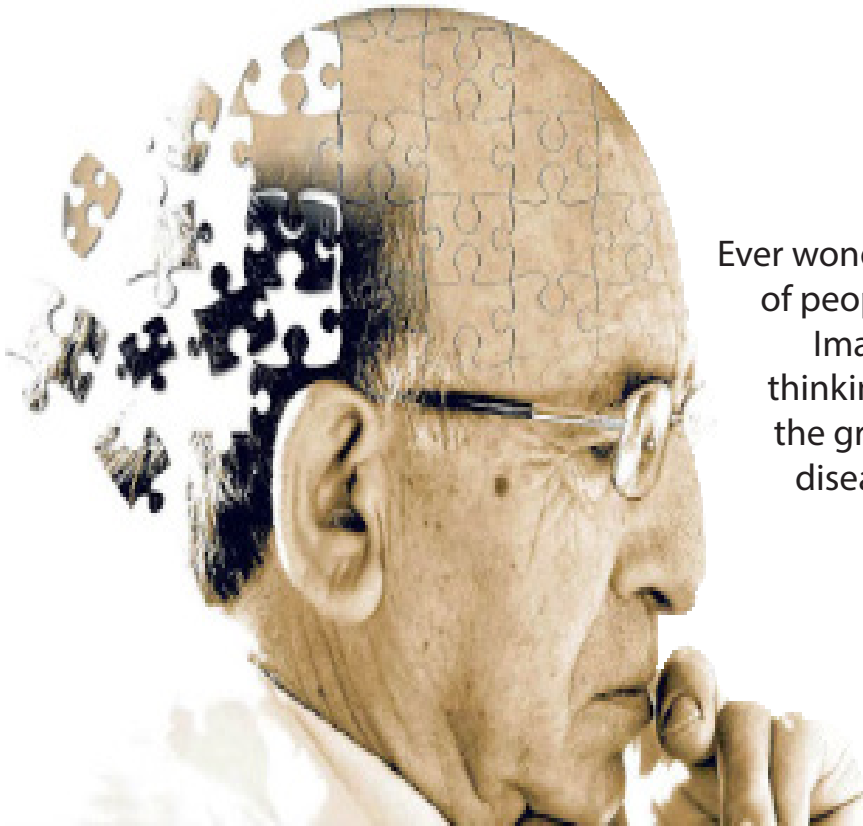
Some other remedies which help to relieve insomnia are:

- \* Paada Abhyanga or Foot Massage: Massage the feet using sesame oil/coconut oil before going to bed. Slightly heat the sesame oil or coconut oil in a vessel and massage the feet (both upper and lower surfaces) gently for around 10 to 15 minutes. After that, one can wash the feet with lukewarm water and pat dry. Wear a pair of socks and sleep.
- \* Inhale the aroma of essential oils like lavender oil.
- \* Gently massage the head with Himasagara Taila/ lavender oil/ rosemary oil.
- \* Drink a glass of warm milk, flavored with 1/4tsf crushed KhasKhas (poppy) seeds, 2tsf sugar, 1tbsp crushed almonds and 1-2 strands of saffron. In place of KhasKhas seeds, 1/4tsf nutmeg powder can also be used.
- \* Perform any of the following Yoga Asanas for 1-3 minutes:
  - Shashankasana-Rabbit posture
  - SuptaPadmasana-Supine lotus posture
  - Paschimottanasana-Seated forward bend
  - Baddhakonasana-Butterfly posture
  - Bala Asana-Child's posture
  - Utthanasana-Standing forward bend
  - Shavasana-Corpse posture
- \* Meditate and chant prayers for at least 10 minutes
- \* Inhale-exhale in a slow, deep fashion; perform 3 rounds of Chandra Anuloma-Viloma type of breathing (slow, deep inhalation, followed by exhalation through left nostril keeping the right nostril closed)  
NOTE: Perform Yoga Asanas and breathing techniques after learning from a certified Yoga practitioner.
- \* Massage gently in clock-wise manner over the Muladhara Chakra or the root chakra at the base of the spine to relax the nerves and induce sleep.
- \* Refrain watching television/computer/laptop/mobile phones and other electronic gadgets; avoid watching movies or shows portraying violence and mystery.
- \* Listen to soothing music, preferably instrumental.

To conclude, as quoted by Thomas Dekker, a famous English dramatist, **“sleep is the golden chain that binds health and our bodies together”** which is all the more important in the elderly who become vulnerable with the forward march of time. Our elders are like the roots in the society. In order to grow the trees (trees/branches/leaves=young), one should not neglect the roots. The knowledge and experience of the elders are the greatest lessons to all of us and beacons of light to lead our life. One day we are all going to stand in the same phase in our life as our elders stand currently, so be kind and treat them well.

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# Avoiding Alzheimer's Disease in Old Age



Ever wondered as to what is the secret of people whose minds never fade? Imagine living into your 80s and thinking as clearly as ever, dodging the grasp of dementia, Alzheimer's disease, or milder brain problems like memory loss.

*Dr Iftheqar Mubeen and  
Dr Bazigah Heal Mubeen*

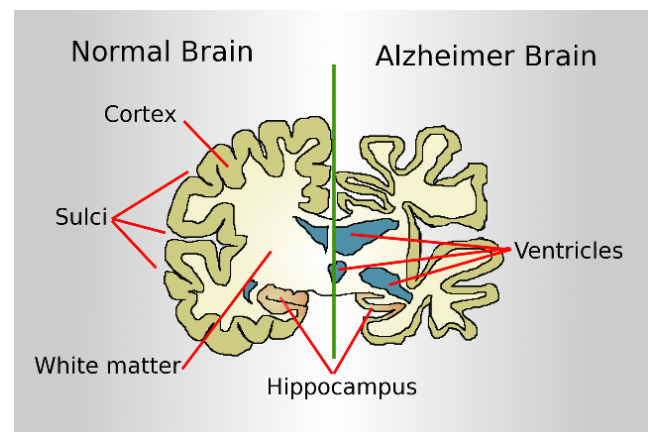
Alzheimer's disease and dementia eventually claim several senior minds, but some people never seem to fall prey to those conditions. You may know someone like that. Perhaps you have had a relative whose mind stayed really sharp well into old age.

Although the risk of Alzheimer's disease increases with age, it is not a usual part of ageing or something that should be expected in older people. In fact, early onset Alzheimer's can occur in people younger than 65, although it accounts for a small number of all cases. The rest are classified as late onset.

## Alzheimer's Disease and Old Age

One of the main issues related to the senior health is the gradual changes in brain, leading to the memory loss, which is termed as Alzheimer's disease. Although age is not the only etiological factor in the progress of this disorder, nevertheless age plays a major role in the progress of this disorder.

Alzheimer's disease is the gradual loss of memory which results from certain changes in the brain which reduces the function of the brain. The main symptom of this senior health issue is forgetfulness, i.e., an affected person experiences gradual memory loss, which is evident from their day-to-day activities. They tend to forget common things involving their daily routine.



## A Brief Discussion on Alzheimer's Disease

It is a progressive neurologic disorder characterized by the shrinking of the brain (technically referred to as atrophy of the brain) owing to the death of the brain cells. This results in the declining of thinking capacity, leading to decline in behavioral and social skills. These factors result in the independent functioning of the affected person.

Occasional loss of memory is experienced by many, but this is different from the memory loss associated with the gradual shrinking of brain owing to the death of the brain cells which is popularly known as Alzheimer's disease. This memory loss worsens with

lapse of time as the disease progresses.

The indications and the symptoms of this disease include frequent forgetting of conversations, appointments, and other such events. The patient often misplaces his belongings and forgets. It is usually difficult for the patient to remember these at a later date. A conversation with an affected person (a patient of Alzheimer's disease) reveals that he or she forgets the names of his or her acquaintances, finds it difficult to choose the right words, identify the objects, etc. The patient even forgets his or her near and dear ones, their names, etc. Reasoning and logical thinking becomes difficult and this affects his decision making, judgement and planning and executing different tasks. The patient undergoes frequent mood changes, depression, and many a times experiences loss of sleep (insomnia). Such people often distrust others and believe in something which is non-existent (delusions). However, some of the skills which they had perfected may continue to remain for the reasonably longer time, when compared with the other symptoms.

#### **Predisposing Factors related to Alzheimer's Disease**

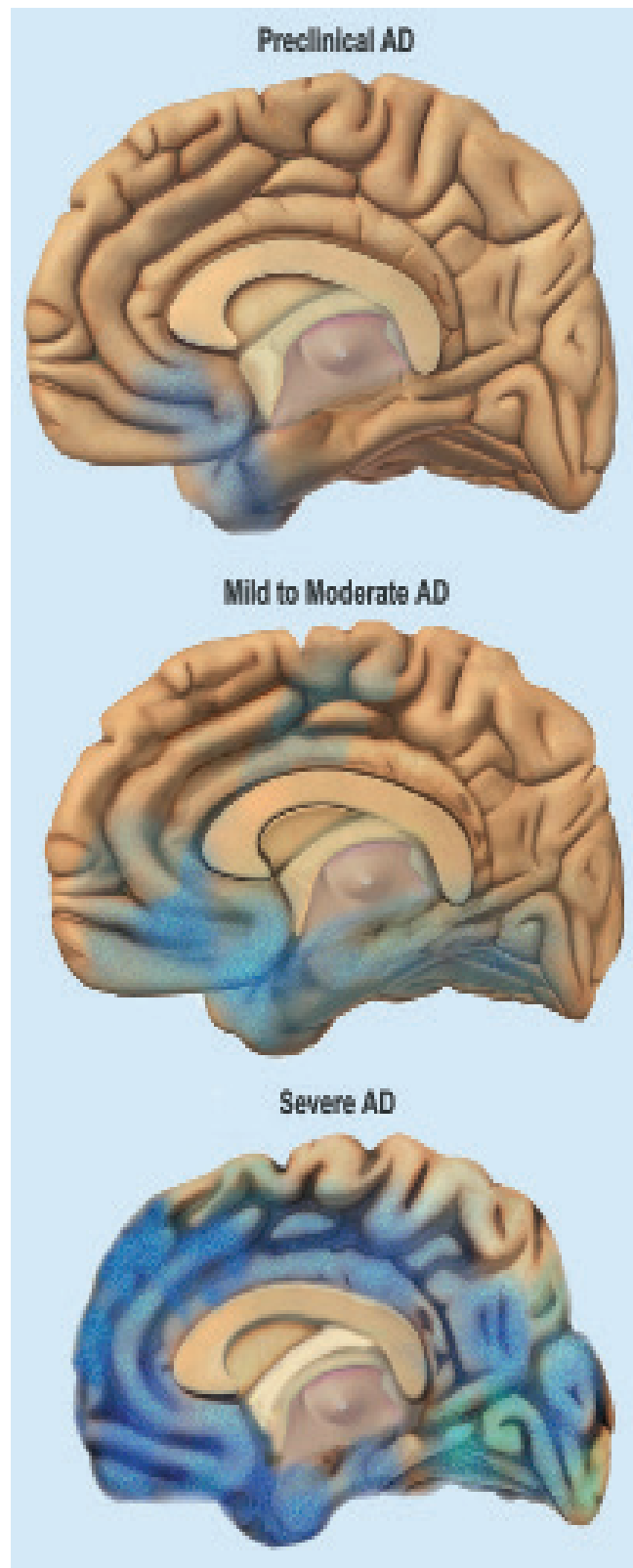
Age is by far the most important factor which has direct impact on the progress of this disease as the advancement of age is associated with the development of plaques (a plaque is an insoluble deposit of amyloid proteins in the nervous system) in the brain cells which causes the progressive death of the brain cells resulting in the gradual loss of memory, an important feature of Alzheimer's disease.

The other causative factor is the disruption of internal support and transport system to carry nutrients and other essential material owing to the development of neurofibrillary tangles.

Family history of Alzheimer's disease is very important as hereditary factors play a major role in the development of this disorder which points toward the genetic factor, particularly Down's syndrome which is characterised by the presence of an extra copy of the 21st chromosome, which causes issues related to mental health.

Trauma or injury to the head also plays an important role in loss of memory leading to the development of Alzheimer's disease.

The other most important factor are the lifestyle related disorders. Lifestyle disease, as the name itself indicates, is a change in normal parameters, which are deviated from the generally accepted norms in terms of the physio-anatomical (functional and structural) parameters and which are directly associated with the way a person or a group of people live. The lifestyle diseases are grouped under NCD (non-communicable diseases). The best example are the diseases like diabetes type 2, obesity, heart diseases, etc. In diabetes, the sugar level of a person deviates northwards, and in case of heart diseases, the normal parameters related



to cardiovascular system are abnormal. Similar is the case with other lifestyle disorders. As it is already mentioned, extremes in the normal activities, food habits, etc. result in the so-called life style diseases. Some of the factors which affect the life style and may lead to life style diseases are the changes in atmospheric air (air pollution due to suspended particles in air) which may enhance degeneration in the brain, increased alcohol consumption, irregular or poor sleeping habits, smoking, increased consumption of cholesterol, etc., leading to diabetes, obesity,



hypertension, etc., act as triggering factors in the progress of Alzheimer's disease.

