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Cardiovascular or heart diseases are already a major cause of morbidity and mortality in India. Economic and social changes taking place in India and ensuing changes in the lifestyle and risk factor profile of the population has resulted in an epidemic of cardiovascular diseases. The heart is probably the most vital organ of the human body that embodies life and the cessation of its function symbolizes the end of life. Ayurveda has a very simple yet extremely effective management approach to Heart Diseases.



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To keep the body in good health
is a duty. . .
otherwise we shall not be able
to keep our mind strong and clear.
- Buddha

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The Heart of the Matter



Why are India's Ayurvedic cardiologists not amongst the world's leading cardiac physicians? Ayurvedic physicians have reason to be world leaders because Indians knew about the heart, its functions, its relationship to respiration and about the management of heart diseases long before William Harvey who wrote his treatises on circulation in the 17th century, as early as 1500 years before the birth of Christ.

The earliest reference to the heart is found in Charaka Samhita, a text originally written in 1500 B.C. It mentions 'the ceaseless circulation' facilitated by the heart, with the aid of the 'vyan vayu'. It also describes the ten great blood vessels (dhamani) connected to the heart. The etiology of the Sanskrit word Hrudaya is revealing too. 'Hru' means to "draw in with force" and 'Da' means, "to donate".

The Sushruta Samhita (600 B.C) describes the morphology of heart. It is described as an organ, which looks like a lotus bud before it blooms. It is tilted to the left, situated in the chest cavity and surrounded by the organs like the lungs, liver and spleen. The heart is referred to as an organ engaged in continuous expansion and contraction, and the blood is classified as one of the seven body tissues. According to Sushruta, blood is composed of 'rasa', which means the pure nutrient fluid or plasma and 'rakta', which is particulate matter. Sushruta elaborates that the blood has typical characteristics like Visra (disagreeable odour), fluidity, red colour, it is pulsating and light in weight. It extols blood as a tissue, which is completely utilized by the body and equates its importance to 'life' itself (loss of blood will lead to loss of life). The idea that the heart is involved with circulation of 'rasa' and 'rakta' was well known. The cardiac impulses were described as impulses in various directions, upwards, towards the periphery, from the periphery towards the heart and impulses for absorption and separation of essence (sar) from waste. These impulses were attributed to the five

vayus viz., pran, udan, saman, vyan and apan. The term 'vayu' in Ayurveda refers to a key physiological function viz., the function of transportation or movement. It embodies all motor and neuron functions and voluntary and involuntary movements.

Heart diseases and their management are also elaborately described in Ayurvedic texts at the prodromal (purva roop) stage and full-blown stage (roop). The associated diseases (updrava) that accompany cardiac problems and bad prognosis (arishta) are also detailed. The Ayurvedic text, Sharangadhara Samhita (11th century) discusses the relationship of respiration and heart circulation. In Bhav Prakash (a 16th century text), seventy-two single plant drugs with their specific therapeutic effects on the heart are described in terms of their pharmacological actions.

With this huge head start on cardiac diseases, Indian Ayurvedic physicians should aspire to be world leaders in cardiology. Definitely in the field of cardiac medicine, both preventive and curative, they have an important contemporary role to play. They are perhaps not playing this role today due to lack of self-confidence, ignorance of the strengths and weaknesses of modern cardiac care and lack of encouragement by shortsighted policy makers for conducting serious research. In surgery however, the traditional knowledge may today be obsolete.

Given the experience of traditional Indian systems of medicine in cardiology they need to be challenged to play a more significant role in India and globally for the management of cardiac health.

Darshan Shankar
Managing Editor

Beauteous Bauhinia

G Annalakshmi

The beautiful Bauhinia trees, which find their mention in the Sanskrit dramas of the famous poet Kalidasa, and also some popular songs are a real treat for the eyes. All over northern India, the flowering of Bauhinia tree, its leafless branches covered in a blaze of pink-white blossoms, marks the advent of spring, a delightful but short season followed by a hot summer, the monsoon rains, autumn and winter. This flowering that coincides with the festive harvest time is also the time when the village women go out in the jungle and collect the flowers and buds of the Bauhinia, which they usually dry and store for medicinal purposes.

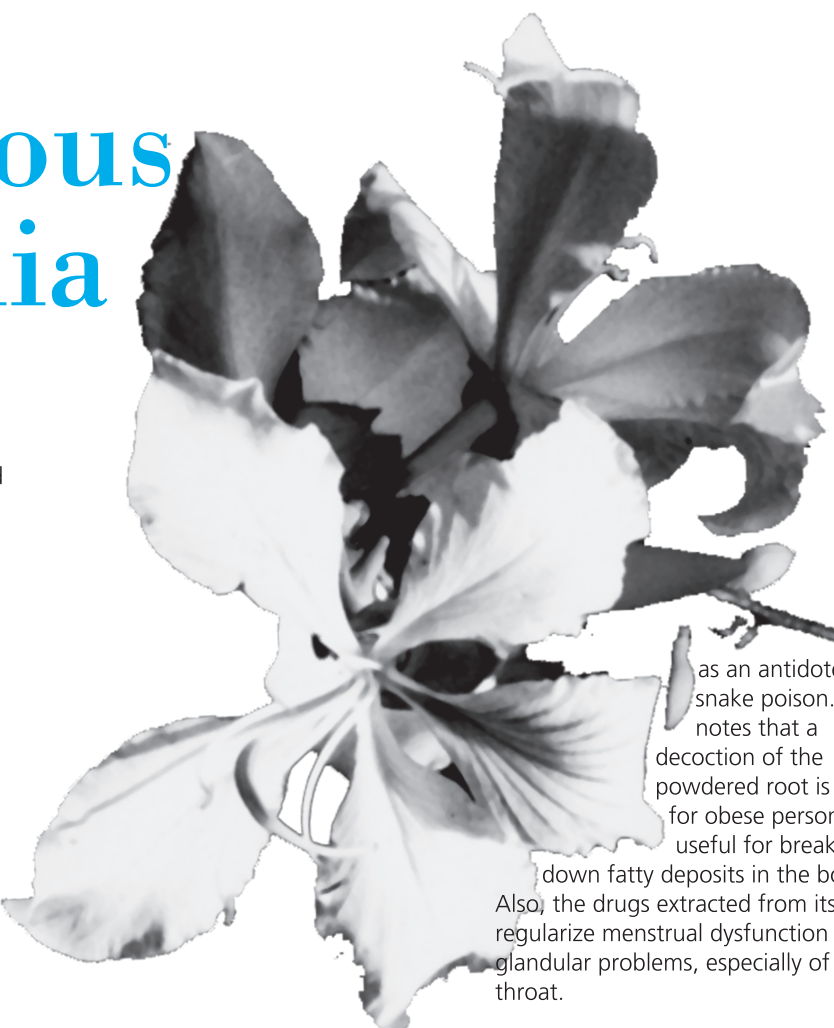
Bauhinia holds a wealth of medicinal properties in it. A bark decoction of it is a useful antiseptic wash for a variety of minor skin infections; an infusion of its flowers with sugar is a gentle laxative; and a gargle made from its bark mixed with pomegranate flowers is an excellent remedy for sore throats.

Properties according to Siddha

The Bauhinia tree is widely used in Siddha medicine. Its flowers reduce body heat and are used to cool the eyes. Owing to their laxative properties, the roots and flowers are extensively used as laxatives while the astringent bark is used as a tonic.

Properties according to Ayurveda

Ayurveda values this plant for its effectiveness against malarial fevers and



as an antidote to snake poison. It also notes that a decoction of the powdered root is good for obese persons, useful for breaking down fatty deposits in the body. Also, the drugs extracted from its bark regularize menstrual dysfunction and glandular problems, especially of the throat.

“A not to be forgotten February memory is the flowering of the Bauhinias. Both the white and pink variety look their best when the first buds appear... Whenever anyone shows an interest in trees and wants to know more about them, Bauhinias are the first I introduce them to”.

-Khushwant Singh, in Nature Watch (1990)

How does it look?

Bauhinia is a medium-sized ornamental tree. Its bark is grey or brown from outside and pink to dark yellow from inside. The leaves have a shallow cleft at the tip. The flowers are white with light yellow spots or pink with red spots, or purple-mauve and are orchid-like in shape. The white flower variety is known as *Bauhinia variegata* referring to the variegated flowers whereas the purple variety is known as *Bauhinia purpurea*. The flowers appear when the tree is in a leafless condition from February to March.

The tree when in bloom presents a beautiful sight. The pods are thick, flat, little curved and shining brown in colour when dry. Another variety, *Bauhinia triandra*, commonly known as ‘Pink Bauhinia’ or ‘Lal Kachnar’ in Hindi, is a small bushy tree, with pinkish flowers and is in bloom from October to November.



What are the vernacular names?

People call it, **Butterfly tree, Geranium tree, Mountain Ebony and Orchid tree** in English, **Deva-kanchan, Rakta-kanchan** in Bengali, **Kachnar or Gulabi Kachnar** in Hindi, **Basavanapada, Sarul** in Kannada, **Chuvanna-mandaram** in Malayalam, **Atmatti** in Marathi, **Mandari, Segappumandari** in Tamil, **Kanchanam** in Telugu. Botanically, it is known as **Bauhinia purpurea** and belongs to **Caesalpinaceae** family.

Where is it found?

Indigenous to India, it is found throughout the country. It is an excellent tree for parks and open places. The tree is mainly used for ornamental planting and is admirably suited also for small gardens and roadside avenues.

How to grow in the garden?

It is commonly propagated from seeds. Seeds are usually soaked in warm water for better germination. Seedling grown to a size of 10-12 cm can be carefully pulled out and planted in pits mixed with required sand and manure. It is fast growing in early stages and attains a height of six to eight feet in the first season of its planting and flowers during the second year.

Self Help

For Obesity

2-3 gms dried root powder is given twice a day for 48 days.

For excessive menstrual bleeding

Decoction of the flower buds is given in a dose of 15-30 ml daily for 48 days.

For constipation

5 gm of powder of dried flower added with little sugar is given at bedtime.

For excessive body heat and as an eye coolant

100 ml of Gingely oil boiled with handful of fresh flowers is used as bathing oil.

For diarrhoea

Decoction of bark is given orally in a dose of 15-30 ml 4-5 times per day.

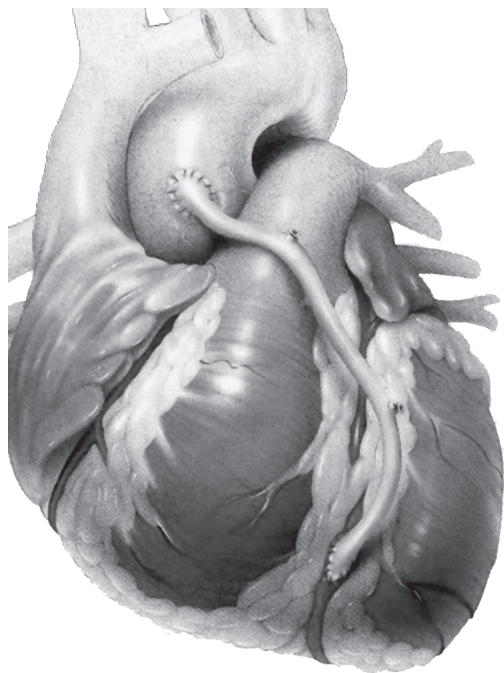
For abcess

Equal part of root, bark and flower ground to a paste with rice washed water applied externally.

