

# The Tridosha Theory According to Ayurveda

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**Abstract:** Ayurveda is believed to be the oldest medical science. It is more clearly the science of the Human civilization based on tridosha. Tridoshas are the three humors or forces of the body, which bring health when in balance, and produce diseases when out of balance. In this study we will describe the basic Ayurvedic theory of Tridosha and how to balance it in our body

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurvedic, Tridosha, Vata Dosha, Pitta Dosha, Kapha Dosha



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## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the traditional, ancient Indian system of health science. Its name literally means, "life knowledge." The Ayurvedic method of holistic healthcare emphasizes balancing the body, mind, and spirit to treat and prevent disease. This 5,000-year-old practice focuses on harmonizing the body with nature through diet, herbal remedies, yoga and meditation, exercise, lifestyle, and body cleansing. The basic edifice of the Ayurvedic mode of treatment is founded on the fundamental theory commonly called the 'tridosha tatwa'. Etymologically, the word 'tridosha' is derived from the Sanskrit words, 'tri' and 'dosh' meaning three and pollutant or vitiated factor respectively, and in combination they mean the 'three pollutants' or 'tri-pollutant'; and the Sanskrit word 'tatwa' stands for its English equivalent 'theory'. Essentially, the pollutants or vitiating factors play a significant role in maintenance of health or well-being and disease or illness. In a nutshell, health or well-being is maintained if trido shorthe three pollutants operate in harmony with one another.

## HISTORY OF AYURVEDA

Understood to be the oldest and most holistic medical system in the world, Ayurveda was developed around 3,000 BCE. The wisdom of this healing method was passed down through ancient Indian spiritual texts, called the "Vedas." There are four major Vedas, each of which describes, in some parts, the principles of health, disease, and treatment. One of these texts, the "Rig Veda" (also known as "Rik Veda" or "Rigveda"), is one of the oldest known books of an Indo-European language.

The Rig Veda contains philosophical verses on the nature of existence, as well as information on the three basic human constitutions. It discusses the use of herbs to heal the mind and body, and to keep oneself young. Another Veda, the "Atharva Veda," contains information on everything from internal medicine and surgery, to infertility and psychiatry. The "physicians" at the time of the Vedas were "rishis" – sages or seers, holy people – who viewed health as an overall integration between mind, body, and spirit. The knowledge we have now is by

three surviving texts of Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita and Vagbhata.

## The link between panchamahabhuta & Ayurvedic Tridoshas

Panchamahabhuta or the five great elements-Akash (space), Vayu (air), Agni (fire), Jala (water), Prithvi (earth) are considered the basis of the universe. When these 5 basic elements making up the composition of the human body gets impregnated with Atma and soul.

Mahabhuta	Properties	Sense organ
Akash	Empty area of cosmos, frictionless, sound	Ear
Vayu	Light, subtle, touch	Skin
Agni	Energy, transformation, ageing, warmth, vision	Eyes
Jala	Fluidity, motion, taste	Tongue
Prithvi	Solidity, grounding forces, smell	Nose

## Ayurvedic Doshas

The Doshas ensure that all mahabhutas are held together and exert their functions in synergism for the optimum function of the human body. Doshas are made up of same element (mahabhutas) which forms our body i.e. Akash, Vayu, Agni, Jala, Prithvi. The three doshas are considered as three pillars of the body. Their balance is the key for the body to be healthy.

- 1) **Vata Dosha** – Vata is made up of air and space elements. It uniformly distributes heat and coldness throughout the body and balances all physiological activities. Vata controls all functions of pitta, kapha, body tissues and excretion of wastes. Vata supervises functions of mind and perception through senses. It is predominantly located in lower portion of the body, below navel

region. Further the Vata doshas has five sub-doshas which include-

- a) Prana Vata is found in the head and it controls the senses.
- b) Vyana Vata controls all the controlled bodily action and is found in the heart.
- c) Udana Vata is found in the chest area and it controls the voice and intellectual abilities.
- d) Samana Vata is present in the stomach and it controls the digestive processes.
- e) Apana Vata controls all the discharges through the urinary tract and is found in the anal region.

2) **Pitta Dosha** – Pitta is made up of Fire and Water . it represents fire forces. Digestion of food, formation of nutritive juices, segregation of nutrients and wastes, absorption and distribution of nutrients is caused by Pitta. Pitta is responsible for heat of the body and maintenance of heat is a sign of life. All metabolic activities are under control of Pitta. It is located in middle portion of the body , between heart and navel. This is the hot zone of the body where digestive fire is located. The dosha is further divided into five subcategories-

- a) Ranjak Pitta produces Rakta or blood and is found in the stomach.
- b) Bhrajak Pitta controls skin pigmentation and is found in the skin.
- c) Aalochak Pitta is found in the eyes and controls the sight.
- d) Sadhak Pitta is present in the heart and it governs the psychological capabilities of the body.
- e) Pachak Pitta controls the digestive functioning of the body and is found in the duodenum part of the small intestines.