## Prevention

Alzheimer's disease is not a preventable condition. However, a number of lifestyle related risk factors for Alzheimer's can delay the onset of this problem. Evidence suggests that changes in diet, exercise and habits, steps to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, may also lower your risk of developing Alzheimer's disease and other disorders that cause dementia. Heart-healthy lifestyle choices that may reduce the risk of Alzheimer's include the following:

- \* Exercising regularly
- \* Eating a diet of fresh produce, healthy oils and foods low in saturated fat such as a Mediterranean diet
- \* Following treatment guidelines to manage high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol
- \* Asking your doctor for help to quit smoking if you smoke

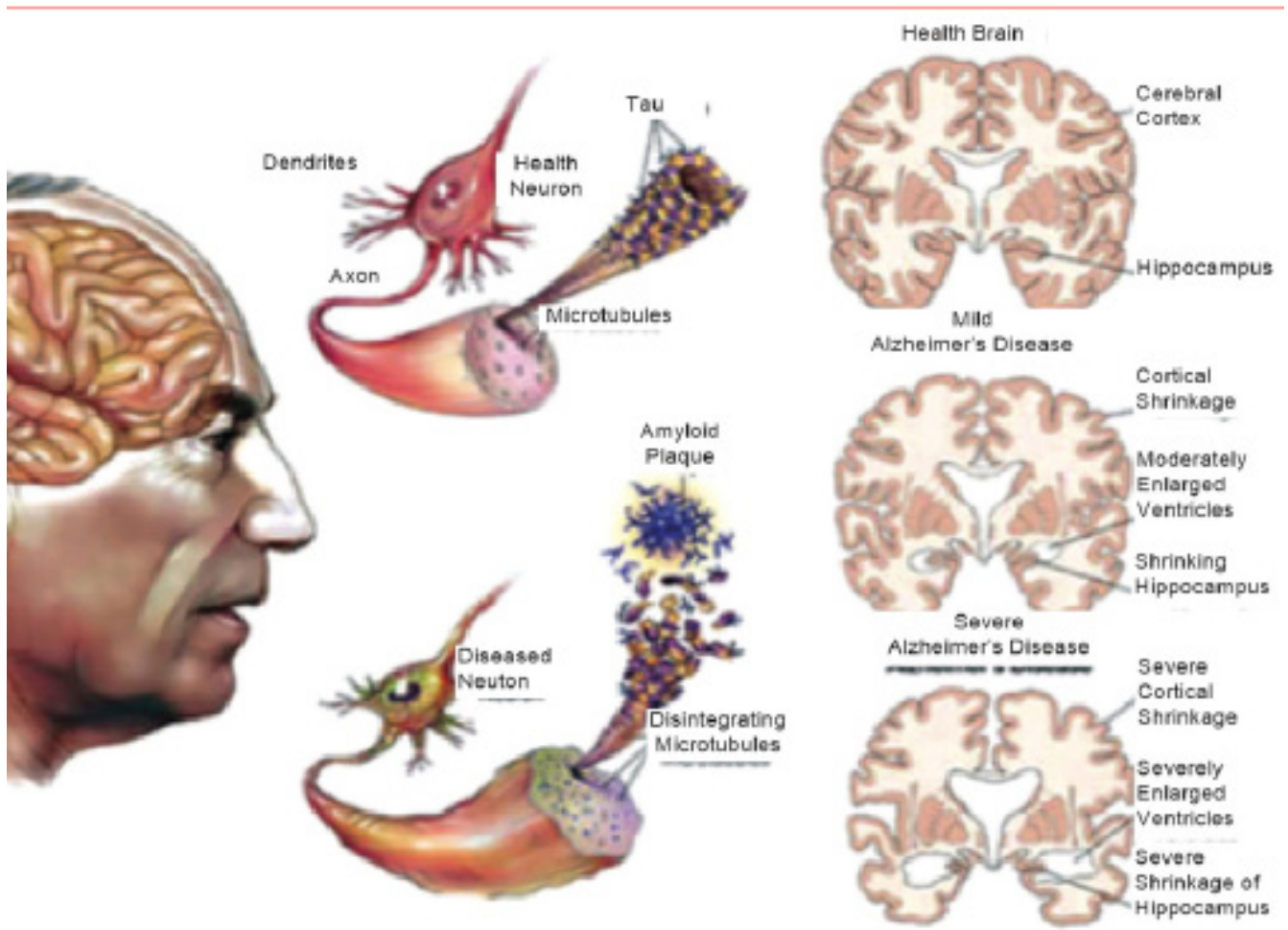
Studies have shown that preservation of thinking skills later in life and a reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease are associated with involving in social events, reading, dancing, playing board games, creating art, playing an instrument, and other activities that require mental and social engagement.

## Plants Helpful in Alzheimer's Disease (AD) Management and Other Age-related Mental Health Issues

Alzheimer's disease is generally considered as a non-treatable disease and the changes produced in the brain due to this disorder are generally non-reversible. There are certain herbs and other plant products with medicinal properties, which are a part of Ayurveda and Unani pharmacopeias, which offer promising results in delaying the progress, development, and onset of the symptoms of the Alzheimer's disease and are recommended for the daily use in the later part of the life (usually after 40-50 years of age). Some of them are:

### Brahmi (*Bacopa monnieri*)

This is the most important plant with proven effect of enhancing the brain function. Since ages it has been a part of Ayurveda and Unani system of medicine as a memory booster and brain tonic. There is gradual degradation of the brain as the age advances. The alkaloids present in this plant (bacosides) are known to slow down the process of age-related degradation of brain associated with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. To be benefited from its desirous effect, it needs to be used for a long time. Promotion of liver health, maintenance of normal blood pressure, detoxification of the body, etc. are the other beneficial effects of brahmi.



### **Ashwagandha or Asgandh** (*Withania somnifera*)

This plant is with multiple benefits and is widely used by the Ayurveda and Unani practitioners since a long time, which speaks of its popularity. The important action of this plant is that it reduces stress and anxiety, boosts the memory and is helpful in improving concentration, hence useful in many disorders related to the nervous system. It also helps in reducing the secretion of cortisol thus reducing the stress and depression.

Besides beneficial in nervous system disorders, its other beneficial effects include lowering of blood sugar level (helpful in diabetes), lowering of cholesterol levels, and its anti-cancer effects,

### **Garlic** (*Allium sativum*)

Another important plant from the treasure of natural medicine, garlic, is known to many of the ancient civilizations (Chinese, Babylonian, Roman,

is used for the prevention and treatment Alzheimer's disease and other nervous system disorders. It is also beneficial in the prevention of cancer, liver diseases, indigestion, etc.

### **General Care and Management of AD patients**

In Alzheimer's disease, there is gradual reduction in the activity of the brain resulting in the degradation of memory and other functions. It is essential to observe some precautions which may eventually delay the progress of this disease. The patients are encouraged to participate in the daily activities and encouraged to carry on with their daily routine. They are encouraged to read the newspapers, books, and the articles relating to their subject of interest. Mingling with the relatives and friends should be encouraged. It is not advisable to leave them alone and unattended. It is the responsibility of the society to help them cope with their daily routine, as today's society mainly



Though Alzheimer's disease has no cure, early warning can give families more time to prepare. If you are concerned, ask your doctor for testing or advice.

Egyptian, Indus valley, etc.) because of its medicinal properties, particularly its benefits in the treatment of symptoms associated with cold and cough. Today's research has revealed its enormous medicinal properties. It is known to control blood pressure and helpful to diabetics and hypertensive patients (patients with high BP). It is said to be beneficial in combating Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

### **Coconut oil** (*Cocos nucifera*)

The coconut is known to be a nutritious fruit and the water of tender coconut is cherished as a cold drink and as a nutritional additive for the patients. The coconut oil is an important product of this tree. The coconut oil contains medium chain fatty acids which, when taken internally are converted into the energy by the liver which is readily absorbed by the brain. Thus, this oil produces instant energy to the brain which is helpful in improvement of the brain activity, resulting in improvement of memory and mental functions. Because of these benefits, this oil

revolves around the younger generation. Their more satisfying mode of life, less will be the maladjustment. They should have some easy, considerate and familiar surroundings which will greatly help them in adjusting themselves.

Meanwhile, it might be a good idea to pay attention to older people's small mental slipups. Those glitches might be nothing; we all have our bad moments, or they might be a first sign of trouble. Though Alzheimer's disease has no cure, early warning can give families more time to prepare. If you are concerned, ask your doctor for testing or advice.

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# Yoga for Seniors



**Is Yoga meant only for the young? Can the elderly also do yoga asanas? The good news is that yoga asanas are one of the few physical exercises one can continue doing as they age. However, as age progresses, it is more important to focus on “how you do” rather than “how much you do”.**

## *Geetaa Singh*

Ageing is something uninvited, undesirable and inevitable phase in everyone’s life. However, it is inevitable. In addition to the diminishing youthful looks, there is the threat to increasing risk of various diseases like Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, cancer, diabetes, hypertension and disorders due to hormonal imbalance. The senior populations suffer psychologically due to various socio-economic situations. Loss of a social role and recognition, non-availability of opportunities for creative and effective use of free time, happens to be a matter of great concern and they start feeling lonely, depressed and left out. Their mobility, range of motion, flexibility, strength and stamina also gets reduced. This physical stiffness radiates to their mind also. They begin to transform themselves to be childish seeking attention.

According to population census 2011, there are

nearly 104 million seniors in India; 53 million females and 51 million males. Percentage share of seniors in India is ever increasing since 1961. This growth is due to the longevity of life expectancy with better medicines and medical facilities. About one third seniors in India suffer from depression with female predominance. The trend clearly reveals that ageing has emerged as major social challenge. Respectable strategies are required to support them; and offer them a genuine service, care and treatment. Yoga has proven to help alleviate many of their health challenges, especially the ones related to emotions and psycho-physiological disorders.

### **Significance of Yoga for Seniors**

Yoga is a practical spiritual science that empowers an individual to attain a state of integrated and holistic

development at multi-dimensional levels. Many documented studies on the scientific basis are available in proof of its potential to normalize psycho-physiological functions. The most popular by-products of a yogic way of living are the attainment of a dynamic state of health and well being apart from its spiritual front. Yoga refreshes the mind and spirit, tones the body and keeps the soul refreshed. All the internal organs and hormonal systems are kept in balance.

The word yoga comes from the Sanskrit word 'Yuj', which means 'to unite'. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar says, "Yoga is a study of life, study of body, breath, mind, intellect, memory, and ego. It is the study of our inner faculties". The great sage of India, Maharshi Patanjali (mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE) compiled the classical text on yoga theory and practice in the form of 196 *Sutras* or formulas to follow. His Sutra No. 2.29 "yama niyama asana pranayama pratyahara dharana dhyana samadhayo-ashtavangani" describes the 8-fold path to be followed for a healthy, happy and harmonious life. This path can be divided into *Bahiranga* practices such as *yama* (right practice of social conducts), *niyama* (right practice of self discipline), *asana* (right practice for harmony with physical body) and *pranayama* (harmony with the energetic body) while the *Antaranga* practices such as *dharana* and *dhyana* (harmony of thought) emphasize on producing mental health along with *pratyahara* (withdrawal of senses for emotional harmony). Yoga works towards restoration of normalcy in all the systems of the human body with special emphasis on

## Sitting Surya Namaskar

10 Steps



*Sitting-Suryanamaskara-charts*

the psycho-neuro-immuno-endocrine axis, in addition to its preventive and restorative capabilities. This 8-fold path of yoga aims at promoting positive health that will improve our health challenges occurring during our lifetime.

The Patanjali Yoga Sutras define asana as "*Sthiram Sukham Asanam*", a posture which is stable and comfortable. Any posture done with awareness in a stable and comfortable manner constitutes an asana. Keep this in mind when performing asanas. Patanjali Yoga Sutras also provide a clue on – 'prevention is better than cure'. His sutra No. 2.16 "*Heyam Dukham Anaagamam*" which means, 'avoid the misery that has not yet come'. As we grow older, the efficiency of the immune system deteriorates, paving the way for various challenges. Regular yogic practices such as asana, pranayama and meditation can help avoid these conditions.

