

## The Art of Healthy Living

धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणामारोग्यं मूलमुत्तमम् ।

(च०सू० 1/15)

We're on this planet to lead a purposeful life. Whatever purpose we're attached to, the primary and most important tool to achieve it is our body. And that too - a Healthy Body!

The concept of total health (physical, mental, social and spiritual) is Vedic wisdom. Adaptability is an outcome of this complete health which can be achieved by synchronizing various intrinsic and extrinsic variables related to health and well-being. While these variables differ in every individual, there are certain basic rules always advisable which need to be followed.

For those who do make the commitment, Ayurveda offers rich and cumulative health benefits that can help you enjoy long, healthy and blissful life.®

### Highlights:

- Healthy habits to work on regularly
- Simplicity is the thumb rule – Eat simple and Live simple
- Go seasonal – Seasonal fruits and veggies
- Regular exercise – Cardio in some form or the other and Meditation

### 1) *Aahar* - Dietary measures:

- Avoid fried, spicy, bakery, synthetic or processed food.
- Avoid heavy foodstuffs i.e. take light, easily digestible food.
- Prefer mustard oil as cooking medium. Add one tsp pure ghee (*desi ghee*) with every warm meal.
- Use pressure cooker (made up of stainless steel) for cooking. Season (*tadka*) with little cooking oil. As per the recipe, put tomato, turmeric and salt while boiling/pressure cooking rather than frying them in seasoning.

- Avoid refined flour (*maida*) – prefer wheat flour with husk. Use rock salt (*sendha namak*) instead of common salt and rock candy (*dora mishri*) or jaggery (*gur*) in place of sugar.
- Avoid eating stale and leftover food, as it is the biggest source of oxidants.
- Reduce excess of cold, heavy, oily, sweet, sour and salty food.
- Avoid ice-creams, cold or iced drinks, packed fruit juices, junk food or preserved food.
- Avoid eating fruits/water just before/after meals. And do not take them together either. You can take a little amount of water with food if required.
- Must have water an hour or more after having meals. Drink a glass of warm water empty stomach in the morning to purify the entire body.
- Eat in moderation. Avoid overeating as well as under eating. Eat until you are about  $\frac{3}{4}$  full.
- Avoid skipping meals because it can aggravate the liver and bile secretions. And do not eat if you don't feel hungry, and if it is during meal time – you can have fruits or water.
- Avoid tea or coffee as much as possible especially after meals.
- In between meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), do not take anything except water, fresh fruit juices, fruits, lemon water/*shikanji*.
- Do not eat food too quickly; chew it properly.
- Avoid any physical activity like swimming, running, stair climbing and sex just after having food.
- Do not divide your attention by reading, watching TV, working while eating food.
- Have your first meal 2-3 hrs after waking up and last meal at least 2 hrs before going to bed.
- Regular daily elimination is must.

## 2) *Vihar* - Life style measures:

- Early to bed and early to rise goes a long way in keeping one fit. Wake up before sunrise and go to bed late by 3-4 hrs after sunset; avoid intense entertainment before going to bed.
- Exercise on daily basis is necessary. Don't overdo - exercise only 50% of your capacity. A brisk walk is beneficial for everyone.

- Learn and practice some technique of reducing everyday stress like reiki, *pranayam*, *sudarshan kriya*, meditation etc.
- Avoid sleeping during the day time, specifically immediately after lunch. If tired, it is advisable to take a short nap before your meal.
- Walk a mile after dinner.
- Be careful about the hygiene of your body.
- Reduce your mobile time by 30-50% (mobile phones are the biggest time waster).
- Have a positive attitude. Calming music may reduce restlessness; boosts brain chemicals and improves behavior.
- Always stay active, physically as well as mentally.
- Avoid extremes of temperatures.
- A warm oil scalp massage, once or twice a week, stimulates the scalp and helps to balance the mind.
- A full body massage is good for everyone.
- If your job is sedentary, take short breaks and regular walks. ®
- Engage your brain continuously in some sort of mental activities to keep it working well. Think creatively everyday; try to do different things to exercise your brain muscles - play some sport, go to new restaurants, make a new recipe, visit the zoo, listen to different music, learn a new hobby, watch kids playing, spend time with senior citizens.
- Start picking up and completing things undone. Discard unwanted and unused stuff from your house and your mind.
- Take vacation at least once a year.
- Devote at least one day a week for family n friends.
- Laugh often.