For ulcer and stomach pain

15-30 ml of decoction of the bark is given daily for 48 days.

Dr G Annalakshmi is a Siddha Physician working with the TSM group of FRLHT.



By-pass the bypass

The Ayurvedic guidelines for healthy heart

Manoj Nesari

Cardiovascular or heart diseases are already a major cause of morbidity and mortality in India.

Economic and social changes going on in India and ensuing changes in lifestyle and risk factor profile of the population has resulted in an epidemic of cardiovascular diseases.

According to WHO estimates, in 2002, 16.7 million people around the globe die of cardiovascular diseases each year. This is around one third of all deaths globally. 600 million people with high blood pressure are at the risk of heart attack, stroke (paralysis) and heart failure.

The extension of epidemic of heart diseases from developed western countries to developing countries like India is a bio-social phenomenon. It results from the people in their new social environment embarking on new ways of living that are beyond the biological capacity of the human species to endure without damage.

If this process continues then it is predicted that compared to 2000, the number of years of productive life lost to heart diseases will have increased to 95% in 2030 in India. The clinical care of heart diseases is costly and prolonged. These direct costs divert the scarce family and social resources to medical care. Heart disease disrupts the future of the families dependant upon the affected person and undermine the development of the nation by depriving of the workers in their most productive years.

Heart diseases like coronary artery disease (CAD – the disease that leads to heart attack) and hypertension are the diseases invited by one due to unwholesome diet and wrong lifestyle. They not only pose the risk to life but also reduce work capacity of the person affected.

‘Heart’ in Ayurveda

Ancient Ayurvedic sages had understood the importance of the heart and impact of heart diseases and have described it in the following words –

*Shadangamangam viganam
indriyaanyarthapanchakam I
Atma cha sagunaschetaschintyam cha
hridi samshritam II*

“ The human body consisting of six components (four limbs and head

& trunk), the organs of perception (Indriya), the wisdom, the mind, the mental concept and soul – all of these are dependant upon the normal functioning of heart”

(Charak samhita Su. 30/4)

The Sanskrit etymological meaning of the word Hridaya (Hri + da + ya) itself describes the circulation. Hri - To take away (Heart takes away the impure blood from body parts), da – to give out (supplies oxygenated blood to them) and Ya – to maintain. Any disturbance in this function is called as hridroga (Hridi baadhaa prakurvanti hridrogam tat prachakshate) or heart disease. Ayurveda has described 5 types of heart diseases. The Angina pectoris is described separately by Sushruta by name ‘Hritshoola’. Various environmental factors like diet, the conduct, heat etc. continuously affect heart. The timely protection of heart from these factors is required to maintain the heart healthy.

Coronary artery disease (CAD) –

The pathological changes in arteries due to the environmental factors start as early as first decade of life and gradually cover roughly 1–2% of the surface area of the arterial tree every year. Symptoms of the coronary artery disease like heaviness in chest,

or breathlessness after walking or climbing a short height develop when 60% surface area of the artery is blocked. Thus the process of arterial block starts at least 20 years before the actual manifestation of the disease. The initial interaction between the coronary arteries and the causative factors is called as biological onset. At this stage, though the disease is there, it is undetectable. Considering this phenomenon there are limitations for the early diagnosis of CAD in modern medicine. However Ayurveda has the unique approach towards the understanding of pathogenesis of any disease including the CAD by which it is possible for a learned Vaidya to diagnose it at an early stage on the basis of symptoms presented by the Doshas involved. The proper care taken at this stage helps to prevent the further development of the disease and its manifestation.

Diet and lipids, smoking, oral contraceptives, alcohol, sedentary lifestyle lack of exercise, stress and obesity are the well established causative factors of CAD in modern medicine. Notably Charaka the great ancient Ayurveda physician wrote -

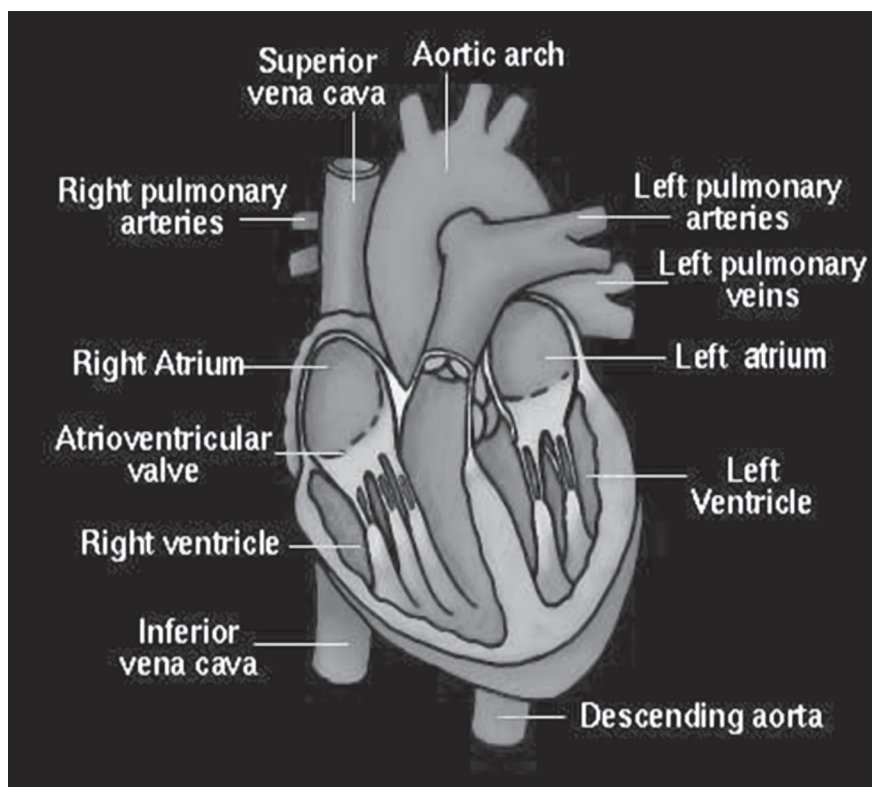
[Atyaadaanam gurusnighdhamachintana machestanam I](#)
[Nidraasukhamchaapyadhikam kapha hridroga kaaranam II](#)

“Over eating, heavy and fatty meals, lack of mental as well as physical activity, sedentary habits and over indulgence in sleep are the causes of heart disease due to Kapha.”

CAD according to Ayurveda can be diagnosed as a disease of Kapha and Vaata. Data from Indian immigrants abroad has revealed cardiac mortality to be higher in this group compared to the native population. According to a study conducted in 1984, Indian immigrants in U.K. had the highest cardiac mortality in the world, which was due to heavy and fatty food as well as sedentary lifestyle and more importantly the change in traditional Indian lifestyle including the diet.

Diet

This is the most important factor responsible for the heart diseases. The role of oily fatty and heavy meals



Heart

as cause of CAD is being discussed a lot now a days in modern medicine. This type of food increases Kapha in the body. This type of food being heavy for digestion, affects the metabolism that ultimately leads to blockades in the coronary arteries. Besides this the stale food, fermented food, excess use of garlic and other spices, cheap vegetable oils, hydrogenated fats (Vanaspati ghee), are also responsible for the heart diseases. Fermented food or preserved food comes under the category of stale food. This type of food in the long term vitiates all the body humors and the tissues. The long-term vitiation results in heart disease.

Excess use of food preparations of various types of flour is also a factor described by Ayurveda that impairs the quality of tissues. Bread, biscuits and other similar bakery products are prepared out of flour, are fermented and are preserved, hence their use should be restricted in daily diet. On the contrary they are widely consumed now a days in various forms of fast food (Junk food) along with Kapha increasing items like cheese that adds to the problem of CAD. Palm oil, sunflower oil or safflower

oil are fast replacing the traditionally used oils. The safflower oil being hot in property develops acidic condition in the body. Hence Ayurveda has advised in clear words that it should be used only in diabetes or other Kapha dominant conditions and not by healthy individuals, else it may cause hypertension. The increasing use of these oils could be one of the reasons for explosion of incidence of hypertension.

The Sesame oil, which is being used traditionally for thousands of years, is the best oil according to Ayurveda. In recent research it has been found to have omega 3 fatty acids that are beneficial to heart. Similarly many more other Ayurvedic concepts would come true on the basis of today's science in coming years.

In a study on hypertension I conducted, it was observed that majority of the patients were consuming very hot and spicy food, lot of garlic, salt, pickles, and tomatoes i.e. food dominant in salty, pungent and sour tastes. This type of food is acidic food according to Ayurveda, which causes hypertension. Majority of the patients

had chronic acidic peptic disease or some other problems related to digestion, which were neglected for years together. Patients never thought of the significance of this problem in relation to heart disease hence never volunteered to describe it. These were detected through interrogation and examination of the patients. Chronic sub-acute indigestion is one of the major factors responsible for heart disease. According to Ayurveda the metabolism in the tissues is dependant upon good digestive power of the stomach. Factors like untimely food, heavy meals, and lack of sleep, mental stress, grief, and unhappiness while eating impairs the digestion in the stomach (Aamaashaya).

Maatrayaa api abhyavahritam pathyam cha annam na jeeryati | Chintaa shoka bhaya krodha dukkhashaiya prajaagaraih ||

“Even the wholesome food also taken in proper quantity does not get digested due to anxiety, grief, fear, anger, uncomfortable bed and staying awake at night.”

This quote explains the importance of factors other than food in proper digestion e.g. happy mind, proper sleep, exercise and rest. Hence other factors stated above are equally important for healthy heart.

Mind

Charaka has described the importance of mind in cardiology as follows-

Tanmahat taa mahaamoolaah tat cha ojah parirakshitaa | Parihaaryaa visheshena manaso dukkha hetavah ||

“The person desiring to protect from adverse effects upon his heart, coronary blood vessels and contents thereof should particularly avoid all that causes mental afflictions”

Charak samhita sutra 30/13

The mental afflictions can be reduced by practicing Yoga, meditation, by self realization, spiritual experience, by discriminating between wholesome and unwholesome to the self, courage and by restraining the mind. (Maanaso dnyaan vidnyaana dhairya smriti samadhibih |) It has been observed that many patients who suffer from heart attack (Myocardial infarction – M.I.) or have under gone bypass surgery (CABG – coronary artery bypass graft) suffer from post MI depression and need counseling.

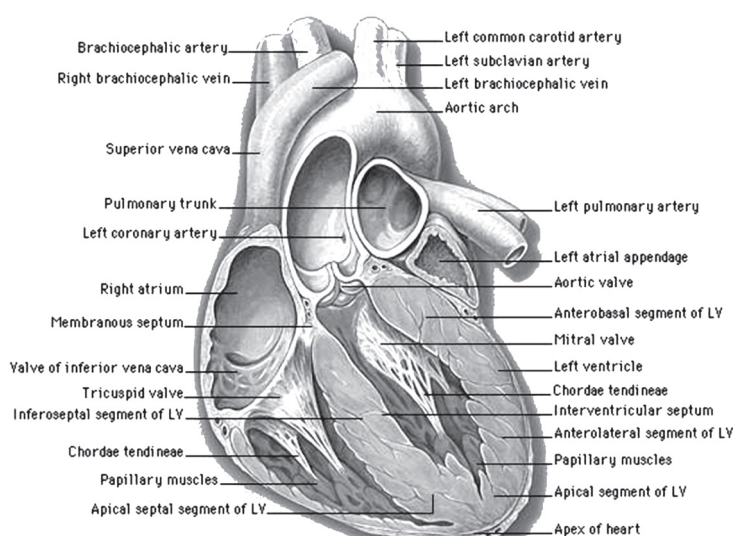
Those who receive psychological care improve and survive better than those who do not. Thus one should try to keep mind cheerful and away from afflictions.