### Benefits of Yoga for Seniors

Perhaps, one of the best things about yoga for seniors is the chance to mingle and bond with others. This priceless addition keeps the mind engaged and happy, alleviating depression and loneliness. Regular





Both legs raised at 90° angles



Leg raising Single



pawanamukthasana



Sethubandhasana



Wide–Angle Seated Forward Stretch (Upavistakona Stretch)



Pawanamuktasana

practice of yoga keeps the joints steady and flexible. Helps maintain healthy bones and muscles. Improves digestion and clears bowel movements. Regulate the hormonal imbalance and blood pressure. Regular practice of yogasanas, pranayama and meditation develops clarity and confidence, leads to happier and more fulfilling life. Yoga will not just tone the body, but will also uplift the moods. Undoubtedly the attitude will improve. **You will think and feel young. And remember, you are as young as you feel!** Hey seniors, just enjoy your yoga at any age, but keep some guidelines in mind.

#### Guidelines for Senior Yoga

- \* Perform simple warm ups with spot walking and simple joint movements.
- \* Series of Sukhma Vyayama and breathing exercises are more advised rather than classic asanas
- \* Choose simpler variations with props for asana practice
- \* Focus on repeating postures rather than holding any posture
- \* Rest adequately after each posture
- \* Make sure that the body has adjusted to daily yoga routine before trying out new asanas
- \* Essentially, include pranayama and meditation for 20-30 minutes in each session
- \* Never miss out on Shavasana, starting and ending prayers
- \* Yoga Nidra (Deep relaxation technique) is by far, the most essential part of any yoga practice. As you grow older, it becomes even more essential to assimilate its benefits into your system.
- \* Practice yoga under a trained yoga teacher and discuss your ailments with him/her

#### Yogasanas for Seniors

Considering the strength and stamina of senior population, simpler versions of most yoga postures can be adopted. There is a range of standing, sitting, lying down and chair yoga asanas to choose from. Among them the practice of breathing exercises and Sukhma Vyayama independently or as part of a larger yoga lesson plan is strongly recommended. These will help people of all ages.

Most of us are unaware that breathing exercises and *Sukhma Vyayama* are always curative and highly healing to the body and mind. They are relaxing, simple, and adoptable by any age group. Breathing exercises in yogic method are very effective in improving the general health and reducing stress. These exercises help in increasing the lung capacity, thereby reducing the fatigue factor and keep us energized. Breathing exercises can be done on and off the mat. Don't ever get confused between the breathing exercises and pranayama. The breathing exercises are always associated with body movement, while pranayama is performed in a still, meditative posture. The breathing exercises are classified based on the posture in which they are performed. They can be practiced in standing, sitting, prone and supine postures. It includes simple exercises

for the eyes, jaws, neck, shoulders, chest, abdomen, hands and legs. Start the practice with a short prayer.

**Breathing Exercises/ Therapeutical movements / Sukshma Vyayama:** The guided movements of all the parts of the body from head to toe, as guided by the instructor is again the most essential part of the session. These practices will loosen the stiff muscles and will also strengthen them, lubricate the joints and help in further tougher movements.

These exercises have to be repeated about 5–10 times to the best of your ability with uninterrupted long inhalation and exhalation. The bottom line is mindful breathing, keeping the awareness on body and breath. In few days time, it will add a shade of pink to the face; keeps you energized, makes you feel good, confident and healthy.



*Pagachalana Kriya*

**Standing :** Hands in and out breathing; H a n d s stretching at different angles; Wrist movements with rotations – clock/anti-clock wise; *Pada Sanchalana*; Toe movements and Ankle stretching; Lateral waist bending, Waist rotation– Clock/ a n t i - c l o c k wise; Knee lunge, thighs and leg lifts;

*Grivasanchalana-*

Shoulder rotations – Clock/anti-clock wise; Half Sit-Ups in Standing Position; Spinal twists

**Sitting :** Toe Movements and Ankle Stretch – Flexion extension; Neck exercises, Isometrics for neck and shoulders, eye exercises, ear, throat and tongue exercises; Seated Forward Stretch (*Paschimottana* Stretch); Wide-Angle Seated Forward Stretch (*Upavistakona* Stretch)

**Supine :** *Uttanapadasana* - Alternate and both legs raising; *Ekapada Pavanamuktasana*; *Dwipada Pavanamuktasana*; *Sethubhandasana*; Lumbar Twisted–Stretch (*Pagachalana Kriya*)

**Prone :** *Bhujangasana*, *Sarpasana*, *Ekapada* and *Dwipada Shalabhasana*, *Makarasana* and its

*variations.*

**Pranayama:** *Anuloma-Viloma*; *Vibhagiya Pranayama* (Full yogic breathing or 3-part sectional breathing), *Surya Bedhana*; *Chandra Bedhana*; *Naadi Shodhana*; *Bhramari*.

**Mudra:** Adopt *Chin mudra*, *Apana Vayu mudra*, *Surya mudra*, *Prithvi mudra*, *Adi mudra* as per the guidance.

“Yoga is a study of life, study of body, breath, mind, intellect, memory, and ego. It is the study of our inner faculties”.

**Meditation:** Choose any suitable meditation techniques in each session like *Aanapana* meditation, *Pranava* meditation, *Nadanusandhana* meditation, *Soham* meditation.

**Shavasana:** It is a great way to reduce stress and manage inhalation and exhalation better.

**Prayer:** Conclude the session with ending prayer which shall accompany a great deal of gratitude to the divine, the teacher and the self. This will give you a deep sense of satisfaction and confidence.

To summarize, we have to come to terms with ageing. Although it is a fact of life, we can slow down the process by making simple lifestyle changes and routine habits. Adopting simple, easily digestible food, minimizing the consumption of cooked food (constituting cereals and pulses), eating ample fruits and vegetable soups rich in antioxidants, regular exercises, meditation and good music will go a long way to keep the mind at peace. Concept of yogic life with positive mind set will be not only restorative but also preventive. Yoga is inexpensive and can be integrated with other systems of medicine as well.

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# Nutritional Support for Nervous Health in Elderly

We all know that eating healthy is important for our mental and physical well-being. More so, during old age, when the body requires some specific nutrients to be more active and healthier. Brain being a part of the body also requires some important nutrients to function properly.

*Neevitha Arun Prabhu*

**F**ollowing a balanced diet as part of a healthy lifestyle improves heart and brain function and reduces the risk of many serious conditions, including strokes, type 2 diabetes and Alzheimer’s disease. It may also help to manage neurological symptoms.

Diet plays a vital role in the maintenance of good health and the additional supportive care in mental health. The body’s mechanism to control and regulate the actions slows down in the elderly people. Due to ageing, they are highly vulnerable to repetitive illness, infections and different type of physical discomforts. The proper dietary guidelines are essential for maintaining good health which in turn assists them to be free from mental stress.

## Nervous System Overview

The nervous system is a complex, highly specialized network. It organizes, explains, and directs interactions

between you and the world around you. The nervous system controls:

- \* Sight, hearing, taste, smell and feeling (sensation).
- \* Voluntary and involuntary functions, such as movement, balance, and coordination. The nervous system also regulates the actions of most other body systems, such as blood flow and blood pressure.
- \* The ability to think and reason. The nervous system allows you to be conscious and have thoughts, memories, and language.

The nervous system is divided into the brain and spinal cord (Central Nervous System, or CNS) and the nerve cells that control voluntary and involuntary movements (Peripheral Nervous System, or PNS).

The symptoms of a nervous system problem depend on which area of the nervous system is involved and what is causing the problem. Nervous system problems

may occur slowly and cause a gradual loss of function (degenerative). Or they may occur suddenly and cause life-threatening problems (acute). Symptoms may be mild or severe. Some serious conditions, diseases, and injuries that can cause nervous system problems include:

- \* Blood supply problems (vascular disorders).
- \* Injuries (trauma), especially injuries to the head and spinal cord.
- \* Problems that are present at birth (congenital).
- \* Mental health problems, such as anxiety disorders, depression or psychosis.
- \* Problems that cause a gradual loss of function (degenerative). Examples include: Parkinson's disease, Multiple sclerosis (MS), Alzheimer's disease etc.

A sudden (acute) nervous system problem can cause many different symptoms, depending on the area of the nervous system involved. Stroke and Transient Ischemic attack (TIA) are common examples of acute problems. One may experience the sudden onset of one or more symptoms, such as:

- \* Numbness, tingling, weakness, or inability to move a part or all of one side of the body (paralysis).
- \* Dimness, blurring, double vision, or loss of vision in one or both eyes.
- \* Loss of speech, trouble talking, or trouble understanding speech.
- \* Sudden, severe headache.
- \* Dizziness, unsteadiness, or the inability to stand or walk, especially if other symptoms are

present.

- \* Confusion or a change in level of consciousness or behavior.
- \* Severe nausea or vomiting.

The factors affecting the nervous system of body may include the following conditions:

- \* Infections
- \* Trauma
- \* Tumors
- \* Exposure to toxins
- \* Stress
- \* Degeneration
- \* Auto immune disorders

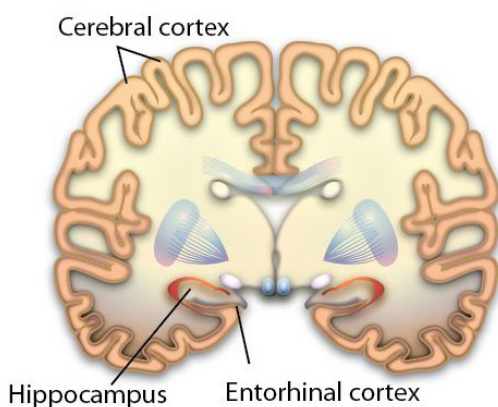
The major symptoms of nervous system disorders might be experienced by any individual in a different manner. Some of the inconveniences faced by them may include mild/ severe headache, neck pain, nausea/ vomiting, loss of feeling/ tingling sensation, dizziness, confusions, visual impairment, loss of memory, poor or lack of co-ordination, tremors/ seizures, back pain, pain radiating from abdomen to toes/feet etc.

### Principle of Diet for Elderly People

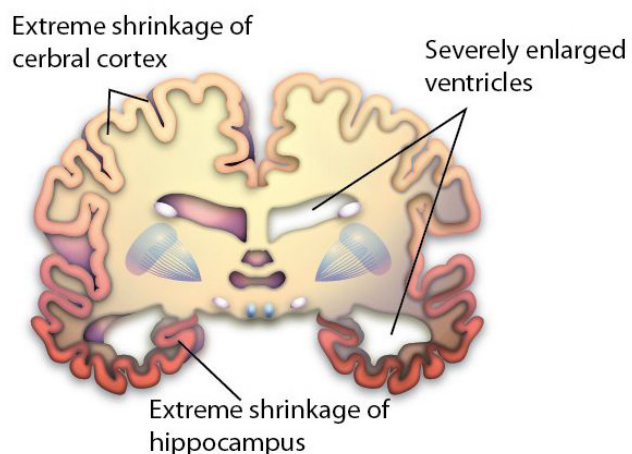
- \* Include at least four to five servings of fruits and vegetables per day
- \* Drink plenty of water and other fluids
- \* Include whole grain/ cereals
- \* Restrict saturated fats/ refined cereals/ sugars
- \* Avoid skipping of meals
- \* Quit smoking and restrict alcohol intake