### 3) Recommended daily routine: (in the following sequence)

- Walk for 20-30 minutes after dinner. Drink at least 300ml of lukewarm water an hour after dinner. Do not take anything after this (this will help in cleansing digestive tract). This habit will make your mornings more fresh and energetic.
- Wake up early in the morning in “*Brahma-Muhurtta*” (between 4:00 to 6:00 am).

You can accomplish 20% more from this period. After gargling drink 300 ml of warm water before going to the washroom.

- After brushing, massage any “*DantManjan*” (herbal gum powder) mixed with mustard oil. Massage it gently over teeth and gums, after 3-5 minutes of application spit and wash it thoroughly. This is a must to maintain healthy teeth and gums. You can repeat the process after dinner as well.
- A full body massage (of olive oil/sesame/ mustard/coconut/almond oil) at least thrice a week is beneficial; before workout during summers and after shower during winters.
- The workout (you have no choice on this): Start with some stretching *Asanas* like – *tadasana*, *tiryaka-tadasana*, *kati-chakrasana*, etc. Next is cardio – options for cardio: A brisk walk or cycling for at least 30 minutes or skipping 300-400 rounds or stairs climbing 150-200 steps or *surya-namaskar* 10-20 rounds. Do *shavasana* for 5-10 minutes and after that do some *Pranayam* like *nadi-shodhana*, *kapalbhati* or *anulom-vilom* followed by Meditation in any comfortable *asana* like *sukhasana* or *padmasana*.<sup>®</sup>
- Have a shower with lukewarm water. First meal should be after shower. In other terms, take shower when your stomach is empty.
- Breakfast options – Steamed sprouts (of *moong dal* or green gram whole), *chilla*/chapati (of green gram split/skinned), veg. vermicelli/*dalia* or *upma/poha*, *dhokla*, *idli-sambhar* and porridge (*halwa*) with little cow’s ghee added post dish out. Take herbal tea or green tea or Kashmiri tea (*kahwa*) along with it.
- To prepare the recipes, prefer whole grains like millets (*jowar*, *bajra*, *ragi*), maize (makka), semolina, fresh seasonal veggies, etc.
- Lunch and Dinner - have light and easy to digest seasonal food. Avoid spicy, fried and sour food. Do not sleep immediately after taking meals.
- Between meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), do not take anything except water, fresh fruit juices, fruits with rock salt and black pepper, lemon water/*shikanji*.
- Snacks – puffed rice, flattened rice (*chivadaa*) and fox nut (*makhana*).

**\*Concept of cheat meal or comfort food; the benefits and limitations!**

Once in a while you can enjoy or gift yourself this “happy meal” or “undisciplined

meal” in a disciplined way! Everything in moderation, simply avoid highly processed and outside food. Exercise regularly and avoid fad diets compromising your immunity.

- Once or twice a week you can enjoy the food your body is craving for.... but avoid binging! A certain level of discipline is required while you indulge.
- At the same time, you need to balance this meal; the rule is - skip the next meal, drink plenty of water and/or have some seasonal fruits.
- Falling ill is very easy; just one bad meal can land you in a hospital. Be watchful.

\*This is not for life threatening or end stage diseased conditions. Please consult your physician.

### Healthy Signs:

Daily bowel movement, regular sound sleep and a good appetite (one should feel hungry at regular intervals – meal times) are very important.

### Conclusion:

Ayurvedic approach to health is general and comprehensive. Because the endeavor is to seek and correct the source of disorders—imbalances in the physiology—the best results from Ayurveda come to those who are patient, persistent, who diligently adopt the dietary and life style changes needed and take a degree of responsibility for their own well being.

While nutritious food in itself is important; its digestion and absorption is the key. It's as simple as knowing and implementing what, why, when, how and how much. The purpose is to achieve the optimal synchronicity between various internal and external variables.

**Have an Awesome Life!**