Does CABG provide complete cure?

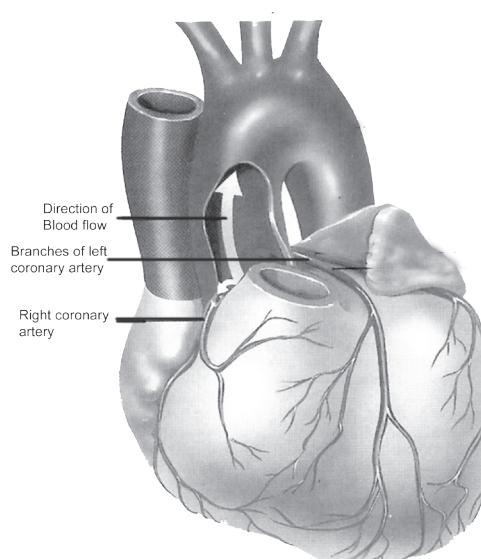
CABG and angioplasty are widely practised now days for symptomatic relief as well as for survival of the patient. However long term follow-up studies have demonstrated that the atherosclerotic plaques reappear after 5-6 postoperative years occluding the vessel again. Same is the story with angioplasty with stent implant. This susceptibility of CABG graft or angioplasty to the atherosclerotic process means it does not cure the disease. The deranged metabolism continues to form the plaques, which compel the patient to go for repeated bypass or angioplasty. Thus the CABG postpones but does not prevent the complications of coronary disease.

Unlike the current medical management in allopathy, which is designed for symptomatic relief by dilating the blood vessels or reducing the heart rate or by reducing the chances of platelets adhesions etc, the ayurvedic therapy is aimed to improve the metabolism that is the root cause of all the problem and to regress the atheromatus plaque (Srotoshodhana). It takes about one and half year to three years of regular Ayurvedic treatment to regress the block significantly that can be seen in follow-up angiography.

Heart Anatomy

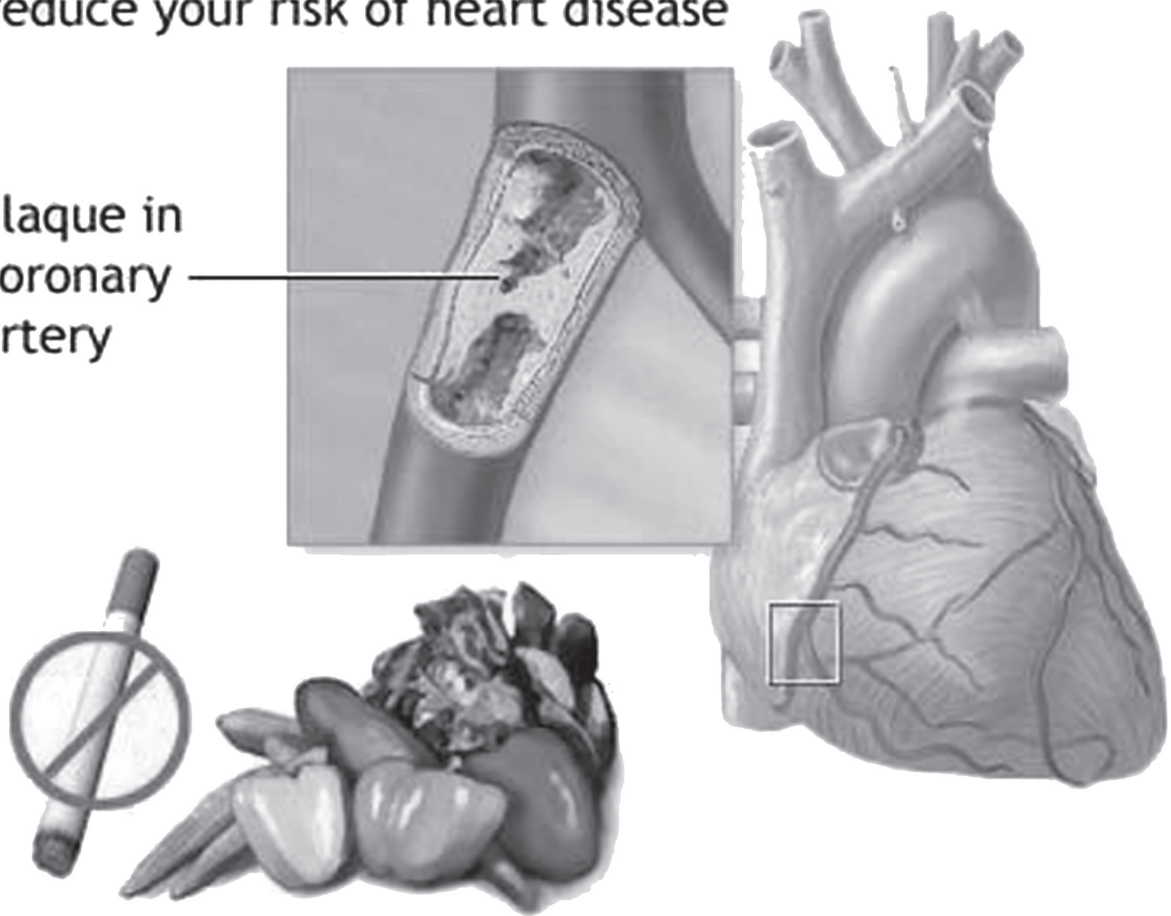


Normal Coronary Artery



Quitting smoking, a healthy diet and exercise may reduce your risk of heart disease

Plaque in coronary artery



Prevention of Heart Diseases

Usually this can be achieved in arteries that are 90% blocked i.e. in which at least minimal blood flow is there. No regression was observed in arteries that were completely blocked. However good collateral circulation had developed naturally bypassing the blockade. During this period of Ayurvedic management, patients are advised to follow lifestyle advocated by Ayurveda. To begin with the Ayurvedic management is given as an add-on therapy along with the routine modern medicines, thus it poses no threat to the patient. Patients usually withdraw allopathic medicine gradually one by one as they start feeling better with Ayurvedic therapy.

The Ayurvedic therapy given post CABG helps for early resettlement of the patient as well as to prevent the repeated blocking of the arteries.

Ayurvedic guidelines for healthy heart

- 1. Wakeup early in the morning – one hour before sunrise. This time is called as Brahma muhurta.** increases Kapha in body.
- 2. Proper exercise every day is essential. It not only maintains physical health but also keeps mind free of afflictions. It opens the arteries and veins in our body.**
- 3. Wholesome diet at proper timing and in proper quantity is the key for healthy life.**
- 4. Avoid day sleep, it makes the metabolism sluggish and**
- 5. A good sleep of at least six to seven hours is required to replenish the body and mind. Late night awakening creates too much dryness in the body. This results in the loss of required elasticity in vessels and their hardening.**
- 6. Keep your mind cheerful. Avoid stressful events or causes that affect the mind. Practise Pranayama and meditation to restrain the mind from all the afflictions.**

Recommended food



- All cereals
- Cabbage, brinjal, white pumpkin, snake gourd, sweetgourd, ridge gourd, bitter gourd.
- Turmeric, asafoetida, dill seeds, ajwain seeds, black salt, cumin.
- Grapes, grapefruit, pomegranate.
- Betel leaf, honey.
- Cow's milk is cooling and jeevaniya (supportive to life) and hence should be consumed every day.
- Sesame oil, pure ghee (prepared out of butter).
- Garlic and onion

Easy remedies

- Take honey 1tbsp. with water every morning.
- Harada soaked in honey every day keeps IHD away.
- Take ½ cup juice of white pumpkin (Petha or Kushmaanda) with ¼ tsp. turmeric powder every morning. It strengthens heart and arteries, lowers high blood pressure, improves circulation and cools your head.
- A glass of cabbage juice or grapefruit juice every day is recommended.
- Ginger garlic paste with honey and fresh turmeric juice helps to reduce cholesterol.
- Black raisins 10 – 15 soaked in water, every night help easy bowel movements next morning.

- In chest pain, take Ajwain with a pinch of asafoetida and black salt along with ginger juice.
- Inhalation of onion relieves breathlessness.

Avoid

Avoid over exertion, excess laughing, shouting, anger, drinking cold water, empty stomach and day sleep. High calory food, fried or oily food, food rich in fats e.g. oil, butter, oil seeds, animal fats etc; sweets, meat and other food items that are heavy for digestion, excess eating, cold or preserved food, cold items like ice cream, soft drinks; irregular food habits, anxiety and stress.

Ayurvedic therapy corrects the metabolism, which is the cause of arterial block. Good lifestyle recommended by Ayurveda helps in prevention of heart disease where as the Ayurveda therapy is useful in avoiding surgical intervention or the post surgical recurrence.

In a nutshell to prevent heart disease and maintain heart healthy, Ayurveda has laid stress on:

1. Achaara - Good conduct.
2. Ahaara - Wholesome diet.
3. Vyayama - Physical exercise.
4. Satvaavajaya - Restraint of mind from unwholesome objects to mind

Lastly, the promotive and protective guidelines mentioned by great Ayurvedic physician 'Charaka' are:

**Hridyam yat syat yat oujasyam
srotasam yat prasaadanam !
Tat tat sevyam prayatnen
prashamo dnyaanam eva cha !!**

Charaka sutra 30/14

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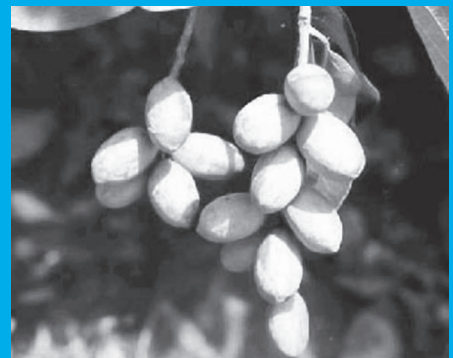
Useful medicinal plants



Haridra



Arjuna



Haritaki



Punarnava

Blue Babies

Geeta Ugru

In the year 2004, one of the instances that grabbed special media attention was when a 2-year-old girl from Pakistan, Baby Noor Fathima, flew down to Bangalore for her heart surgery and have the hole in her heart from which she was suffering since birth, surgically closed. The medical fraternity called her a "Blue Baby" and she had a VSD (Ventricular Septal Defect). Today, VSDs are the most common of all congenital cardiac defects. They account for about 25% of all congenital heart diseases, or about 2 in every 1000 live births.

Who are Blue Babies?

An infant born with a type of congenital heart disease wherein his/her skin appears to have a bluish tint is known as a "Blue Baby". This bluish tint is the result of circulation of poor oxygenated blood supply to the tissues and organs. Many different heart defects can cause this condition.

One of the heart defects that could result in blue babies is VSD. Human being heart has two upper chambers called "Auricle" and two lower called "Ventricle". Septum is a wall that separates the heart's left and right chambers. Septal defects are commonly known as a "hole" in the heart. Such defect between the heart's two lower chambers (the ventricles) is known as VSD.

The oxygenated blood from left ventricle shunts to right ventricle because the left ventricle's thick muscular walls contract with more force than the right ventricle. Due to physical as well as mental stress and strain, the shunt could get reversed wherein the deoxygenated blood moves from right ventricle to left ventricle. This reverse shunt makes the baby to turn blue.