# Ageing Changes in Nervous System

## Healthy Brain



## Old Brain



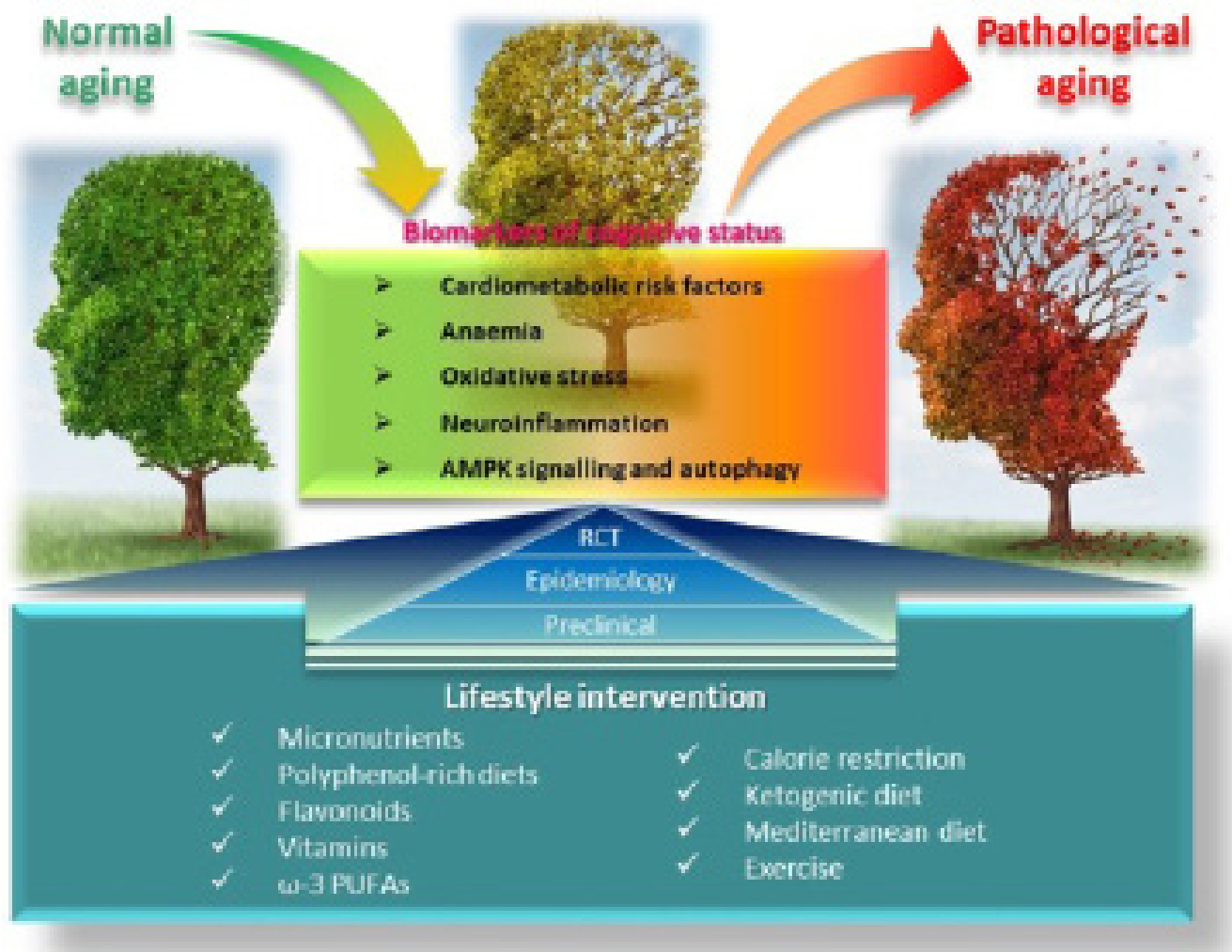


\* Prefer balanced diet with low-fat milk and its products

Apart from the major nutrients like carbohydrates, proteins and fats, vitamins and minerals play an important role in body metabolism to facilitate the digestion, absorption and utility of essential nutrients from foods. Nutrients present in foods encourage every individual to perform their work and be active. The various functions performed by the active ingredients

are found available with enormous amount of vital nutrients specifically to treat conditions experienced by aged people. The foods with its active chemical contents are listed below to understand their health benefits.

There are various scientific evidences and reports to highlight the efficiency of naturally available foods, they are as follows:



of foods assist in prevention of some diseases and also treat some of its conditions. The nervous health of elders requires major nutritional support and health care from their regular diet. The modification of diet in the old age people should provide the nutritional and functional health benefits. The mental health care can be obtained by various combination of nutritious and delicious healthy meal. A healthy diet with the restriction or inclusion of food/ its products based on their medical conditions may improve mental health and provides nutritional care to prevent deficiency conditions.

The functional foods with their active components can be included in our daily diet to reduce risk of age-related disorders. The chemical compounds with its properties aid in promotion of normal well being in elderly stage. Usually, fresh fruits and vegetables

### Green Leafy Vegetables

The green leafy vegetables like spinach, fenugreek are found to be rich in vitamin B complex. They are necessarily important for the production and utilization of chemical component i.e., neurotransmitters. They are brain chemicals that regulate heart beat, respiration and improves digestion. Green leafy veggies are having more amount of anti-ageing factors (vitamin C and vitamin E) which assist in breakdown of homocysteines, a chemical responsible for dementia. They also have a good mineral content; magnesium is good for calmness of nerves and aids in nervous health.

### Omega 3 fatty acids

Alpha linolenic acid, EPA and DHA which comes

under omega 3 fatty acids are predominately present in fish (salmon, tuna, and mackerel), flaxseeds, kiwi fruit and walnut. They are very effective in healing of nerves and nervous system. The enhancement of brain health and prevention of cognitive decline is achieved through these types of fatty acids. They are the essential components of phospholipids in brain.

Coconut oil with its medium chain triglycerides is considered to be with healthy fats and provides its support to improve memory.

## Root vegetables

**Carrot:** Being a good source of beta carotene, carrots help to reduce the age-related memory deficits and inflammation in the brain. It is with positive impact on mental health due to the active component, luteolin.

**Beets:** Beets are useful for brain health by these beneficial effects:

- \* Reduce blood toxins
- \* Reduce inflammation
- \* Nitrates present in them boost the flow of blood to brain
- \* Assist in cognitive abilities

**Avocado:** Avocados are good source of vitamin K and folate. The three major functions performed by them include:

- \* Prevention of blood clot in brain
- \* Stroke prevention
- \* Improves concentration and memory

**Nuts:** Vitamin E present in nuts is highly useful for performing two actions. They are:

- \* It protects the cell membranes from free radical damages
- \* It slows down the progress of mental decline

**Pumpkin seeds:** Magnesium present in pumpkin seeds is good for reduction in depression and migraines. Anti oxidants and minerals such as copper, iron and zinc present in it assist in controlling nerve signals, reduces the risk of Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. They are necessarily effective in the reduction of free radical damage to brain.

**Egg:** Vitamin B and choline is present in eggs. They assist in synthesizing acetyl choline, a neurotransmitter which is utilized by brain for memory and to communicate among brain cells.

### Polyphenols:

Active ingredients	Plant source
curcuminoids	Turmeric
flavonoids	Berries
epicatechin epigallocatechin epicatechin-3-gallate	Green tea

The (polyphenols) active ingredients responsible for performing various functions in our body include:

- \* reduction in cognitive deterioration due to ageing
- \* antioxidant properties
- \* prevents loss of memory
- \* reduces DNA oxidative damage
- \* positive impact on cognition for treating brain diseases and brain injury
- \* increase the production of anti-inflammatory agents

## Prebiotics and Probiotics

The combined effect of fibers and resistant starch with the friendly bacteria in the gut reduces inflammation and plays its lead role in mood regulation. They provide positive effect on various conditions like Alzheimer's disease, parkinson's disease, multiple



sclerosis, mood and anxiety. Oat meals increase the release of serotonin from brain to maintain good mood. They also reduce the stress and anxiety. The milk products like curd and buttermilk supports the nerve health and gut health.

- \* Advisory tips for Elders:
  - \* be positive
  - \* perform moderate exercises regularly
  - \* don't skip breakfast
  - \* don't practice faulty food habits
  - \* restrict salt and sugar
  - \* Say NO to smoking, tobacco, alcohol
  - \* Include soups, salads, juices in daily diet
  - \* maintain/ monitor blood pressure and blood sugar level
  - \* seek medical advices on time
  - \* maintain oral health
  - \* don't ignore any signs and symptoms of your body
  - \* maintain personal hygiene practices
  - \* sleep on time
  - \* stop worrying and love yourself

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# Ageing Gracefully with Ayurveda



We are a nation obsessed with youth. Even if you are not actively trying to look like you did 10 years ago (or even one year ago), chances are you want to at least feel, and possibly think, younger. Well, who doesn't?

*Yashaswini G*

**T**here seems to be a point where people realize that their previously youthful bodies and minds are changing, and they want to get back to where they were. That is normal. What is not normal or need not be is the notion that ageing has to be filled with inevitable aches and pains. "We should not expect that we'll get old and decrepit and that our bodies should hurt. We do not need to suffer inordinately. That is not necessarily the reality of ageing. Not according to Ayurveda, anyway".

The truth is that our bodies do break down as we get older; that's fact. As the synovial fluid in the joints starts to wear thin, our bodies become more brittle, causing friction and pain. Bones, joints, and organs are more delicate. In Ayurveda, this also means an excess of vata, the dosha that governs movement in the body. Too much vata can mean dryness, exhaustion, and excessive coldness. As we age, we collect more vata; as such, age prevention, Ayurveda-style, is about managing vata and restoring doshic balance. And the earlier the better: starting to use preventive Ayurvedic treatments and principles during late youth or middle age may help reduce the incidence of health problems

later on, while also increasing life span.

## Ageing Gracefully

Ageing is not a disease; ageing is inevitable and it's a part of life. Ayurveda explains that, process of ageing begins naturally by the influence of Kala (time). Though the disturbance in the equilibrium in all the three doshas occurs during old age, there is physiological dominance of vata dosha in old age with deterioration of seven tissues. This combination leads to degenerative changes in the body. Hence one can adopt a regular healthy diet and lifestyle regimen and age gracefully.

Ayurveda mentions three pillars of Life as Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya. These are the things which enhance your health and help for graceful ageing. Cultivating healthy habits from an early age will have an impact on later part of life for graceful ageing.

## Dinacharya

Ayurveda recommends a daily routine, called Dinacharya, which includes time of waking up,

sleeping, natural urge elimination, sensory organ hygiene, oil massage, well balanced food, kind of profession to be involved according to one's interest. Dinacharya also includes seasonal detoxification procedures to be taken according to one's own body constitution, yoga, exercises, and the code of conduct one should observe.

These Dinacharya procedures along with the night regimen (ratricharya) and seasonal regimen (Ritucharya) were observed to enhance the healthy ageing process.

Ayurveda also suggests taking Rasayana (Vayasthapana - Anti Ageing Formulations) / Rejuvenation supplements to enhance healthy ageing.

## Food

Diet is an important factor that influences ageing. A poor diet together with irregular lifestyle triggers the vitiation of three Doshas, leading to disturbances in dosha and derangement of sapta dhatu/ seven tissues and in turn reduction in the life span. Healthy dietary habits with regular meals play an important role in healthy ageing.

Healthy eating is important at any age, but becomes even more so as we reach midlife and beyond. It's a key to improve the mental sharpness, boost energy levels, and increase resistance to illness and staying emotionally balanced. But healthy eating does not have to be about dieting and sacrifice. Rather, it should be all about enjoying fresh, wholesome meals.

Including whole grains, cereals and pulses, fruits, vegetables, green leafy veggies, fish and nuts packed with omega-3 fatty acids may be able to improve focus and decrease senile disorders and improve brain functions.

Snacking between meals i.e., taking a small portion of meal for 4-5 times a day is recommended.

Easily digestible warm, soft soothing meal, which



suits their body and mind should be consumed. Ageing comes with challenging weight maintenance and people often become less physically active. This makes it even more important to adopt healthy eating and exercise habits to avoid weight gain.

## Sleep

Sleep is as important as diet for a human being, to have a quality lifespan. Generally, with ageing, sleep quality and quantity declines. Good adequate quality sleep is as essential as regularizing sleep-wake cycle. Avoiding any gadgets use before sleeping. Mild feet massage at bedtime will enhance the sleep quality. Taking power naps in the day while sitting on an easy chair comfortably is recommended.

## Care of Weakened Sensory Organs

Naturally age-related conditions are- diminished eyesight, taste perception, declined hearing capacity that will be seen in common. Regular eye exercises with palming, blinking of eyes, proper correction of eye sight with glasses.

## Oral Hygiene

With age, dryness of mouth, missing tooth, sensitive teeth, gum disorders are very common. Avoid sugary drinks, hard to chew food items. Eat steamed/ well cooked vegetables and soft food. Improve hydration by taking regular water, fluids like fruit juice, soups etc.

Regular oil pulling with coconut oil/ sesame oil should be followed. Tongue cleaning should be done regularly

## Mental Health

Accept the reality - Reality of getting aged; accept the change, spend time with your loved ones.

Engage yourself in leisure time hobbies and social activities to connect with people. Do things you enjoy - it will keep you happy. To be occupied with relaxing breathing techniques and simple stretches to keep you physically and mentally fit.

## Ageing is inevitable.

While we cannot stop ageing, we can decide how we choose to age. Ayurveda guides us to be stronger, confident, and powerful as we age and teach us how to make aging natural and easy with balance and grace. Ageing gracefully is more about being physically and mentally healthy.

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# Bladder Control and Constipation during Old Age



## *Shantala Priyadarshini*

The prevalence of both urinary and faecal incontinence, and also chronic constipation, increases with ageing and these conditions have a major impact on the quality of life of the elderly.

### Urinary Incontinence in Elders

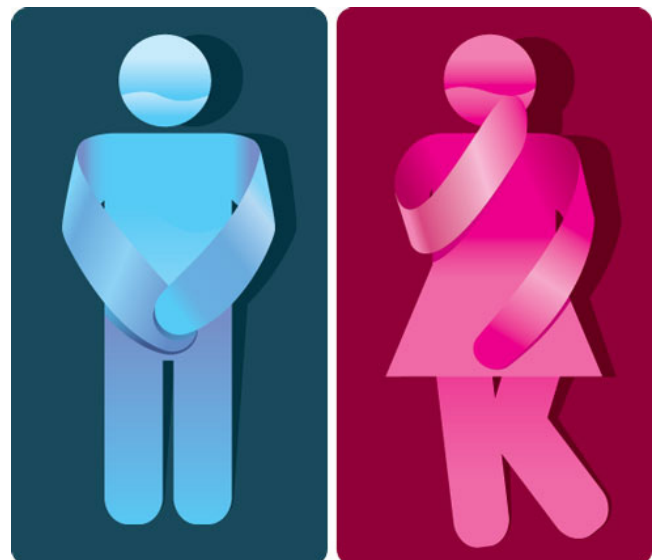
Urinary incontinence means a person leaks urine by accident. While it may happen to anyone, urinary incontinence is more common in older people, especially women.