3) **Kapha Dosha** – it is made up of Earth and water element. It acts like coolant and buffer system. It counteracts excessive heat caused by Pitta and excessive dryness caused by Vata Dosha. Kapha helps in nurturing tissues and it is the cause for body immunity. It is located in the upper portion of the body, i.e. in chest and head.

- a) Kledak Kapha is found in the stomach and works to digest the food.
- b) Shleshak Kapha is present in all joints of the body and controls the lubrication of joints.
- c) Tarpak kapha is found in the head and controls intelligence.
- d) Bodhak Kapha is found in the sensory organ of taste and governs the same.
- e) Avalambak Kapha is present in the chest and it lubricates the heart and throat.

#### Correlation of tridosha with Nature

Just like moon, sun and wind beholds, protects and supports the world through their visarga(nourishing), Adana (depleting) and vikshepa (distributing) functions, three doshas i.e. Kapha, Pitta and Vata beholds, protects and support body by rendering similar roles and functions as those of moon, sun and wind .

- Kapha performs nourishing function in the body just like moon does nourishing in nature.
- Pitta performs depleting function in body like sun in nature.
- Vata performs distributing function in body just like wind in nature.

When these doshas are balanced , they support body. When they are disturbed, they become pathogenic and cause many disease.

## Dhatu and Mala

Ayurveda explains about 7 body tissues which form the physical body. The functioning of body tissue is regulated by Tridosha.

- Rasa – Blood plasma / Lymph
- Rakta – Blood tissue
- Mamsa – Muscle tissue
- Meda – Fat tissue
- Asthi – Bone tissue
- Majja – Bone marrow

Dhatus are the strata or base for doshas to show dosha action. As per Ayurveda, Dosha, Dhatu and Mala (waste products) form the root moola of the body. The body is formed and maintained by their balance. Proper elimination of excreta is one of the signs of good health. The doshas and tissues too, when imbalanced are called malas because they tend to contaminate the body, causes damage and diseases. Thus the word mala is interchangeably used for doshas, dhatus and malas.

### Yogasanas for balancing tridoshas

- 1) Vata dosha : Urdhvamukhasvanasana, Adhomukhasvanasana, Malasana, Bakasana, Navasana, Kurmasana, Shalabhasana, Ushtrasana, Vrikshasana, Dandasana, Sukhasana, Shavasana, Balasana, Mayurasana, Padmasana, Virasana, Vajrasana, trikonasana, bhujanasana, Katichakrasana, Tadasana, Triyaktadasana.
- 2) Pitta dosha : Urdhvamukhasvanasana, Adhomukhasvanasana, Malasana, Bakasana, Navasana, shalabhasana, shavasana, Mayurasana, Vajrasana, Trikonasana, Chakrasana, Bhujangasana, Katichakrasana, Tadasana, Triyaktadasana.
- 3) Kapha dosha : Shavasana, Balasana, Mayurasana, Vajrasana, Tadasana, Triyaktadasana, Suryanamaskara.

### Pranayama for balancing tridoshas

- 1) Vata balancing : Agnisar, Bhastrika, Ujjayi, Bharamri, nadishodhan, anulom vilom.
- 2) Pitta balancing : Bhramari, sheetkari, sheetali, nadishodhan, anulom vilom.
- 3) Kapha balancing : Kapalbhati, bhramari, nadishodhan, suryabhedan, anulomvilom, bhastrika

## DISCUSSION

Ayurveda defines disease as the natural end result of living out of harmony with one's constitution. Our constitution is the inherent balance of energies within our bodies and our mind. It describes who you are on the most fundamental level. Our constitution defines what we are naturally attracted to as well as what repels us. It defines what is in harmony with our nature and what will cause us to move out of balance and experience sickness and disease. Because we all have a different balance of energy, therefore Balance of three doshas i.e. vata, pitta and kapha is very important for comprehensive well being and health of an individual. It is quite natural that whatever changes, happens in miniature representative of nature called the body. Just like nature beholds all life and protects them when in its serene form, doshas too support body and contribute towards good health when they are in balanced. Thus, the *tridosha* are the foundation of the mind and body balanced existence of man.

## CONCLUSION

We know that body and mind are two sides of the same coin. Physical disorders can cause mental disturbances and mental disorders can cause physical ailments which can give rise to imbalance of tridoshas. Therefore it is equally important to keep mind healthy and make it more sattvic. This can be achieved by –

- Positive thinking, noble thoughts and deeds
- Disciplined behaviour

- Keeping away from extremes of emotions and material attraction
- Spending simple way of life and consuming sattvic food
- Incorporating Yogasana and Pranayama in their daily life.

Good and balanced mind will take care of body and body too will be healthy.

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