Risk factors and causes of blue baby

Research is yet going on to understand what causes the congenital heart defects. A problem or use of certain sedatives or anesthetics during pregnancy could be an alert to a possible congenital defect.

Ayurveda considers congenital disorders as "Janmajaata" i.e. disorders since birth.

Treatment/Management

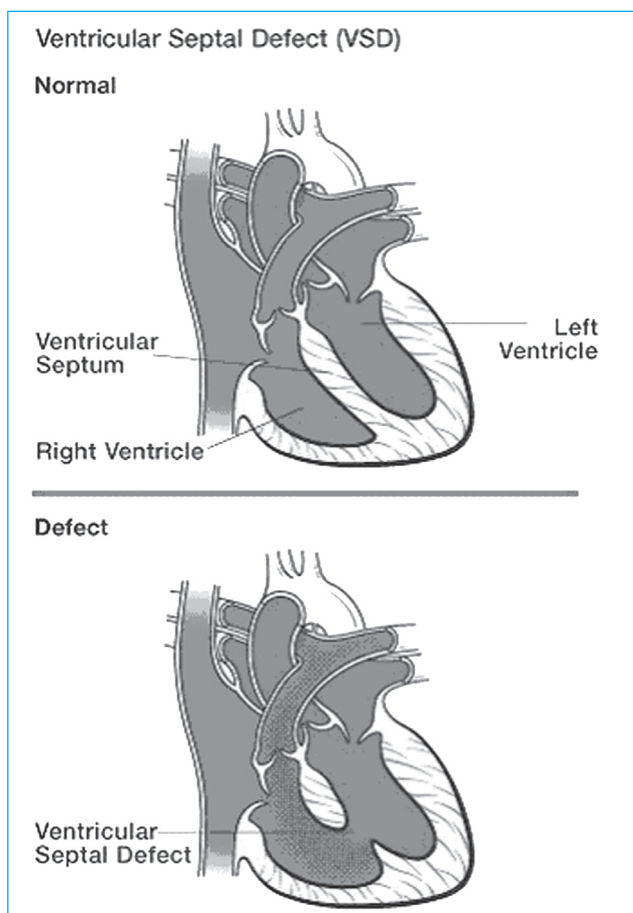
If the opening between the ventricles is small, it does not strain the heart. In that case, the only abnormal finding is a loud murmur.

No medication has been reported to close the hole.

Surgical Correction

Small VSD i.e. a small hole may not require surgical closure. They often close on their own in childhood or adolescence. But if the hole is large, surgical closure is recommended. This would prevent serious problems later.

Usually the defect is closed with a patch. Over time the normal heart lining tissue covers the patch, so it becomes a permanent part of the heart. Some defects can be sewn closed without a patch. Repairing a VSD restores the blood circulation to normal. The long-term outlook is good. After their VSD is closed, a cardiologist to make sure that the heart is working normally should examine patients regularly.



Complications

Repeated infections may result in Endocarditis (infection of the innermost layer of heart - "Endocardium"). Reverse shunt i.e. right to left may result in congestive cardiac failure.

Life Style

If a child's VSD is very small with no complications, there is no need to limit his/her activity. Consult cardiologist personally to determine if one needs to curb on activities. Emotional stress and anxiety make the heart work harder, which can make symptoms worse.

The following tips would help prevent complications during childhood and even in their adulthood

- Keep yourself and surroundings clean and maintain the cleanliness.
- Keep yourself on healthy diet so as to prevent obesity, hyper cholesterol level etc.
- Check with your doctor to determine what activity level is right for you.
- Learn to say no. Do not promise too much. Give yourself enough time to get things done.
- Think ahead about what may upset you and try to avoid it.
- Plan productive solutions to problems. Consult your

friends, family members to seek solution rather than worrying about them.

- Do not use smoking, drinking, overeating, drugs or coffee to cope with stress. These make things worse.
- Count to 10 before answering or responding when you feel angry.
- Learn to accept things you cannot change. You need not have to solve all of life's problems.

Ayurveda intervention

Palliative measures help a lot in preventing complications reported of VSD. One can choose a suitable tonic to keep oneself fit to fight against common ailments like fever, cough etc. Tonic made of Amlaki (*Phyllanthus emblica*) generally suits all. This would prevent complications like Endocarditis.

Yoga therapy like concentrating at the tip of the nose while breathing deeply in a relaxed position for about ten minutes everyday preferably early in the morning is very helpful. This helps in good oxygen supply to the body, keeps the mind calm and thus prevents the heart from working much harder, which can worsen the condition.

Certain asanas help to keep the muscles in tone. This would prevent complications like obesity, atherosclerotic changes etc.

Preparation of tonic made of Amla (*Phyllanthus emblica*) Ingredients

1. Amla (*Phyllanthus emblica*) fruits - 10 in number
2. Sugar candy powder - 10 gms
3. Long pepper powder - 5 gms
4. Cardamom powder - 5 gms
5. Ghee (clarified butter) - 50 gms

Method of preparation

Wash fresh 10 Amla (*Phyllanthus emblica*) fruits to remove dirt. Wipe them dry with a clean white cotton cloth. Grate them. Discard the seeds. Fry the grated fruit under moderate flame in 50 gms ghee (clarified butter) till it becomes soft enough to cut by ladle and the colour changes from bright green to dull green. Add the other ingredients so as to make a thick paste and mix well. Now pour this mixture in to a clean dry glass jar and stir continuously till a homogenous mixture is formed.

One teaspoon once a day (preferably in the morning) followed by a glass of milk is considered very healthy.

Note: The information provided regarding VSD in this article is only to create awareness among readers. Kindly consult your family Doctor or Cardiologist for specific recommendations.

Dr. Geeta Ugru is an Ayurvedic Physician working in the TSM Department of FRLHT.

Cholesterol is not that bad!

Mahesh Krishnamurthy

The greatest risk causing factor, doctors and the common man talk about these days is cholesterol. This word is used without understanding the use of cholesterol in our well being. This might be due to the highlighting of the ill effects of cholesterol without mentioning the usefulness of cholesterol to all.

We should understand that there is a little bit of cholesterol in all our body tissues and constitutes an important fraction of the blood combined with a protein complex of amino acids with other substances. Cholesterol is also required for the production of hormones and vitamins.

What is Cholesterol?

The word sterol literally means "solid alcohol." Since cholesterol was first isolated from gall stones it got this name meaning "solid alcohol from bile." Cholesterol is an oily organic compound insoluble in water but soluble in organic solvents.

Cholesterol is a component of cell membranes and furnishes the molecules for the synthesis of provitamin D, adrenocortical hormones like different steroids, sex hormones, and bile salts. Our body cannot function normally without this lipid compound.

Cholesterol concentration is high in the liver, the adrenal, the white and grey matter of the brain and the peripheral nerves. Liver meets the body needs of cholesterol regardless of dietary intake. Low-density lipoprotein or LDL intake through foods facilitates the synthesis of cholesterol.

What causes Cholesterol?

There are primarily two sources of cholesterol—endogenous and exogenous. Endogenous is that which is synthesized by the liver and small intestine while Exogenous is that which is acquired from food.

The endogenous synthesis of cholesterol is partly regulated by the dietary cholesterol intake. Even on cholesterol free diet, the body for its need, synthesizes cholesterol in the liver. The cholesterol absorption capacity of the intestines is limited to only 300 - 500 mg per day.

Hereditary factors, mental stress and lack of physical activity are examples of endogenous causes that could lead to LDL cholesterol buildup in the blood. Diet is an exogenous agent that could lead to LDL cholesterol. Nothing much can be done for hereditary factor, but a substantial reduction in the blood cholesterol level can be achieved safely through modifications in the way we eat, think and the lifestyle.

There are food items that lower cholesterol level and others, which increase serum (blood) cholesterol level. A high level of blood cholesterol is a major risk factor of coronary heart disease and the thickening of the arterial walls called arteriosclerosis. Cholesterol is also a major risk factor for ailments like cirrhosis of the liver, gall bladder stones, hypothyroidism, nephrotic syndrome, diabetes and some types of metabolic diseases.

Local traditions attribute a dull liver, sedentary activity and eating wrong food types to a build up in serum cholesterol.

Does diet alone control Serum Cholesterol?

Diet is only one of the prescriptions to reduce serum cholesterol. There are other regimens that one has to adapt so as to reduce serum cholesterol levels.

Today, doctors refrain from prescribing drugs that can reduce serum cholesterol, instead advice the patient to cultivate health regimen such as walking, exercises and Yoga. Though walking is usually a direct, off the shelf prescription to reduce serum cholesterol, it actually works as a body flexing activity which has to be followed by exercises.

Though research in Yoga has not studied its effects on lowering serum cholesterol, a regular practice of asanas and Pranayama has apparently proved useful in helping reduce serum cholesterol levels.

Fruits and vegetables are known to reduce serum cholesterol, as they are rich in pectin and cellulose, which prevent absorption of serum cholesterol through the intestines. Turmeric reduces absorption of serum cholesterol.

How does the practice of Yoga help?

A discipline of Asana (body posturing) and exercises combined with Pranayama packaged in a shell of Positive Mental Attitude will work well to reverse serum cholesterol. When a person goes through any practice, it is imperative that a person, who is not accustomed to performing any practice, will find it difficult to continue the practice through time. Hence, it would be better if two people can team up and practice together. Few simple practices are indicated below. Pranayama and breathing practices alike, can be practiced in groups.

Exercises



Walking – The practice of walking regularly helps build a sense of discipline in waking up early in the morning. Walking loosens the muscles in the body preparing it for other forms of exercises.

Passing the ball – This is one of the exercises that requires co-ordination and in process of maintaining this co-ordination; one forgets the amount of time and effort he or she has spent. This is an excellent exercise for a couple to practice.

Breathing

Our Lungs are one of the important organs that play the role of intake of fresh air, exchange of gases and expelling carbon-di-oxide. To fill in the lungs, one needs to breathe at least 5 litres of air, while the average intake of air is about 350 ml. This deficiency in the intake of air can be partially met by yogic breathing.

Posture - You can sit on the ground cross-legged or on a chair. The spine must be erect. This can be the posture for all breathing practices including Pranayama.

Tucking the abdomen - For a start, breathe in normally and tuck the abdomen in while breathing out. You will realise that it happens the other way round. This is normal in most of us.

If you are confused on how to go about this technique, try placing a hand on the abdomen while you breathe. This way,

you can understand what happens to the chest and abdomen when you breathe.

Breathing from the chest: Breathe in and out of the chest only. This means, when you breathe in, puff up your chest and when breathe out, let the chest sink in. During this breathing cycle, the movement of the abdomen ceases.

Yogic Breathing - Yogic breathing involves a complete breath. Here, the first and second stages are practiced together while breathing. Inhale and puff up the chest. Continue to breathe till the chest fills up completely and the abdomen protrudes slightly. Exhale and tuck the abdomen in and empty the lower lobes of the lungs first and then let the chest sink in slowly.

Breathing





Ujjayi Pranayama

Pranayama

Pranayama is a combination of two words, Prana – that which flows from somewhere inside our body and pervades through the body and keeps us alive. Ayama means to stretch or extend. From common man's understanding, Pranayama could simply mean extending the breath. There are Pranayama practices that can heat the body and cool as well. There are several other practices through which various benefits can be obtained.

Surya Anuloma Pranayama – As the name suggests, Surya or the Sun is associated with heat. This Pranayama is performed with an intended therapeutic use of heating the body. This process of heating the body is performed so as to burn fat cells in the body.