One might wonder as to what actually happens to the body in old age to cause bladder control problems? As we all know that the body stores urine in the bladder. During urination, muscles in the bladder tighten to move urine into a tube called the urethra. At the same time, the muscles around the urethra relax and let the urine pass out of the body. When the muscles in and around the bladder do not work the way they should, urine can leak. Incontinence typically occurs if the muscles relax without warning.

### Causes of Urinary Incontinence

Incontinence can happen in women for many reasons such as urinary tract infections, vaginal infection or irritation and constipation. When incontinence lasts longer, it may be due to:

- \* Weak bladder muscles



- \* Overactive bladder muscles
- \* Weak pelvic floor muscles
- \* Damage to nerves that control the bladder from diseases such as multiple sclerosis, diabetes or Parkinson's disease.
- \* Blockage from an enlarged prostate in men.



- \* Diseases such as arthritis that may make it difficult to get to the restroom on time.
- \* Pelvic organ prolapses, which is when pelvic organs (such as the bladder, rectum, or uterus) shift out of their normal place into the vagina. When pelvic organs are out of place, the bladder and urethra are not able to work normally, which may cause urine to leak.

Most incontinence in men is related to the prostate gland. Male incontinence may be caused by:

- \* Prostatitis-a painful inflammation of the prostate gland
- \* Injury, or damage to nerves or muscles from surgery
- \* An enlarged prostate gland

According to Ayurveda, urinary incontinence is primarily a Vata disorder. In specific, it is vaigunya of

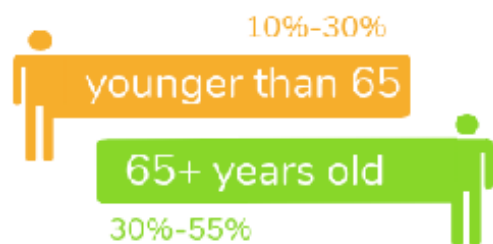
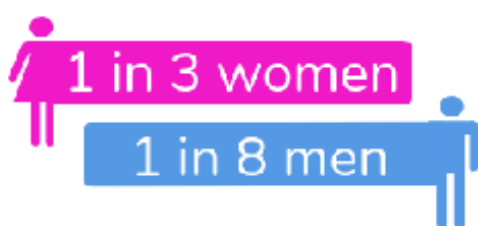
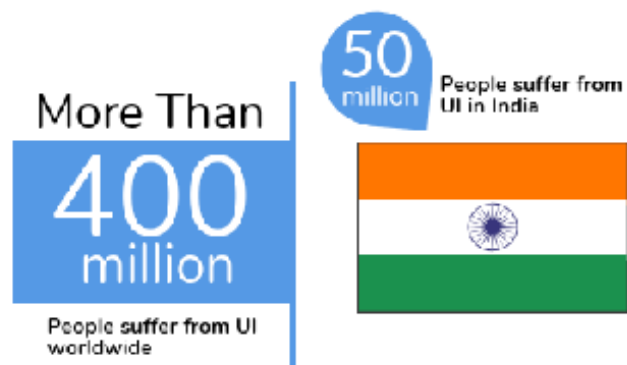
apana vata (abnormality in the normal functioning of vata located in the bladder, groins, reproductive organs).

In this case the following remedies would be beneficial:

- \* Consume fennel (saunf) seeds/ drink water boiled with fennel seeds.
- \* Dry jamun seed powder can be consumed twice daily with warm water.
- \* A cotton bandage dipped in dhanwantaram oil can be placed over the lower abdomen for 20-30 minutes daily. This normalises the flow of vata thus curing the incontinence.
- \* Avagaha sveda (sitz bath) with vatahara kashaya like dashamoola kashayam/ dhanwantaram kashayam/ dhanyamla is recommended.
- \* De-seed and crush one Amalaki (gooseberry) into paste, add a pinch of turmeric powder and 1 tsp of honey, mix well and have this mixture daily morning.
- \* Regular consumption of 12-15 raisins and walnuts would be beneficial.
- \* Half tsp of cinnamon powder mixed with some sugar can be tried daily.
- \* Taking suitable Ayurveda rasayana medications as prescribed by Ayurveda vaidya or daily consumption of myrobalans (amla, harad or beheda) helps.

Recommended Ayurvedic Formulations for Urinary Incontinence

- \* Sukumaram kashayam
- \* Dhanwantaram kashayam
- \* Chandraprabha vati
- \* Aswagandha churna 3-4 grams with ghee, twice daily, before food.



experience Incontinence

## Dietary Changes

- \* Avoid alcohol, artificial sweeteners, chocolates
- \* Cut on caffeine
- \* Limit the intake of spicy food
- \* Avoid acidic/ sour fruits
- \* Do not take carbonated drinks
- \* Indulge on nuts, beans and legumes, whole grains, black beans, split peas, kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas
- \* Intake of food rich in fibre content
- \* Intake of sweet fruits helps: sweet pears, apples, sweet potatoes, melons help

## Yoga and Exercise

- \* Kegels exercises should be done daily to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles.
- \* Surya namaskara, Ushtrasana, Utkatasana, Moola bandha, Pavanamuktasana are some recommended yogasanas.

## Constipation in Old Age

Constipation is a common issue that many older adults deal on a regular basis, and this chronic digestive discomfort can seriously affect their life. Seniors are more likely to have chronic constipation because of:

- \* Side effects from medications like painkillers, antidepressants, anticonvulsants, and antihistamines.
- \* Medical conditions like strictures, tumours, Parkinson's disease or low thyroid.
- \* Slowing or weakening of the digestive system due to ageing or frailty.

Constipation symptoms include:

- \* Few bowel movements
- \* Trouble having a bowel movement (straining)
- \* Small or hard stools
- \* Swollen abdomen or abdominal pain
- \* Vomiting

### There are serious complications that can occur due to constipation

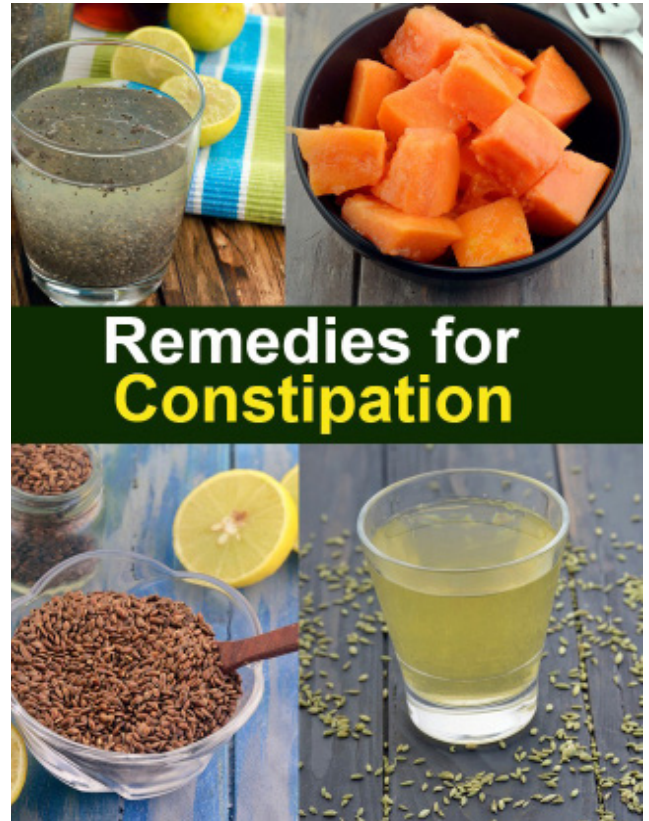
- \* Straining to pass stools can lead to swelling in the veins surrounding the anus. This can lead to hemorrhoids (piles). These hemorrhoids can start bleeding, which is a serious issue especially in old age.
- \* When straining becomes excessive and regular, there is a risk of rectal prolapse. The rectum may protrude and come out of the anus requiring medical attention.
- \* When the stools are too hard, evacuating it puts pressure on the anus and can cause cuts or anal fissures. This can be extremely painful and may even cause bleeding.
- \* When constipation occurs for long periods, stools are stuck in the colon. This can cause pain, swelling, and if untreated can even lead to serious health problems. In extreme cases, it may even require surgical intervention to

remove the stools.

To avoid these complications, it is important to get proper and timely treatment for constipation.

## Ayurveda and Constipation

Ayurveda recommends a holistic approach to treat constipation. While conventional medical systems prescribe laxatives, Ayurveda recommends a host of measures to treat constipation such as lifestyle changes to improve body metabolism. This not only treats constipation but leads to a general improvement in health. The constipation remedies Ayurveda



recommends are made from herbs. They are safe and gentle on the body. They correct the Vata imbalance allowing the digestive system to function normally and this ensures normal bowel movement.

Dietary changes are a must to treat constipation. The diet to be consumed must pacify the Vata dosha. Ayurveda recommends the use of warm and cooked foods to be consumed. Cold drinks and cold food should be strictly avoided. Some of the dietary recommendations are:

- \* Wheat, green gram, fruits and vegetables rich in fibre content, and green leafy vegetables should be consumed. Apples, bananas, guavas, figs, oranges, and spinach should be a part of the diet to treat constipation.
- \* Food prepared should be warm and freshly cooked. The use of spices like garlic, turmeric, cumin, and asafoetida is recommended. It is suggested to use ghee or organic oils while cooking.
- \* Fried food, processed food, spicy food, and non-

vegetarian food must be avoided.

- \* Warm water should be taken frequently. It is very important to drink a lot of water so that the stools turn soft and can be easily passed out. One should start their day with a glass of warm water and lemon.
- \* Warm soups should be consumed. The warmth can help pacify Vata dosha and the fluid content helps in passing out stools easily.
- \* Some people find it difficult to pass stools if they do not drink coffee/tea. It is advised to avoid an excess of coffee/ tea as it can disturb the digestive system.
- \* A warm glass of milk should be taken before going to bed. Mixing a spoon of ghee with milk can be beneficial.
- \* Food should be eaten at regular times and one should avoid overeating.
- \* Roasted fennel (saunf) seeds with warm water work as a laxative and can help in easy bowel movement. Castor oil has been used for centuries as a natural laxative. It is suggested to take a spoonful of this oil before going to bed.
- \* Physical activity is important to improve body metabolism. Avoid sitting in one place for a long time. Exercise regularly and take a short walk after a heavy meal.
- \* Yoga can be very helpful in the treatment of constipation. There are a number of Yogasanas that can provide a lot of relief for those who suffer from constipation. It provides relief from gas and bloating. It can also help in correcting imbalances and allowing smooth passage of stools. However, it is advisable to consult a Yoga practitioner before trying out any of these asanas (postures). Some of the Yogasanas helpful in constipation include:
  - \* Bhujangasana (Cobra pose)
    - Trikonasana (Triangle pose)
    - Viparita karani (Upside down pose)
    - Pavanamuktasana (Wind relieving pose)
    - Shalabasana (Locust pose)
    - Ardhamatsyendrasana (Half spinal twist pose)
- \* Sleep is very important to treat any disease since sleep rejuvenates the body. A good night's sleep for six to eight hours is recommended to feel refreshed and stimulate body metabolism.
- \* Try to follow a regular routine for waking up, sleeping, eating food, and passing stools. This can be helpful in solving the problem of constipation.
- \* One must never hold back when there is an urge to defecate.
- \* Ayurveda recommends Abhyanga or massage to treat imbalances. This can even be done as a self-massage. Panchakarma is a cleansing therapy, which can be undergone to cleanse the body and rejuvenate body metabolism.

## Herbal Formulations for Constipation

- \* Triphala is one of the most common herbal formulations used to treat constipation. It is a formulation made from three fruits Amalaki, Bhibhitaki, and Haritaki. Triphala can be taken



in capsule or powder form. It works as a natural laxative and helps improve the working of the digestive system.

- \* Sukumara Ghrita is a medicated ghee that is prescribed for good digestive health. It is very helpful in treating constipation.
- \* Eranda Oil is made from castor oil, which is a natural laxative. It is helpful in ensuring smooth bowel movements.
- \* Dashamula is a classical formulation made from the roots of ten herbs. It offers multiple health benefits, including better digestion and easy elimination of stools.
- \* Abhayarishta is made from grapes and other herbs. It promotes better digestion and helps in ensuring smooth and regular bowel movement.

