



Holistic Healing with Ayurveda

CHARAK SAMHITA, AN ANCIENT AYURVEDIC TEXT

*True healing of any condition means to restore the mind,
body and spirit to their naturally balanced states.*

All Ayurveda seeks to restore balance within the body. Diet plays a primary role in achieving this balance, as it is food that gets digested to create new tissues while herbal remedies aid this process. When food is not properly digested, it leads to the build up of toxins, or *aam*, in the body.

According to Ayurveda, everyone is born with a unique combination of the five elements (or the three *doshas*) – this is our *prakruti*. When this inborn constitution becomes imbalanced through diet, lifestyle, time of day, time of life and climate, it is called *vikruti*. Therefore, Ayurveda suggests the use of different qualities and substances to bring these elements back into balance. Any particular individual may be primarily one *dosha*, or any combination of the three (i.e. *vata*, *pitta*, *kapha*). Typically, it is our strongest *dosha* that gets imbalanced.

Part of the beauty of the Ayurvedic dietary consideration is the wisdom that links a particular taste and quality of food with its effect – whether aggravating or pacifying – on a particular *dosha*.

In Ayurveda, the concept that ‘like increases like’ means that a person with too much heat, or *pitta*, would not try and achieve balance by eating foods that are heating or that increase *pitta*; rather they would balance this *dosha* by eating foods that have the cooling qualities of water or earth and ether.

Upon seeing an Ayurvedic practitioner you will be given dietary recommendations that are specific to your constitution so that you may restore balance through what you eat and how you live. What follows are general guidelines for understanding the *doshas* and their particular dietary recommendations.

Treating Dosha Imbalance with Food and Diet

When the diet is not balanced, that is, when it does not contain all six tastes, it can lead to experiences like feeling hungry after finishing a large meal, feeling weak and tired in the late afternoon, or developing cravings for certain foods.

Ayurveda recommends that we eat a balanced diet (with all six tastes) regularly. Each taste contains nutritional factors that the body needs for proper functioning. However, if you clearly have the symptoms of an imbalance in one of the *doshas*, you should favor foods that decrease that *dosha* and avoid the ones that aggravate it.