Close the left nostril with the ring finger and the little finger. Now close half the right nostril at the bridge of the nostril. Now breathe in from the right nostril in a controlled manner. Adapt the yogic breathing technique. When you have inhaled completely, close the right nostril and close half the left nostril at the bridge and exhale in a controlled manner. This is Surya Anuloma Pranayama.

Nadi Shodhana Pranayama – Having performed Surya Anuloma Pranayama, it is important that you balance the body and the mind. Nadi Shodhana Pranayama holds good to achieve just that. This practice has been covered in detail in the Vol. 8 Issue 6, 2004 Heritage Amruth.

Ujjayi Pranayama – The word Ujjayi is derived from the Sanskrit word Ujji which means to win over or to conquer. The practice of Ujjayi is intended to do just that-conquer the mind. The practice of manasika japa (mental repetition) with breathing is usually associated with Ujjayi Pranayama. To inhale, lift the head up then exhale and lower the head and lock the chin in such a manner as to constrict the wind pipe slightly. This posture is called as a bandha or a lock and the name of this lock is Jalandhara Bandha.

Maintaining the Jalandhara Bandha, breathe in and out with awareness on the throat. The constriction will initially produce a snoring kind of sound. With constant practice,

this will smoothen out to a hiss. This Pranayama technique extends the breathing capacity considerably. This is Ujjayi Pranayama.

There are a few variations of Ujjayi Pranayama like Anuloma, Viloma and Pratiloma Ujjayi. They have varied therapeutic uses and are not being discussed here.

Illustration from previous issue

Does one type of practice help everyone?

Like Ayurveda and Homeopathy, Yoga also believes that each individual is a total being and one specimen does not match the other. Hence, a formal and complete diagnosis is required and a practice that suits an individual is recommended.

There are so many people with eye disorders who require a pair of spectacles and go to an ophthalmologist. What would happen if he gave the same powered glasses to all the patients? Only that patient who needs the specific powered glass will be comfortable, while all the others would face some or the other type of discomfort which could even worsen their problem.

Yoga is similar to this. If you have a problem, then the solution suggested will only solve your problem. Serum Cholesterol or diabetes or hypertension, the causes are aplenty. So are the solutions. Each individual has to be looked into separately, diagnosed and analysed and then treated separately.

To conclude, I would say that all the above-mentioned practices do have a positive effect as far as reversing cholesterol level in the blood. However, it is also important to note at the same time that you have to be physically and mentally active and free of emotional disturbance which will itself go a long way as a promotive and curative lifestyle. Cholesterol or no cholesterol, do not stop your health regimen. If you do not have a health regimen yet, then it is time you got yourself one. Schedule some time for your physical and mental health. You keep it going and it will keep you happy.

Maresh Krishnamurthy is a Yoga Researcher at FRLHT.

High on pressure

Shilpa Naveen

I remember one of my uncles, all of fifty-two is used to regularly pop up three to four pills every day along with his meals. He has been a victim of high blood pressure since eleven years and the pills have become a part of his daily routine. This rise in the arterial pressure or blood pressure is probably the most important public health problem in the developed as well as the developing countries today. Hypertension or high blood pressure is a common health condition, asymptomatic, readily detectable, easily treatable and often leads to lethal complications if left untreated.

What is High Blood Pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of arteries. It is a finding recorded by a sphygmomanometer. The average normal blood pressure is 120/80 mm of mercury ranging up to 140/90. A persistent reading above 140/90 indicates hypertension. Having blood pressure beyond 140 (systolic) and 90 (diastolic) is not normal. But to say someone is hypertensive, the blood pressure has to be either above 160 (systolic) and 95 (diastolic). Often systolic blood pressure runs as high as 180 or more. Blood pressure can rise up to 280 in the manometer. This is dangerous and lowering it is essential. The more difficulty the blood has in flowing, the higher the number will be.

Hypertension is not a disease and has no characteristic symptom or manifestation of its own but is a symptom of many diseases as well as a root cause of cardiac disorders. High blood pressure is dangerous because it

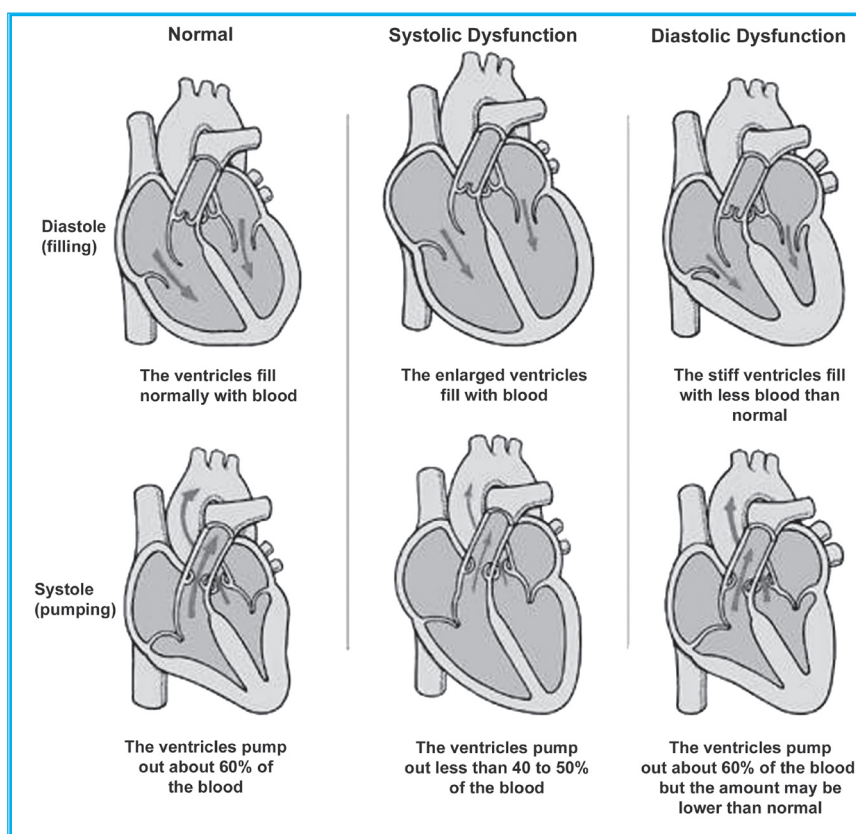
makes the heart work harder to pump blood to the body and it contributes to hardening of the arteries.

Quite often high BP goes unrecognized. It is a silent killer and not related to nervous tension. A calm person may also have high BP. It depends on the attitude and lifestyle. High blood pressure is one of the most significant risk factors for cardiovascular disease, and a major contributor to heart failure, renal failure and stroke. Despite this, both physicians and patients have often neglected its detection and treatment. Three factors have accounted for this

- The causes of the disease are poorly understood
- The treatment can be life long
- Symptoms do not usually manifest until complications develop.

What causes Hypertension?

Ayurveda mentions rasavruddhi (increased body fluids), raktavruddhi (increased blood volume) and disturbance in vyaan vayu (represented by autonomic nervous system) as reasons of hypertension.



Dietic factors:

- Oily and fried food items
- Overeating
- Frozen food

Psychological factors:

- Worrying, stress
- Excessive mental work

Activity:

- Inactivity
- Lack of exercise
- Sleep during daytime
- Excessive exertion

Drug induced:

- Long time intake of some drugs e.g. long term consumption of oral contraceptives develops hypertension

Symptoms of hypertension

One of the cruel facts of hypertension is that it exhibits no distinctive symptoms. This is why it is important to have one's blood pressure checked regularly. Serious cases of hypertension, which happen infrequently, may produce the following symptoms:

- Heaviness in head/ headaches
- Palpitations
- Discomfort in chest
- Sweating attacks
- Blackouts or sparks flying before the eyes
- Uneasy feeling towards crowds and noise
- Trembling hands and legs
- Fainting / giddiness

Some of these symptoms may not be due to hypertension itself.

Ayurvedic approach towards hypertension

Ayurveda seeks to restore balance of the body, not by making an enemy of disease, but by helping the body to naturally regain its state of lost equilibrium. It is necessary to make a choice: either take prescription medications and suffer their far-reaching side effects, or adopt a healthier lifestyle. Drugs may treat one disease, but at the same time, they often create myriad others. Ayurveda, on the other hand, incorporates

nutrition, exercise, herbal supplements and stress reduction techniques to arrive, ultimately, at better health.

Ayurveda tries to create health emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically. Herein, balance is the key and Ayurveda treats the whole person in order to remove the imbalance that has created the disease. Thus, when treating hypertension, it seeks not just to reduce elevated blood pressure, but also to restore the body to its natural, healthy equilibrium.

Nutrition

It is the key towards controlling high blood pressure.

Diet to be included

- Cereals: Barley, ragi, red rice, wheat
- Pulses: Moong (green gram), masoor (lentil), matki
- Vegetables: Radish, raw cabbage, bitter gourd, spinach, pumpkin, drumstick, carrot, beans, green leafy vegetables
- Fruits: Amalaki (gooseberry), watermelons, orange, banana, black grapes, pomegranate, almonds
- Garlic has been shown to reduce blood pressure

It has been shown to decrease systolic pressure by 20-30 mm Hg, and diastolic pressure by 10-20 mm Hg in hypertensives.

Psychological

As psychosomatic factors constitute a major cause in majority of the cases, stress reduction techniques like meditation, breathing exercises and yoga are important aspects of Ayurveda, and can be used in conjunction with other therapies to effectively treat hypertension.



Garlic

Exercises

- Mild exercises like walking helps in various ways. It burns calories, relieves mental stress and strengthens the heart.
- Lose weight- the more the body weight, the higher is the BP.

Avoid

- Oily and fried food items
- Excess intake of salt
- Yogurt
- Excess of ghee
- Meat, frozen food articles
- Alcohol, tea, coffee
- Smoking
- Incompatible diet
- Vigorous exercise

Drugs taken

- Goksura (*Tribulus terrestris*)- half teaspoon
- Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*)- half teaspoon
- Shunti (Dry ginger)- one-fourth teaspoon

Prepare decoction of the above drugs. It has to be taken early morning on empty stomach.

Effect

It improves the tone of the cardiac muscles and arteries by improving the elasticity of the muscles and thereby maintaining the blood pressure.

Routine

Persons above 40 years of age, those with family history of hypertension and persons suffering from symptoms listed above need to check their BP at least once in six months.

Home Remedies

- Take a teaspoon of onion juice mixed with a teaspoon of honey once a day for 1-2 weeks.
- Eat 1 Papaya on an empty stomach daily for a month. Do not eat anything after for about 2 hours.
- Meat and egg cause blood pressure to rise more than any other food. Avoid meat, sugar, tea, coffee, pickles, and fried food. Eat Garlic and Amla.
- Drink 8-12 glass of water daily.

NOTE: Do not discontinue the medicines without the advice of the physician.

Dr. Shilpa Naveen is an Ayurvedic Physician working in the TSM department of FRLHT.

Eating for a healthy heart



Tabassum Ishrath Fathima

If you are concerned about your heart, learn to eat a healthy diet first. Diet is one thing, which affects your heart's health. Adopting simple changes in your daily eating habits will not only make you feel better but will also improve your over all health.

In today's lifestyle it is hard to change one's diet, particularly when one is too busy and often does not have time for three healthy, home cooked meals a day. While the thought of changing one's diet might be daunting, it is really confusing to know what to eat, how much to eat, what type of fats to eat, what type of fats to avoid, how much salt to use.