Apart from these formulations, the use of herbs like Haritaki, Isabgol, and Patola can be helpful in treating constipation.

## Ageing Gracefully to enjoy life

Offering prayers to lord Dhanwantari has applicable goals like achieving freedom from fear of death, disease and ageing. Just the fear of the unknown, fear of complications in old age, diseases like cancer, diabetes, neurological problems like paralysis, dementia, depression, cardio vascular conditions, Musculo skeletal disorders, age-related degenerations resulting in blindness, social distancing, insecurity are few conditions that are the reasons that people assume even before they manifest and this fear can be overcome by positive and competitive lifestyle.

Sensible food and habits, hobbies like gardening, swimming, yoga, knitting, painting, stamp or coin collections, travelling, writing can keep one active and happy. Accepting ageing with grace but being happy is essential.

*Good health adds years to life.*

*Vaidya Professor T.R. Shantala Priyadrshini is Retd. Joint Director, AYUSH Training center, Government of Karnataka, Chief consultant at Dr.Vijay's Ayurveda research and treatment center, Mysore. Email: shantala3001@gmail.com*





## Rasayana: The Contemporary Strength of Ayurvedic Geriatrics

The main purpose of Rasayana therapy in the elderly is to impede the ageing process and to delay degenerative process in the body.

*S N Venugopal*

In Ayurveda, rasayanas are rejuvenative, anti-ageing and immune-modulators for old age.

Rasayana tantra (trayate anena ithi tantra, that which protects)

[रसायन तन्त्रम् नाम वयःस्थापनम् आयुर्मेधा बलकरम् रोगापहरण समर्थम् च \(Su.su.1/7\)](#)

The above shloka represents the fundamentals of Ayurveda which comprises of preventive promotive and curative aspects of health and carries the most practical methods for management of health and disease through its measures as the Rasayna chikitsa. The classification to consider Jara chikitsa (treatment for ageing) as synonymous with Rasayana chikitsa (Rasayana treatment) as one of the eight branches of Ayurveda is not only to specialize certain methods in any particular knowledge domain of the Ayurvedic system but also as a process by which the body tissues attain its best capacity to perform their systemic activities.

The concept of Rasayna chikitsa as a branch has its own importance not only in the old age but needs to be

commenced in the early stage (Poorve vasi madhe va). As one the the eight branches of Ayurveda, Rasayana chikitsa is applicable in all branches of Ayurveda irrespective of any particular domain of specialization and has great relevance as a procedure to attain and maintain good health.

## The definition of Rasayana

रसानाम् अयनम् रसायनम्  
rasānām ayanam rasāyanam.

रसस्य अयनं प्रापणं रसायनम्

rasasya ayanam prāpaṇam rasāyanam [sabda kalpadruma

That process that which facilitates optimum acquisition, assimilation and circulation of the essence of food or medicine is Rasayana. Rasa means the essence of the end product of digestion and “Ayanam” means the opening, door or the process by which Rasa reaches to the targeted appropriate body tissues. The term Rasa representing the first dhathu (mostly correlated to plasma or lymphatic fluids or circulation, the term rasa is also known as taste in the context of materia medica, rasa represent sensory perception of taste) is also known as mercury in rasasastra which is alchemy. In rasayana chikitsa the term represents the first dhathu and the end product of digestion. The life and integrity of body tissues depend upon the quality and quantity of nutrition it receives through the process of Rasayana.

Medicine (bhesajā dvi-vidham, svastasya orsakaram aturasya vikara parsaman ) according Ayurveda is classified into two: One is that which bestows strength and vitality of body tissues if taken by a healthy person and second one is that which cures diseases. The first category is known as Rasayana. This method of treatment not only prolongs the human life but also refreshes and invigorates or revitalizes the body as a whole to make the body invulnerable to disease and decay.

## Benefits of Rasayana

The benefits of following Ayurvedic way of life are the benefits of Rasayana. By controlling the natural cause of health and disease one can maintain health. It is possible to change the course of disease whether it is natural or the self-imbibed. The process, measure and procedures to keep healthy life and drive away diseases to keep longevity is the purpose of Ayurveda (Hita ahitam sukam dukham ayusthasya ...manam cha tat cha yatrokta ayurveda sa ucyate). It is required to pay special attention in the course of life to give more focus on controlling degeneration. In the normal process of degeneration to prolong the longevity without disease is the intention and special measures for such purposes are taken into consideration in Rasayana chikitsa. The function of body tissues or specific activity of internal organs are in stake in the old age

or in a clinical situation when normal procedures fail.

दीर्घमायु स्मृतिं मेधां आरोग्यं तरुणं वयः  
प्रभा वर्णं स्वरोदार्यं देहेन्द्रिय बलं परम्  
वाक्सिद्धिं प्रणतिं कान्तिं लभते च रसायनात्  
लाभोपायो हि शस्तानां रसादीनां रसायनम्

(Cha.ci.1/8)

The benefits of Rasayana are long life, excellent memory, brilliance, health and young age, radiating lustre, pleasing colour , commanding voice, great strength of body and sense organs, Influencing speech, reverential attitude and loveliness. That process which facilitates optimum movement acquisition, assimilation and circulation of the essence of food or medicine to gain the above benefits is attained through Rasayana chikitsa. The benefits are focused (Ca. Ci. 1-4-13) focused on attaining strength/ Balya, Jivaniya, bulk promoting / Brmhaniya and stabilising the ageing process which is Vayahsthapana.

It may appear that the purpose of following Rasayana treatment is to attain immortality which is poetically exaggerated benefits of Rasayana in the charaka samhita. This is to keeps away old age/ Jara; which can annihilate weakness/ Daurbalya; which can cure incurable diseases and thus it can even overcome death /Mrtyu and person lives long / for thousand years. Thus, the individual gets long life to attain salvation.

Rasayana treatment is an answer to epidemics and acute onset of some diseases according to caraka (Ca. Vi. 3/12-18).

The average life span of organisms varies within and between the species. This indicates that the genetic and environmental factors play an important role in the process. Therefore, ageing is characterized by decreased ability to combat stress, increased homeostatic imbalance and susceptibility to the disease carrying pathogens. All the factors individually or collectively cause ageing and ultimately death.

As old age is the end point of life cycle of birth, growth and death, this transformation process is naturally sequenced in the prakruti of a person. The control of natural changes happening in the body is not always possible by superficial manipulation but requires control over causative factors that which are responsible for transformation or changes. So, old age is also considered as a “disease” in Ayurveda like the natural urges, appetite or thirst. The question is how to control over the natural changes happening in the body with respect to ageing process.

Following formulations are being used as Rasayanas by the practicing physicians of Ayurveda as Rasayanas in the old age. The efficacy of these formulations may vary from person to person, their digestive capacity, old age diseases and natural.

Sn	Name of the Rasayana	Pharmacopeial details*	Relevance in Old age
1	<b>Agastya Rasayana;</b> (CS, C, 5/79-84)	<p><b>Agastya Rasayana;</b> (CS, C, 5/79-84)</p> <p><b>Ingredients:</b> Haritaki, Kasmari, Vilva, Patala, Tunduka, Agnimantha, Saliparni, Prsniparni, Kantakari, Brhati, Goksura, Kapikachu, Sankhapushpi, Sati, Bala, Hasti Pippali, Apamarga, Pippali, Citraka, Bharngi, Puskaramula, Yava - pippali, Haritaki.</p> <p><b>Indications :</b> Gives strength (Balya), Gives colour (Varnya), Rejuvenative (Rasayana), Increases life span (Ayushya), controls early graying (Jara), Different types of cough (Panca kasa), Emaciation (Ksaya), Asthma (Svasa), Hiccough (Hikka), Fever (Jvara), Diabetes (Prameha), Abdominal distention (Adhmana), IBS, Sprue (Grahani), Piles ( Arsa), Cardiac ailments (Hrdroga), Tastelessness ( Aruci), Sinusitis (Pinasa)</p> <p><b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with milk or warm water.</p> <p><b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon.</p>	<p><i>Recommended in respiratory ailments when digestion is good and chronic productive cough is persistent.</i></p>
2	<b>Asvagandhadi Lehya;</b> (Sahasrayoga)	<p><b>Asvagandhadi Lehya</b> (Sahasrayoga)</p> <p><b>Ingredients:</b> Asvagandha, Kapikachu, Yasti, Salamisri, Tugaksiri, Ela, Lavanga, Patra, Devakusuma, Jathi, Jatipatri.</p> <p><b>Indications:</b> Aphrodisiac, improves libido (Vrsya), gives strength (Balya), Emaciation (Kshaya)</p> <p><b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with milk or warm water.</p> <p><b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon.</p>	<p><i>Recommended not only to improve virility, but to improve sleep, cures general weakness and useful in memory loss in old age.</i></p>
3	<b>Brahma Rasayana;</b> (CS, C, 1/42-57)	<p><b>Brahma Rasayana</b> (CS, C, 1/42-57)</p> <p><b>Ingredients:</b> Pathya, Dhatri, Bilva, Kasmari, Tarkari, Patala, Tuntuka, Brhati, Kantakari, Saliparni, Prsniparni, Goksura, Bala, Erandamula, Punarnava, Mudgaparni, Masaparni, Satavari, Bimbi, Jivanti, Jivaka, Risabhaka, Darbha, Kusa, Kasa, Iksumula, Tvak, Ela, Musta, Rajani, Pippali, Agar, Candana, Mandukaparni, Kanaka, Sankhapuspi, Vaca, Plava, Yasti, Vidanga, Ghrta, Taila, Maksika, Sitopala</p> <p><b>Indications:</b> Increases life span (Ayusyam), Improves immunity (Amayavarjita), increases intelligence, memory (Medhakara, Smrtikara), Increases strength (Balya), cures lassitude (Tandra), weakness (Srama, Klama), early wrinkles, grey ( Vali, Palita).</p> <p><b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with milk or warm water</p> <p><b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon.</p>	<p><i>Selected when conditions of low immunity, and early aging. Improves memory and age-related weakness.</i></p>

4	<b>Chyavanaprasa Lehya;</b> (CS, C, 1.1/62-74)	<p><b>Chyavanaprasa Lehya;</b></p> <p>(CS, C, 1.1/62-74)</p> <p><b>Ingredients:</b> Bilva, Kasmari, Tarkari, Patala, Tuntuka, Saliparni, Prsniiparni, Kantakari, Brhati, Goksuru, Bala, Musta, Jivaka, Risabhaka, Meda, Mahameda, Utpala, Mudgaparni, Masaparni, Pippali, Sringi, Tamalaki, Truti, Jivanti, Jongaka, Draksa, Puskaramula, Candana, Sati, Punarnava, Kakoli, Ksirakakoli, Kakanasa, Amrta, Abhaya, Vidari, Vrsamula, Dhatriphala, Tugaksiri, Pippali, Ela, Lavanga, Patra, Nagapuspa.</p> <p><b>Indications:</b> Gives strength (Balya), Increases weight (Brimhaniya), Increases life span (Jivaniya), Improves brain function (Medhya), Increases color (Varnya), Rejuvenative (Rasayana), Increases appetite (Dipaniya), Beneficial for heart (Hrdya), Improves immunity (Anamayatva), Cough (Kasa), Asthma (Svasa), Fever (Jvara), Emaciation (Sosa), Rheumatoid arthritis (Vatasonita), Ailments of urinary systems (Mutra dosa), Ailments of reproductive system (Sukla dosa), Hoarseness, feeble speech (Vaisvarya)</p> <p><b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with milk or warm water</p> <p><b>Dose:</b> 1-2 teaspoon.</p>	<i>Well known formulation to boost immunity and chronic respiratory ailments</i>
5	<b>Dasamoola Hareethaki</b> (AH, C, 17/14)	<p><b>Dasamoola Hareethaki</b></p> <p>(AH, C, 17/14)</p> <p><b>Ingredients:</b> Bilva, Agnimantha, Gambhari, Patala, Tuntuka, Saliparni, Prsniiparni, Kantakari, Brhati, Goksuru, Pathya, Ela, Lavanga, Patra, Sunthi, Pippali, Marica, Yavasuka.</p> <p><b>Indications:</b> Diabetes (Meha), Fever (Jvara), Swelling (Sopha), Abdominal distention (Gulma), Emaciation (Karsya), Gout (Amavata), Bleeding disorders (Raktapitta), Discoloration of skin (Vaivarnya), Ailments of urinary and reproductive system (Mutradosa, , Sukladosa), Vitiation of vata, (Aniladosa), Asthma (Svasa), Tastelessness (Aruci), Sinusitis (Pinasa), Ailments of spleen (Pliha), Chronic Poisonous and Toxic conditions (Gara), Ascitis (Udara).</p> <p><b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with milk or warm water</p> <p><b>Dose:</b> 1-2 teaspoon.</p>	<i>More useful in chronic ailments like diabetes, excess body weight, generalized swellings.</i>
6	<b>Dasamoola Rasayana;</b> (Sahasrayoga)	<p><b>Dasamoola Rasayana</b></p> <p>(Sahasrayoga)</p> <p><b>Ingredients:</b> Bilva, Agnimantha, Gambhari, Patala, Tuntuka, Saliparni, Prsniiparni, Kantakari, Brhati, Goksuru, Vrsa, Sunthi, Marica, Pippali, Jati, Jatipatri, Ela, Lavanga, Patra, Jiraka, Krsnajiraka, Kustha, Ambara, Jahaka, Kunkuma, Kustha</p> <p><b>Indications:</b> Vitiation of Vata and kapha (Vata, Kapha), Asthma (Svasa), Cough (Kasa), Sinusitis (Pinasa), tastelessness (Arocaka), Lack of digestive power (Agnimandya), Vomiting (Vami), Ascitis (Jatararoga).</p> <p><b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with milk or warm water</p> <p><b>Dose:</b> 1-2 teaspoon.</p>	<i>Recommended to improve respiratory functions, chronic cough dry or wet or chronic bronchitis, seasonal allergy.</i>

7	<b>Drakshadi Lehya;</b> (AH, C, 16/32)	<b>Drakshadi Lehya</b> (AH, C, 16/32) <b>Ingredients:</b> Draksa, Kana, Sarkara, Madhuka, Sunthi, Tvakkshiri, Dhatri, Madhu <b>Indications:</b> Anaemia (Pandu), Jaundice (Kamala), Chronic liver disorder (Haleemaka) <b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with milk or warm water <b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon.	<i>Recommended for persons with chronic anaemia, liver disorders.</i>
8	<b>Ellum Thippalyadi Rasayana;</b> (Sahasrayoga)	<b>Ellum Thippalyadi Rasayana</b> (Sahasrayoga) <b>Ingredients:</b> Tila, Lantha, Pippali, Sunti, Loha- Bhasma, Khandasitha, Kshudra <b>Indications:</b> Piles (Gudaja/ Arsa), Ailments of spleen (Pleeha), Anaemic disorders (Pandu) <b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with milk or warm water <b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon	<i>Recommended for old age persons with chronic anaemia, lack of appetite and digestion.</i>
9	<b>Gomutra Hareetaki</b> ;(AS, C, 17/4)	<b>Gomutra Hareetaki</b> (AS, C, 17/4) <b>Ingredients:</b> Hareetaki, Gomutra Fruits are soaked in Gomutra. <b>Indications:</b> Swelling (Sopha), Pain (Sula), Abdominal distention (Anaha), excessive thirst (Trsna), Giddiness (Murccha) <b>Usage:</b> For internal use, 1-2 fruits Twice a day after food with warm water <b>Dose :</b> 1-2 fruits	<i>Selected to improve waste elimination and reduce tendency for fluid retention</i>
10	<b>Jeerakadi Lehya;</b> (Ref:Sahasrayogam)	<b>Jeerakadi Lehya</b> (Ref:Sahasrayogam) <b>Ingredients:</b> Jeeraka, Modaka, Dhanyaka, Asvagandha, Vidanga, Kalanusari, Maricha, Yashti, Kutaja, Krishnajeera, Lasuna, Kunthurushka, Sveta-Kushta, Mayakku, Jatamanji, Sunti, Sati, Garuda-Pacha, Gorochana. <b>Indications:</b> Tuberculosis (Rajayakshma), Fever (Jvara), Cough (Kasa), Asthma (Svasa), Diarrhoea (Atisara). <b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with jeeraka water <b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon	<i>Recommended when digestive power is less and for frequent respiratory ailments are affected in old age.</i>
11	<b>Kandakaryadi Lehya;</b> (Ref:Sarangadhara Samhitha)	<b>Kandakaryadi Lehya</b> (Ref:Sarangadhara Samhitha) <b>Ingredients:</b> Kantakari (Samulam), Bala, Vyosha, Vidanga, Sati, Dadima, Sowvarchala, Yavakshara, Mulaka, Amalaka, Powshkara, Vricheeva, Brihati, Pathya, Yavani, Chithraka, Riddhi, Mridweeka, Chavya, Varshabhu, Duralabha, Amlavetasa, Sringi, Rasna, Gokshura. <b>Indications:</b> All types of cough, Respiratory ailments and hiccough (sarva-Kasa), (Sarva Svasa, Hikka). <b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with warm water <b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon	<i>Selected for all type of respiratory ailments and improves general health.</i>

12	<b>Kushmanda Lehya;</b> (Ref:ashtanga hridayam)	<p><b>Kushmanda Lehya</b></p> <p>(Ref:ashtanga hridayam)</p> <p><b>Ingredients:</b> Kushmanda, Pippali, Sundi, Jeeraka, Trijatha, Lavanga, Pathra, Dhanyaka, Maricha.</p> <p><b>Indications:</b> Cough (Kasa), Hiccough (Hidma), Fever (Jwara), Cough (Svasa), Bleeding disorder (Raktapitta), Emaciation (Kshatha-Kshaya), Beneficial for strengthening thoracic bones (Ursandhana Jananam), Improves brain function (Medhyam), Gives strength (Balyam), Improves memory (Smritipradam).</p> <p><b>Usage:</b> For internal use, Twice a day after food with warm water</p> <p><b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon</p>	<i>Selected for all types of respiratory ailments and improves brain health., improves memory in old age.</i>
13	<b>Vasishta Rasayana;</b> (Astanga hrdaya)	<p><b>Vasishta Rasayana</b></p> <p>(Astanga hrdaya)</p> <p><b>Ingredients:</b> Dasamoola, Bala, Moorva, Haridra, Daruharidra, Pippali, Chavya, Patha, Aswagandha, Apamarga, Swayamgupta, Athivisha, Amrita, Baala-vilva, Trivrt, Danti, Citraka, Payasya, Kutaja, Himsra, Bejaka-Pushpa, Beejaka-Sara, Bola(Takkola), Stavira, Bhallataka, Vikamkatha, Sathavari, Poothikaranja, Syamaka, Chandralekha, Sahachara, Shobhanjana, Nimba, Ikshura, Pathya, Yava, Dhathri-Rasa, Pippali, Trijatha(Ela, Tvak, Pathra) Taila, Ajya, Madhu.</p> <p><b>Indications:</b> Rejuvenative, (Rasayanam (poorva gunadhikam ie as compared to Agasthya rasayana), Increases strength (Balya), Increases colour (Varnya), Rejuvenative ( Rasayana), Increases life span (Ayusya), Early gray (Jara), Cough ( Panca kasa), Emaciation (Ksay), Asthma (Svasa), Hiccough (Hikka), Fever (Jwara), Diabetes (Prameha), Abdominal distention (Adhmana), IBS, Sprue (Grahani), Piles (Arsa), Cardiac ailments (Hridroga), Tastelessness (Aruchi), Sinusitis (Pinasa).</p> <p><b>Usage:</b> For internal use, twice a day after food or as directed by the physician.</p> <p><b>Dose :</b> 1-2 teaspoon</p>	<i>Selected when age related ailments are more, improves digestion and respiratory health, improves immunity.</i>

The ageing process has its natural phenomena as in the case of disease pathogenesis and progression. Intervention is possible at different stages of a disease, the earlier the better for complete cure. This emphasis that the Rasayana measure needs to be practiced not at the retirement age but needs to be initiated from the beginning of middle age. While medical treatment is aimed to ward away the disease, the Rasayana treatment is aimed to guard the body against disease and rapid changes or cell death happening inside the body due to various reasons. This has a great role in preventive medicine or promotive health and specific role in curative approaches.



**Please send a request to author for botanical names of the ingredients and the method of preparation.**

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# Dental Care for Seniors



Wisdom may come with age, but so do a multitude of problems associated with ageing teeth and gums. Good dental health is as important for elderly as it is for youngsters. Maintaining a good overall oral hygiene is essential because the health of the mouth affects the overall health of the body.

## *Roja LD*

**A** lifetime of chewing, grinding, gnashing, and general wear and tear combined with medications, medical conditions, and a potential decrease in dental care can cause many oral health problems in seniors. These issues may result in significant tooth pain inflamed gums, bleeding gums, or gum infection.

Here are a few common geriatric dental problems to watch out for:

### Tooth decay

Tooth decay can lead to cavities, which can cause pain, infection, and even tooth loss. It is often caused by a build-up of plaque and tartar. A diet with sugary foods, a tendency to snack between meals, and a decrease in saliva production all contribute to the build-up of sugar and acid in the mouth. Medical conditions can play a major role too. For example, tooth brushing can be difficult and painful for those with arthritis and memory loss conditions.

### Gum disease

Gum disease, also called periodontal disease, is a common problem caused by bacteria in plaque and tartar. Smoking can also play a significant role.

Symptoms in the later stages of gum disease include irritated, red, and bleeding gums.

Gingivitis is the inflammation of the gums due to bacteria build-up where teeth meet gum tissue. This can develop into periodontitis, a serious gum infection that damages the gum tissue and the bone that supports the teeth. If the ability to chew and swallow is impaired, inadequate nutrition can also lead to additional gum health issues.

### Receding Gums

Gum recession is a gradual process where gums shrink away from teeth. It is commonly caused by gum diseases and poor dental hygiene, although smoking, family history and teeth grinding (known as bruxism) are also possible contributing factors.

Teeth may become sensitive as the root of the tooth becomes exposed and teeth may appear to lengthen. Untreated, this condition can result in significant damage to oral tissues, an increased likelihood of developing gum disease, and tooth loss.

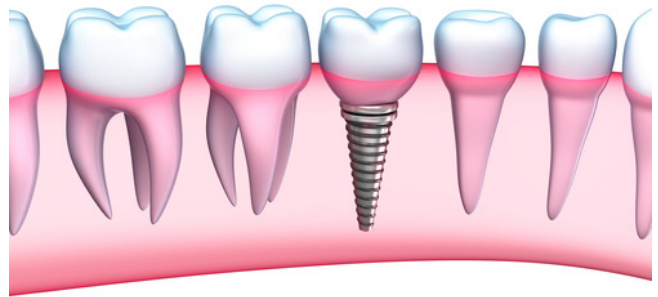
Again, prevention is the best cure, through practising good oral hygiene, quitting smoking, and avoiding sugary foods.



## Dry Mouth

Many people experience decreased saliva production with age, a common syndrome known as dry mouth, or xerostomia. It is also a known side effect of long-term use of modern medicines. The problem with reduced saliva production is that sugar and acids build up more readily in the mouth, resulting in an increased chance of cavities and leads to some of the problems mentioned above. It can also result in dry, cracked lips and a swollen tongue, making it difficult to speak and swallow.

To combat these negative consequences, seniors should drink water regularly and avoid sugary foods and carbonated drinks.



## Oral Cancer

The chance of oral cancer increases with age. People who smoke or drink alcohol frequently are at higher risk.

## Denture-induced Stomatitis

Ill-fitting dentures, poor dental hygiene, or a build-up of the tartar/ fungus cause this condition, which is inflammation of the tissue underlying a denture.

**Age in and of itself is not a dominant or sole factor in determining oral health. However, certain medical conditions, such as arthritis in the hands and fingers, may make brushing teeth difficult to impossible to perform. Drugs can also affect oral health and may make a change in your dental treatment necessary.**

Ayurvedic medications have stood the test of time and since time immemorial been used for various ailments. Recently, there is renewed interest in use of various Ayurvedic drugs for oral and dental health antiulcer genic, wound healing, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant properties.

## Ayurveda and Oral health

In Ayurveda, dental health (danta swasthya in Sanskrit) is held to be very individualistic, varying with each person's constitution (prakruti), and climatic



changes resulting from solar, lunar and planetary influences (kala-parinama). The body constitution is classified based on the predominance of one or more of the three doshas, vata, pitta and kapha. The dominance dosha in both the individual and nature determines health care in Ayurveda, including dental health.

## Chewing Sticks

Ayurveda recommends chewing sticks in the morning as well as after every meal to prevent diseases. Ayurveda insists on the use of herbal brushes, approximately 9 inches long and the thickness of one's little finger. These herb sticks should be either 'kashaya' (astringent), 'katu (acrid), or 'tikta' (bitter) in taste. The method of use is to crush one end, chew it, and eat it slowly.

It is recommended that chewing sticks be obtained from fresh stems of specific plants. The neem (Azadirachta indica) is a famous herbal chewing stick. The stems should be healthy, soft, without leaves or knots and taken from a healthy tree. Chewing on these stems is believed to cause attrition and levelling of biting surfaces, facilitate salivary secretion and, possibly, help in plaque control, while some stems have an anti-bacterial action.

People with vata dosha dominance may develop atrophic and receding gums, and are recommended to use chewing sticks with bitter-sweet or astringent tastes, such as licorice (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) and black catechu (*Acacia catechu*), respectively.