If you are a software professional or from a profession that confines you to your desk with no physical activities then you tend to develop unhealthy eating habits. Beware! To keep yourself and your heart healthy, plan a proper diet intake, now! Too much of fats and cholesterol can block your arteries.

Tips for a Healthy Heart

- Choose a diet which is moderate in total fat
- Choose the food, which is low in saturated fats; as saturated fats raise LDL (Low Density Lipid - bad cholesterol) level. Saturated fats are commonly found in meat, poultry, whole-milk dairy products and in tropical oils like palm oil, coconut etc. Most vegetable oils are low in saturated fats. Foods, which are low in saturated fats, include fruits, vegetables, whole grain food and low fat dairy products.
- Select the foodstuffs, which are low in cholesterol and to reduce dietary cholesterol, eat fruits, vegetables, greens, whole grains, low fat or non-fat dairy products.
- If you are already having a high blood pressure as well as high blood cholesterol it is important to cut down the intake of salt. Even if you do not have high blood pressure or cholesterol, try to have no more than 2,400 milligrams of Sodium or salt a day. You can choose low sodium foods, which will also help you to lower your cholesterol level.

- At the same time check out your body weight too. It is not uncommon for the over weight people to have high blood cholesterol than people who are not over weight. When you reduce the fat in your diet, you cut down not only on cholesterol and saturated fat, but on calories as well. This will help you to lose weight and improve your blood cholesterol, both of which will reduce the risk of heart diseases.

- Regular exercise is the most important thing you can do, which will help you to lower your cholesterol, blood pressure and improve your over all health. Many people think that certain diseases are inevitable with age, however one can reduce the chance of heart diseases, if some sort of exercise is done every day simultaneously keeping track of one's diet.

Dietary approach

Include the following in your diet:

1. Grains and grain products: Whole wheat bread can be included in the daily servings as; these are the major sources of energy and fibre.
2. Vegetables like carrots, broccoli, spinach, greens and others can be included in the diet, which are rich source of potassium, magnesium and fibre.
3. Fruits should be included in the diet as they are major source of Potassium, magnesium and fibre.
4. Low fat dairy products: Fat free or low fat milk, fat free butter milk, low fat regular or frozen yogurt, fat free or low fat cheese- these are the major sources of calcium and proteins- that tone up the heart muscles.
5. Nuts, seeds and dry beans- are a rich source of energy, Magnesium, potassium, protein and fibres – that strengthen the muscles.

Before you plan any diet for your self, consult your physician, who can help you planning your diet in a systematic way.

Some recipes for healthy heart



Butter milk curry (Kadhi)

- 2 1/2-cup fresh buttermilk
- 3-1/2 cups water
- 1/4 cup chickpea (chana)
- 1- Onion
- Garlic paste- 1 tsp
- Coriander leaves-2tsp
- Curry leaves- 2 tsp
- 2 tsp- melted butter
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 2 to 3 cloves
- Cinnamon stick –1 inch long
- Chilli powder
- Salt to taste

Take onion, coriander, and chickpeas and grind them to a paste. Heat butter in a pan, add mustard seeds, clove, cinnamon and curry leaves then add turmeric and chilli powder. Add the prepared paste, heat for a while and then add buttermilk and salt to taste, heat this over a medium flame, stir constantly to avoid overflowing, until the mixture becomes slightly thick. Serve it warm.

Iron-rich breakfast drink

- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup dried apricot or peaches
- 1-cup water
- 1/8 tsp dry ginger (for Kapha only)

Soak raisins and dried fruits overnight in water. Next morning blend soaked fruits and water in a blender. People with Kapha constitution need to garnish it with a pinch of ginger to balance the drink for them.

Moong dal with beans

- 1-cup moong dal
- 4-1/2 cups water
- 1 tsp sunflower oil
- 1/2 tsp mustard seeds
- 3-4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/4 hot green chillies (optional, good for Kapha)
- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 200 gms beans, chopped

Take 1 tsp oil in a pressure cooker, add chopped onion, stir well until golden brown, add turmeric, chilli, finely chopped garlic and then add moong dal, and salt to taste After 2-3 minutes add water and pressure cook it for 15 minutes.

Boil beans separately and after the moong dal is cooked add the boiled beans to it. Boil for another 5-10 minutes over the medium heat. Serve hot with chappatis.

Date shake

- 6 dates, pitted
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend it as a shake. This shake is sweet and has a cooling effect. Vaata constitution people can add a pinch of cardamom or ground cloves for easy digestion.

Tabassum Ishrath Fathima is a Research Scholar working in the TSM Department of FRLHT.



Raami Shaami enthralled by elegant lotus

T. S. Suma

Raami was equally nervous and excited! On the occasion of the Independence Day, her class teacher had asked her to deliver a speech on "The National Flower". Shaami on the other hand was to speak on "The National Flag". "I want to make my speech interesting, and I want to have a roaring applause which will make me feel good", said Raami with her eyes already sparkling while imagining the sound of the claps. "That's the spirit of a winner, dream for the best and then work towards the best", chipped in their father who overheard the girl's conversation in the next room.

"Oh, thank you Appa! But how I go about it? I do not want to include the usual boring stuff, Lotus is our National Flower, it is pink or white in colour, and it is found in water and blah blah blah!" said Raami making a funny face, seeing which everyone burst out in a laughter. Ten minutes later, when the excitement subsided down, Raami was still thinking. "What should I do? Whom should I go to? Who will give me a brilliant idea? Who is an expert storyteller and knows a lot of interesting things? Oh yes! Now I know! How could I ever forget our favourite Ravi Uncle! Yes! Yes! He is the one I should go to!" said Raami jumping in the room joyously. Everyone immediately mooted the idea and

Raami darted towards the telephone instrument to call up Ravi Uncle.

"Hello! hello! Hello! Why don't you speak? Why are you mewing like a cat?" screamed Ravi Uncle on phone and then he recognized the familiar giggle. "You naughty girl, why do you always tease your Uncle? To which Raami then replied, "it's with you only Ravi Uncle that we can take such liberties. So how are you? What are you doing now? I know it is a Saturday today, so you must be relaxing, listening to music, no! Have you had your breakfast? What did you eat? Are you free now? Can we come down?....." and the barrage of questions went on, when Ravi Uncle had to stop Raami, "Wait! Allow me also to speak! Yeah, I can very well read the excitement in your voice, so tell me what's up? But please, one by one! Do not run like a train".

"Uncle, I want your help, I have to prepare an interesting talk on Lotus plant which I have to deliver in my school assembly on Independence Day, so I am coming over to your house now, and also we will be having our lunch with you, something really yum!" stated Raami in a matter of fact tone. "Ok! Ok! I got your point, but just look outside, the weather is so good, the birds are chirping and singing, would you really like to sit at home and waste

such a beautiful day? Let me make a suggestion, why not we all have an outing today?"

"Uncle, you are super, super sweet!" squealed Raami in delight. "Where shall we go?" "Umm... We can go to the Botanical Gardens, a Flower Show also is going on there, you all can have a good time admiring the flowers and in the meantime I can tell you something about Lotus also", answered Ravi Uncle. So the deal was struck, the twins got ready in a jiffy and off they were to their uncle's place and from there on, to the Lalbagh Botanical Gardens.

Tourists and people had thronged the gardens to have a look at the beautiful flowers. It was a visual treat for all. After a while, Ravi Uncle guided the children towards the lake. They found reeds, colocasias, grasses and trees growing along the lake. In the centre, they saw, bluish pink water lilies, elegant pink and white lotus flowers. Raami exclaimed, "Wow! Ravi Uncle, I want lotus. Please get me some flowers... they look so striking and beautiful. I have never touched them. I only dream about them". She pleaded and Ravi Uncle smiled at her and said, "Lets see! But how do we go there?"

They continued walking around the lake. There were people collecting fodder grass and plants from the

lake. They had teppa, a small round boat. Ravi Uncle approached them and requested them to fetch a few lotus plants with flower and some lotus seeds. One of them reluctantly plucked a plant and came out. Raami, eagerly grabbed the plant and stared at it keenly. The elegant flower seemed to have a hypnotic spell on her. She remembered her lessons about the elegant lotus flower. She caressed her cheeks with the cool and soft flower. "Wow, it is so soft, how I wish my cheeks were as soft as lotus petals".

Raami opened the petals to peep in to the centre of the flower. As she opened layers of petals, a sweet fragrance just engulfed all over. In the centre, there were plenty of stamens with powdery pollen. She sniffed at them and her nose tip got coated with yellow powder. Shaami laughed at her clapped her hands and again said, "Look you are a joker.... Hi... hii... haa haaa...". Raami did not bother much and she also joined in, "Yes, yes, I am a joker, I have a yellow nose, ha haha.....Achu achu....." and she sneezed.

Shaami, took the plant from Raami. She was amused with the huge circular leaf and the long stalk. Soon, it started drizzling. Every body started rushing to stand in the shelter. Shaami held the leaf like an umbrella and started walking. Raami screamed and said, "Hey look, the leaf does not get wet. See, the water is sliding down!" The twins tried holding water in the shallow leaf but all their attempts were in vain. Water drops just slid down the leaf. They touched the leaf surface and felt its shiny and smooth surface. Raami turned to her uncle and asked him, "Ravi uncle, why does lotus leaf not hold any water, it just slides away"? "That is because the leaf has a sort of wax polish! So nothing stays", replied their uncle. Well, that was an interesting piece of information. Raami soon made a mental note of it.

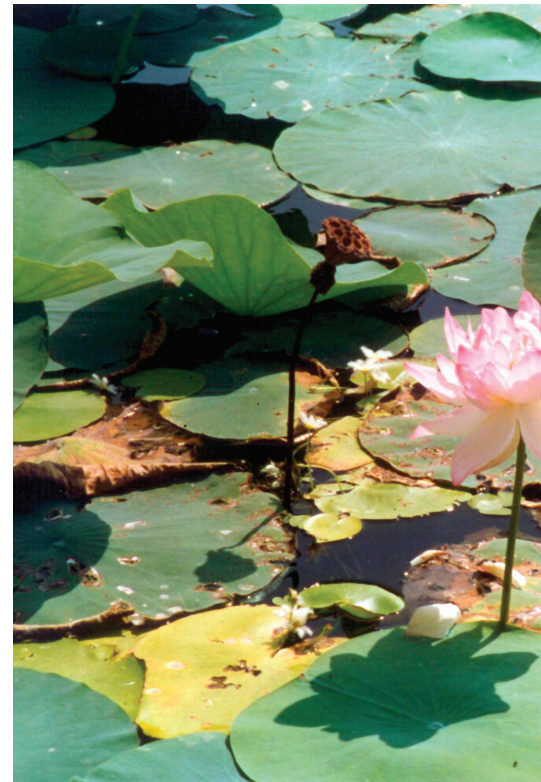
Shaami then questioned her uncle, "how does the lotus plant float on water?" Amazed at her curiosity her uncle explained, "Look, dear, the Lotus plant has sort of floaters in its leaf and flower stalks. Take that leaf, lets look at the stalk". Raami closely observed the stalk, which resembled this fat stick with pricks on its surface. "Ouch!!" Ravi uncle said, "Lets break it". Pat!

Pat! Raami quickly looked at the broken stalk section and said "hey Shaami look there is a wheel with spokes!" Shaami came eagerly to see the wheels and asked Ravi uncle, "what are these wheels for"? "These helps in sending oxygen to the roots from leaves and keep the plant floating on the water surface", replied their uncle.

"Now, do you want to know more about lotus?" asked Ravi Uncle, to which both shrieked in unison, "Yes"! He started, "The Lotus plant is there on this earth since 160 million years. This is one plant, which has not undergone many changes. It loves to live on still water. Did you observe, its leaves are circular and float on the water, but as they mature they become more like an inverted cone and are held about the surface. In the center of the flower, there is a strange receptacle whose circular holes hold the seeds. These seeds can be eaten like groundnuts! Want to try them?" Raami and Shaami stretched their hands for the yummy seeds. As they walked, their uncle said, when he had gone to Kashmir, he saw a lake full of lotus. And there he ate pickles made of lotus stalk. They were just superb!!

"In Delhi, there is a famous "lotus temple" built by the Bahai community, which has no form to worship. The temple looks like a Lotus flower from outside. In Indian mythology, Brahma, the creator of universe appeared from the lotus and created the universe. In the famous story during "Amruthmanthan" when the ocean of milk was churned by the Devas and Asuras, Goddess Lakshmi emerged from the waves with the "lotus" in her hand. This is the reason why she is always depicted sitting on a lotus or with a lotus flower in her hand". As they walked, their uncle told them more about the fascinating lotus. Raami now had a lot of material to include in her talk. She could already hear her schoolmates clapping for her.....

My
Botanical name:
Nelumbo
nucifera Gaertn.





My local names:

Assam - Podum
Bengali - Padma
English - Sacred Lotus, Indian Lotus, Chinese Water Lily
Gujarati - Suriyakamal
Hindi - Kanwal, Kamal
Kannada - Kamala, Tavaregadde
Kashmir - Pamposh
Khasi - Soh-Lapudong
Malayalam - Thamara, Senthamara
Marathi - Kamal
Mundari - Salukid Ba, Kombol Ba
Oriya - Padam
Punjab - Kanwal, Pamposh
Sanskrit - Ambuja, Padma, Pankaja, Kamala
Tamil - Ambal, Thamarai
Telugu - Kalung, Erra-Tamara

How do I look?

I am a beautiful floating aquatic herb with succulent, creeping roots spreading all over. My leaves are round, very large, ranging from 60-90 cm or more in diameter. My floating leaves are shiny and wax coated. Hence, the water slips and slides away. I have a long, round, leaf stalk, which is more or less smooth and occasionally with minute prickles. My flowers are large, strikingly beautiful either white or rosy. My fruit is large, spongy and funnel shaped. My fruits measure about 5-10 cm in diameter, with many oval shaped seeds.

Where can you see me grow?

You can see me growing in almost all parts of our country and other parts of the world too. I grow in water puddle, murky water, fresh water ponds, jheels etc. I am often cultivated for my elegant sweet scented flowers in gardens, parks etc.

My Botanical family:
Nymphaeaceae
(Water lily family)

How to grow?

You can grow me by planting small pieces of rhizomes. I can also be grown using the seeds.

What are my uses?

- o My flower is the National flower of India.
- o I am gardeners' pride. I am seen growing in gardens for my elegant flowers and large foliage.
- o In India, young leaves, petioles, flowers, roots, seeds of the plant are eaten as vegetables. White and red colored stout roots are sold as vegetable (Kamal-kakadi, bhen).
- o Fresh roots are eaten after roasting, while dried slices are used in curry/ fried as chips; they are also pickled.
- o A kind of porridge is prepared from fleshy roots which is fragrant, sweet and nutritious tonic. Porridge is also given to children in cases of diarrhea, dysentery and stomach upset.
- o Root paste is applied externally for ringworm and skin diseases.
- o Sherbet prepared from the plant is used as a cooling agent.
- o Entire plant is also used in smallpox.
- o The milky viscid juice of leaf and flower stalks is used in diarrhoea.
- o Flowers are used as salve, and checks vomiting.
- o The flowers are used as ornament and as offering in temples.
- o Flowers were once used as the source of perfume.

In Ayurvedic medicine, my uses are plenty

- o Stem is used as diuretic, de-worming agent, stops vomiting, used to treat skin disorders and general tonic.
- o Roots are useful in skin disease, dysentery, diarrhea, cough, small pox. Leaves are useful for burning sensation, fever, skin diseases.
- o Flowers are useful as heart tonic, body cooling, diarrhea, fever, liver disorders, and skin disorders.
- o Stamens are useful in diarrhea, inflammation.
- o Fruits and seeds are used as coolant, diuretic, tonic, vomiting, burning sensation, skin diseases.

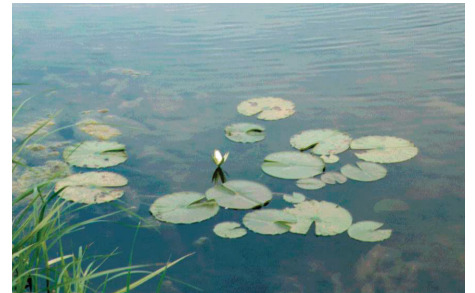
My beautiful water flower is used as offerings and considered to be divine.



Flower



Fruit



Habitat

Crossword

May - June 2005

Story line: T.S. Suma
Crossword: T.S. Suma & Amita Kaushal

Across

- 1. Fat Cells (5)
- 5. Sacred flowers, used as heart care plant in Ayurveda (5)
- 8. Thin pipe that carries pure blood from the heart to various parts of the body (6)
- 9. The heart contracts and expands like a? (4)
- 10. Blood vessels that carry blood to the heart (5)
- 11. A chamber of heart which pumps blood to arteries (9)
- 13. Nobel prize winners Watson and Crick discovered its 3-dimensional structure (3)
- 14. Mental or emotional strain (6)
- 15. The iron compound that carries oxygen in the blood (11)

Down

- 2. The rate at which heart beats (5)
- 3. Sound of heart (6)
- 4. The artery that supplies blood to the head and neck region (7)
- 6. Excess of fats causes heart attack (9)
- 7. Function of heart (11)
- 12. The largest artery that carries blood from the left ventricle (5)

		1		2						3			
		4		5				6					
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Crossword Answers for May-June 2005

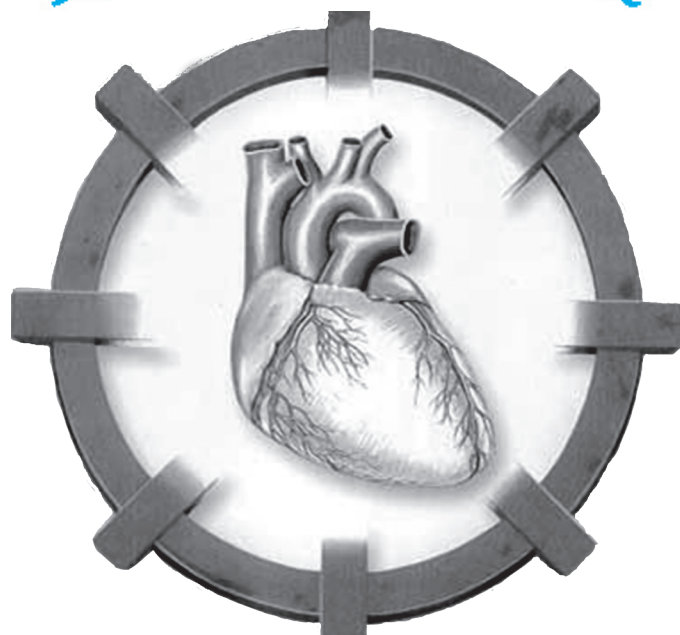
ACROSS

- 2. Polio
- 4. Abhimanyu
- 5. Midwife
- 7. Male
- 11. Fraternal
- 12. Navel
- 13. Pregnant

DOWN

- 1. Placenta
- 2. Progesterone
- 3. Anaemia
- 6. Infant
- 8. Labour
- 9. Morning
- 10. Date
- 11. Foetus

Healthy Heart



The Ayurvedic Way ...!

M K Vivek Sanker

Ischaemic Heart Disease

Atherosclerosis (or clogging of the coronary artery with fat (cholesterol) plaques) is the most important cause for IHD. It (Atherosclerosis) happens due to a combination of many reasons like a sedentary life style with minimal physical exercise, fat rich diet, age, smoking, alcohol, genetic predisposition and mental factors like anger, stress and hostility.

Cardiovascular disease CVD

Specifically coronary artery disease (CAD) – is a large and growing problem in low and middle income populations. Several components of secondary prevention, including changes in lifestyle and risk factor modification, can substantially reduce the risk of recurrent CVD.

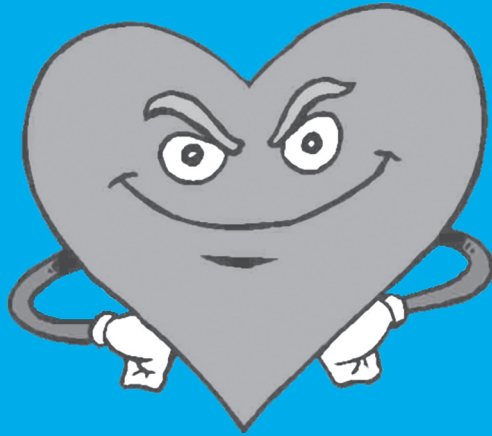
Today there are numerous distinct disorders that relate to heart. These include arteriosclerosis and atherosclerosis, angina, heart attack, and heart failure, arrhythmias, myocarditis, cardiomyopathy, heart murmurs, rheumatic heart disease, valvular disease, mitral valve prolapse and high blood pressure or hypertension.

Our heart is probably the most vital organ of the human body that embodies life and the cessation of its function symbolizes the end of life. The heart is also the most efficient human organ, which in a normal life time will faithfully beat more than 2.5 billion times driving blood through almost 1,00,000 km of blood vessels, to nourish each and every cell in our body. It is strange but true that the heart cannot derive any nourishment such as oxygen; from the blood flowing through it because the inner layer covering the heart 'the endocardium' is liquid proof or liquid tight. Hence

the heart has its own network of specialized arteries called coronary arteries designed to bring oxygenated blood to the heart muscle.

Heart diseases

For the heart to function efficiently over such a long period of time it is richly supplied by blood vessels to ensure that the heart cells never have a shortage of oxygen. However due to multiple reasons these arteries get blocked partially or completely hampering the oxygen supply to the heart muscle. When this is complete, it results in the death of the heart muscle and that part of the heart ceases to function leading to a condition commonly known as 'heart attack'. This diseased condition arising due to insufficient oxygen supply to the heart muscle is named as Ischaemic Heart Disease and the pathology in the coronary artery that leads to this condition is broadly grouped as the Coronary Artery Disease.



Amazing Heart Facts

- Your heart is about the same size as your fist.
- An average adult body contains about five quarts of blood.
- All the blood vessels in the body joined end to end would stretch 62,000 miles or two and a half times around the earth.
- The heart circulates the body's blood supply about 1,000 times each day.
- The heart pumps the equivalent of 5,000 to 6,000 quarts of blood each day.

Prevention of heart diseases

The approach of Ayurveda and modern medicine to heart disease are quite dissimilar and can possibly be depicted thus:

"Ayurveda is like a man with a signpost warning that there is a deep valley ahead urging people to keep away from it while contemporary medicine on the other hand is like the one with an ambulance deep down the valley."