Pitta dosha dominant individuals are recommended to use chewing sticks with a bitter taste such as the twigs from the neem tree and the arjuna tree (*Terminalia arjuna*). Those with the kapha dosha dominant are likely to have pale and hypertrophic gums and are advised to use chewing sticks with a pungent taste, citing the fever nut (*Caesalipinia bonduc*) and the common milkweed plant (*Calotropis procera*).

## Mango Leaves

In southern India, mango leaf is widely used for cleaning teeth. A fresh mango leaf is washed and the midrib is removed. Leaf is then folded lengthwise with glossy surfaces facing each other. It is rolled into a cylindrical pack. One end of this pack is bitten off 2-3mm to create a raw surface which is rubbed on the teeth - pack is held between the thumb and the index finger. At the end, the midrib, which was first removed, is used as a tongue cleaner. Mangiferin a compound present in mango leaves has significant antibacterial property against certain strains of bacteria.

## Meswak

The meswak is a teeth cleaning twig made from a twig of the *Salvadora persica* tree, also known as the arak

tree or the peelu tree. A scientific study comparing the use of meswak with ordinary toothbrushes concluded that the results clearly were in favour of the users who had been using the meswak, provided they had been given proper instruction in how to brush using it.

## Oil Pulling



Oil pulling is a procedure that involves swishing oil in the mouth for oral and systemic health benefits. It is mentioned in the Ayurvedic text Charaka Samhita where it is called Kavala or Gandusha, and is claimed to cure about 30 systemic diseases ranging from headache, migraine to diabetes and asthma. Oil pulling has been used extensively as a traditional Indian folk remedy for many years to prevent decay, oral mal-odour, bleeding gums, dryness of throat, cracked lips and for strengthening teeth, gums and the jaw.

Oil pulling therapy can be done using oils like gingelly oil or sesame oil.

Brushing is contra indicated in the cases of mouth ulcer, fever, indigestion, those who have tendency to vomit, asthma, cough, thirst. Oil pulling can be used to clean the oral cavity in all these cases. Gandusha and Kavala Graha are two primary oral cleansing techniques; specialized therapy to treat as well as to prevent oral diseases. Gandusha involves filling the mouth completely with fluid so that gargling is impossible. In Gandusha, the oral cavity is filled completely with liquid medicine, held for about 3-5 minutes, and then released. In Kavala Graha, a comfortable amount of fluid is retained with the mouth closed for about 3 minutes, and then gargled. It is a simple rejuvenating treatment, which, when done routinely, enhances the senses, maintains clarity, brings about a feeling of freshness, and invigorates the mind. These oral cleansing techniques can also benefit bad breath, dry face, dull senses, exhaustion, anorexia, loss of taste, impaired vision, sore throat, and all kapha related imbalances in old age.

## Tissue Regeneration

In Ayurveda, the well-known Rasayana herb, Amlaki is considered a general builder of oral health. Amla works well as a mouth rinse as a decoction. One to



two grams per day can be taken orally in capsules for long-term benefit to the teeth and gums. Herbs such as amla that support the healing and development of connective tissue when taken internally also benefit the gums. The healing effect of these tonics take longer to become apparent since they must saturate the whole body in order to work on the gums. The results, however, are more lasting.

Licorice root promotes anti-cavity action, reduces plaque, and has an antibacterial effect. In Ayurveda, teeth are considered part of Asthidhatu - bone tissue, so that their sockets are like joints. Herbs taken internally to strengthen Asthidhatu, i.e., the skeleton and the joints, are good for long-term health of the teeth. Outstanding examples include cinnamon bark,

and turmeric root.

### Herbal Mouth Rinse

A decoction of Triphala or Yashtimadhu serves as an excellent mouth rinse. The practice in addition to maintaining oral hygiene helps in alleviating mouth ulcers. Boil Triphala or Yashtimadhu in water till the water reduces to half the amount. Allow it to cool. Rinse when it is lukewarm.

### Ayurvedic Dental Remedies in Old Age

**Bad Breath:** Gargle using lemon water, eat fresh guavas or have fenugreek tea. Clove oil also helps.

**Yellowness and Dirty Teeth:** Use salt and lime as tooth powder or rub orange peels on teeth before going to bed in the night.

**Tooth Decay:** Rub a mixture of salt, mustard oil and turmeric on teeth, twice a day. Rubbing amla powder on teeth helps in tooth decay. Kavala also helps. Dhoopana (fumigation) with seeds of kantakari (*Solanum xanthocarpum*) is recommended for treatment of dental caries in old age.

**Mouth Ulcers:** 1 tablespoon Triphala soaked in water overnight is recommended for mouth ulcers during old age.

**Bleeding Gums:** Chew a couple of guava leaves.

**Toothache:** Clove oil relieves in toothaches effectively.

#### Seniors who are using denture should follow these tips for good denture care:

- \* Remove and rinse dentures after eating to remove food debris and other food particles.
- \* Handle your dentures carefully.
- \* Clean your mouth after removing your dentures.
- \* Brush your dentures at least daily.
- \* Soak dentures overnight in salt water.
- \* Rinse dentures thoroughly before putting them back in your mouth.
- \* Schedule regular dental checkups.
- \* Typically, should avoid: abrasive cleaning materials, whitening toothpastes, bleach-containing products and very hot water.

**Modern dental care often requires the use of caustic chemicals to prevent and treat oral diseases. By incorporating these simple Ayurveda methods into daily dental hygiene routine during old age will promote overall health by removing disease causing toxins and also boost immunity.**

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# Grandma's Favourite Fennel

*Amita Kaushal*



**Botanical Name:** *Foeniculum vulgare*

**R**omans believed that serpents sucked the juice of fennel to 'improve their eyesight'.

The Roman author, a naturalist and philosopher, Pilny recommended fennel for 'dimness of human vision'.

**John Milton** (1608 – 1674), an English poet, in his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, alludes to the aroma of the plant: "A savoury odour blown, grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense than smell of sweetest Fennel".

And I remember my grandma being fond of chewing fennel seeds after her food as it helped her in 'digestion' and 'stopping gastric rumbles' during her 'Satsang'!

As kids, whenever we used to complain of stomach pain, fennel seeds water was my grandma's favourite, soothing remedy.

In Ayurveda, fennel seeds are considered very auspicious. They were extensively used in various recipes in ancient India. Saunf or fennel, the aromatic spice is one of the prominent spices used extensively for its indispensable medicinal and culinary properties.

**Common Name(s):** Fennel (English)  
Saunf (Hindi)  
Sabbasige/ Sompu (Kannada)  
Madhuri (Sanskrit)  
Mauri (Bengali)

**Family:** Umbelliferae

**Part (s) used:** Seeds  
(root can be used but not as effective)

**Qualities:** Warming, dry, pungent and sweet

## Did you know?

India happens to be the largest exporter of fennel seeds, widely known as 'saunf'!

An age-old practice in most Indian households is to chew a few fennel seeds at the end of every meal as a digestive and mouth freshener. However, fennel seeds being a concentrated source of minerals like Copper, Potassium, Calcium, Zinc, Manganese, Vitamin C,



Iron, Selenium and Magnesium, this age old practice does much more than simply beat bad breath. From regulating blood pressure to water retention, fennel seeds pack a bevy of nutrients that make it a must have in every kitchen.

#### How does it look like?

In size and shape Fennel seeds resemble cumin or zeera, but it is a different spice altogether.

#### Medicinal Uses of Saunf

- \* Ayurvedic medicine strongly vouches for saunf by its imperative medicinal properties and it is valuable in pacifying the Tridoshas - Vata, Pitta and Kapha.
- \* Saunf with a sweet, astringent-like and bitter taste has a cooling effect on the body. It is a good idea to consume a fennel seed drink during the scorching summer, to relieve heat from the body.
- \* The best way to reap the benefits of saunf is steeping, as Ayurvedic medicine suggests that

cooking depletes the properties of the nutrients. Saunf functions well as a potent detoxifier and clears out the toxins from the body.

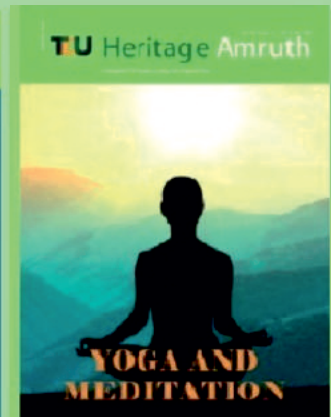
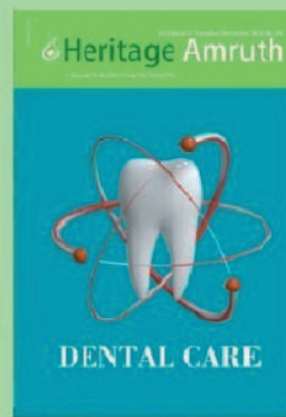
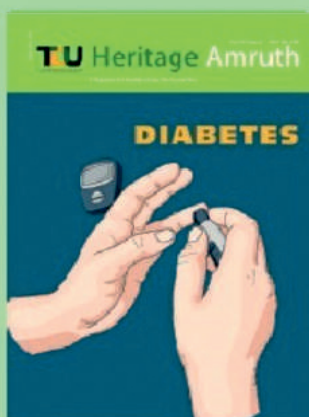
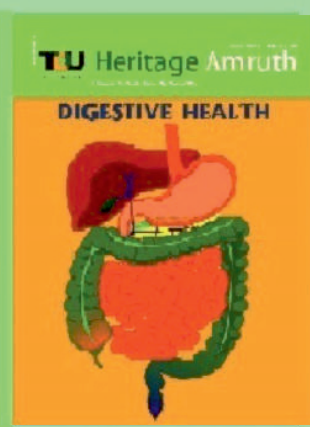
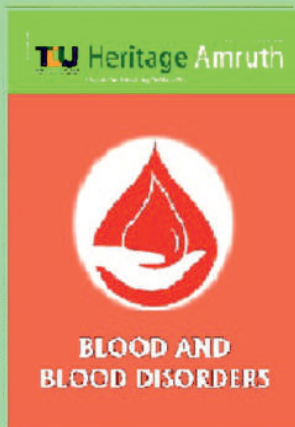
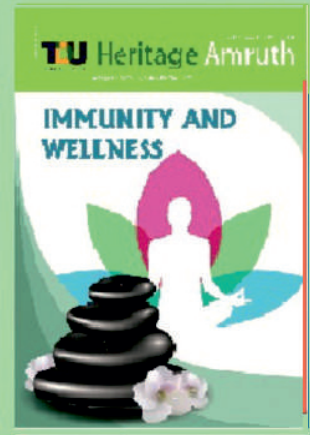
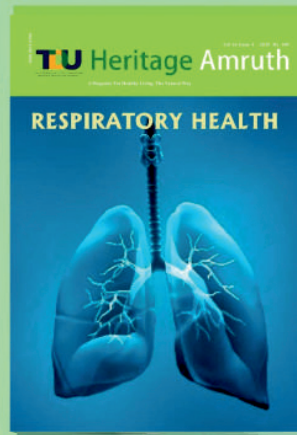
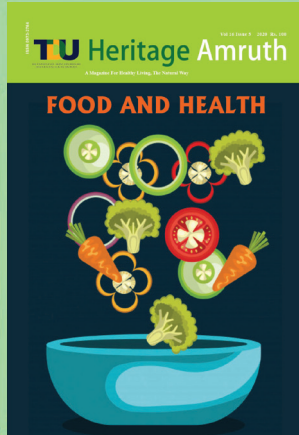
- \* Saunf is chiefly used in Ayurvedic medicine to treat digestive ailments while the secretolytic (medicine that breaks up secretions, especially, phlegm) properties assist in curing respiratory ailments with antispasmodic effect easing abdominal cramps.
- \* Saunf seed extracts possess strong carminative properties that help to relieve belching and gas. The antispasmodic action works to ease abdominal cramps caused due to indigestion. While it also controls gastric secretions that help to reduce acidic and sour taste in the mouth.
- \* Fennel seeds are highly valuable for lessening excessive thirst which is widely used as a natural remedy in Ayurveda. Fennel seed powder is blended with sugar candy (Mishri) in equal quantities and consumed with water to reduce excessive thirst.
- \* The oil found in the seeds is carminative in nature, hence it is used in massage blends, especially in Ayurveda to calm the nerves and promote mental clarity.
- \* Great for Acne: When fennel seeds are eaten on a regular basis, they provide the body with valuable minerals like zinc, calcium and



selenium. These minerals are very helpful to balance hormones and in helping up the oxygen balance. When consumed, fennel has a cooling impact on the skin, hence giving a healthy glow.

**Fennel seeds are a storehouse of antioxidants and volatile oils having a potential to improve heart health, lessen inflammation, stimulate digestion and promote weight loss. To reap the wellness incentives of this amazing herb, incorporate dried fennel seeds in your daily regimen!**

# The Nectar of Life



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