According to Acharya Charaka:
Abadha varjanam nithyam Swastha vritta anuvartanam Utpanna aarti vighatascha marmanaam paripalanam || Charaka Trimarma Chikitsa

This implies that the treatment of MARMA (the three vital points of the body including the heart) revolves around three things:

- **Abadha varjanam nithyam:** Always abstaining from the causes of disease.
- **Swastha vritta anuvartanam:** Adhering to a healthy life style.
- **Aarti vighata:** Taking medicines that will counter the problem.

Ayurveda has a very simple yet extremely effective management approach to Heart Diseases. It says that the food one consumes gets converted to a substance called rasa, which goes to the heart and from there gets circulated throughout the body with the help of an entity called vyana vayu. Heart disease is the result of impairment in this mechanism and the root cause

for this is the rasa dushti (formation of faulty rasa from the ahara). Hence the prevention of heart disease in Ayurveda is nothing but ensuring that the rasa is properly formed and its circulation throughout the body especially the heart is not hampered.

'Moderation' is the Ayurvedic mantra to a healthy heart; it advocates moderation in all facets of Human activity and Ayurvedic preventive measures can be broadly put under the following headings:

Preventive measures relating to the ahara (food)

Ayurveda has a very elaborate description regarding the type of food to be consumed, its processing and also the method of its intake. There is a very strong interrelation between this and health in general and heart in particular.

The following are specifically beneficial: Cabbage, Drumstick, Ash gourd, Brinjal, Onion, Soya, Ripe Mango, Tender coconut, Citrus fruits (lemon, orange etc), Pomegranate, leafy vegetables, almonds, dates (fresh and dried) and honey.



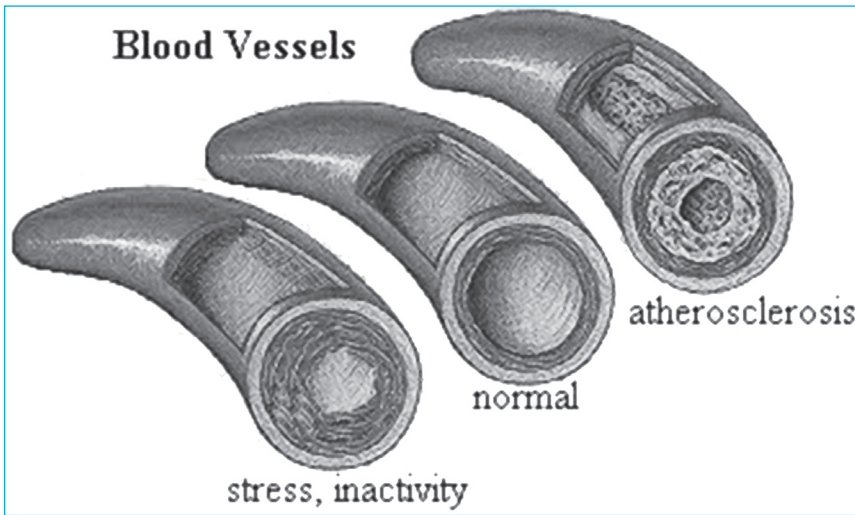
When to take food

As per Ayurveda there are only TWO annakalas, i.e. only twice a day you should take a full-fledged meals. This can be flexed a bit to accommodate the current eating pattern which usually consists of three annakalas. However, it is always healthy to have a light breakfast preferably consisting of fresh salads of seasonal fruits. The lunch is the first annakala which can be sumptuous and should be shad rasatmaka {consisting of all the six basic rasas namely sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and astringent}. The dinner is the second annakala and it should be taken quite earlier than what is usually practised now {ideally by around 7 or 8 pm}. It should be fairly lighter than the lunch and should consist of food articles that can be digested easily.

The following are specifically harmful to the heart

1. **Adyasana:** Eating frequently or before the previous meal has been digested.
2. **Pramitasana:** Eating food that is not nutritious or eating less or eating food that contains only one rasa predominantly.
3. **Ajeerne bhojana:** Eating when you have indigestion {indigestion is characterised by distaste in mouth, loss of appetite and is best relieved by skipping a meal or two and taking a hot soup or porridge with ginger and pepper}.
4. **Alpasana:** Eating less.
5. **Upavasa:** Fasting for long hours and very frequently should be avoided.

Viruddhahara sevana {consuming incompatible food articles together} The concept of viruddhahara is unique



{increasing ojas} are good for the heart also and those that decrease ojas are harmful to it, have been proved beyond doubt. Hence they are of particular significance here as they form an important part of prevention program for heart disease in Ayurveda.

Factors that decrease ojas: {hence harmful to the heart}

1. Excessive physical strain
2. Excessive carnal desires
3. Physical trauma
4. Prolonged periods in hunger.
5. Taking food that is very dry, or in less quantity.
6. Insufficient sleep.
7. Excessive exposure to wind and sun
8. Emotional factors like anger, grief, fear, stress etc.
9. Alcohol and tobacco
10. Junk Food

Factors that increase ojas: {hence beneficial to the heart}

1. Nutritious food.
2. Food substances like milk, meat soup etc. {Milk is a very nutritive substance that increases the ojas, but known heart patients {patients with Coronary Artery Disease} are better at not consuming it. Those in the initial stages can consume it by diluting it with boiled water, a pinch of ground ginger and/or black pepper. Goat's milk is an

to Ayurveda. It lists a few food articles that are not compatible with each other and hence should not be consumed together.

Oral hygiene and heart disease

Not many of us know that a large and diverse microbial flora colonizes the oral cavity and that it is estimated to house as many as 200 different species of microorganisms. Oral bacteria can some times enter the blood {due to mechanical irritation, curettage process to remove dental plaque, during tooth extraction, biopsy or oral surgical procedures} and in some circumstances, get settled on the endocardial surface (heart tissue) leading to some heart diseases. Recent studies show that there is significant association between heart disease and oral health. A set of healthy teeth and gums is necessary to ensure that mastication (the process of grinding, crushing and chewing of food in the mouth) is proper. Proper mastication is a pre-requisite to the proper digestion of the food, proper formation of the rasa and its absorption into the system and thus to positive health in general.

Ojas and heart

Ojas is considered in Ayurveda as the most sublime part of all the dhatus in the body {dhatus are body tissues that are seven in number and constitute the physical body}. It is said to be the finest part of the food that we consume which is formed at the end

of the digestive mechanism 'according to Ayurveda' after the sequential formation of the seven dhatus. It is responsible for the sustenance of life and is seated in the heart. Its increase reflects on the heart in a positive way and its decrease leads to diseases of the heart or further to its death. It is like a lamp kept at the doorway, lighting both inside {heart} and outside {entire body}.

This entity, as explained in Ayurveda, has not yet been identified to any substance in the human body that has been discovered by the modern human anatomy or physiology and hence many question its existence. However the fact that, things told in the text to be Ojasya





even better option in such people as it does not have any such problems}

3. Mental tranquillity and peace is a major factor that is said to increase ojas. {hence there is a great role for meditation, yoga and pranayama, which bring about a sense of well being and tranquillity to the mind, in cardiac care as they increase ojas}

Preventive measures relating to the vihara (activity)

The second major facet of prevention revolves around the activities of the human being. Here again Ayurveda emphasises on moderation in all the activities that we undertake. Ayurveda believes that all diseases are the result of an over association, under association or improper association of three factors namely

Kala: Seasonal variations like cold (winter), hot (summer) and rain (monsoon) reflect on the body as well and our body is designed to accommodate such variations if they are in the limit. However when these seasonal changes are drastic, sudden or untimely then the body does not tolerate them and it then needs to be safeguarded from these changes by taking proper precautionary measures.

Indriyaartha: This refers to the objects of our five senses viz. visual (eyes), tactile (skin), olfactory (nose), auditory (ear) and taste (tongue). The sense organs are one of the most sophisticated organs of the body and are as well the most delicate. They have a particular threshold limit of tolerance beyond which they break up leading to morbidities.

Karma: Karma is classified into three in Ayurveda, viz. Kaya (activities of the body), Vak (speech) and Manasa (activity of the mind). All the three should be used reasonably i.e. in a manner that is not straining.

Exercise and heart

"We evolved to be active animals who ate diet rich in fiber and carbohydrates and low in fat, and we have no evolutionary experience with exposure to toxins such as cigarette smoke. These life style insults appear to be largely responsible for the epidemic of chronic diseases in the modern world."

- Blair 1994: a pioneering researcher in the field of medicine.

Thanks to the scientific and technological progress, which has invented a host of labour saving devices, men in industrialised societies are living a sedentary life compared to their ancestors. There is compelling evidence to prove that physical inactivity is a major factor in developing heart disease. The silver lining is however the fact that it is never too late to switch over to a more active life style as epidemiological studies reveals a strong inverse relation between physical exercise and heart diseases.

Exercise should be taken as a form of medication and scrupulously pursued by everybody who otherwise have a sedentary way of living and working. Walking, jogging, swimming and cycling are some of the beneficial exercises.





Natural urges and heart

The concept of Natural urges and its suppression leading to disease is unique to Ayurveda and is probably the most ignored yet potent cause of diseases in the modern society. Ayurveda talks about 13 natural urges that should neither be suppressed nor be forcefully activated. They should be released without any sort of force as soon as they come. Among these thirteen, nine {first nine in the below list} lead to heart ailments if suppressed and hence is of considerable significance in the present context. The thirteen urges that should not be suppressed are:

1. Micturition- urge to urinate
2. Defecation- urge to defecate
3. Flatulence- urge to release flatus (gases)
4. Ejaculation-urge to ejaculate the semen
5. Thirst- urge to quench thirst
6. Sleep- urge to sleep
7. Coughing/belching- urge to cough/belch
8. Exertional dyspnoea- urge to breath rapidly after a physical strain
9. Tears- urge to cry
10. Yawning- urge to yawn
11. Vomiting- urge to vomit
12. Sneezing- urge to sneeze
13. Hunger- urge to eat

Any aspirant of a healthy heart should be vigilant to hear these calls of nature and should never ever interfere with their smooth execution.

Preventive measures relating to the mind

The last aspect of prevention of heart diseases centers on the measures relating to the mind. Ayurveda considers heart as the seat of mind and says that the two are strongly interrelated. Any change in the state of mind reflects on the heart and quite understandably then mental health is a factor deciding the health of heart.

Ayurveda speaks of six mental urges that must be kept at bay to ensure a healthy mind. They are:

1. Kama: Excessive desire in worldly pleasures
2. Krodha: Anger
3. Mada: Intoxicated or inebriated state of intellect.
4. Lobha: Greed.
5. Irshya: Envy.
6. Matsarya: Jealousy.

Mind and heart

Ayurveda is the first science to have talked about the inter-relation between mind and heart. It says that in heart ailments one must specifically remove the causes of mental worry. Recent studies in the United States of America have shown that death rate after an attack of acute myocardial infarction increases to as much as six times in patients who are depressed than those who are not. This proves beyond doubt the Ayurvedic concept of the interrelationship between Mind and Heart or in other words between Mano Dosha (mental unhealth) and Hridroga (heart disease).

Mental health and personality

Things to adopt:

1. Bring in joy and flexibility to your life: Engage in one activity that gives you pleasure and mental relaxation on a daily basis.
2. The best way to reduce stress is to share your worries.
3. Visit a religious place (temple/mosque as per your religion) at least once a week or on a regular basis.
4. Spend more time with your family.

Things to avoid:

1. Avoid getting angry; picking quarrels, fights or heated arguments by being a bit broad minded and forgiving.
2. Avoid abusing others or wishing bad for others (even your enemies)
3. Avoid doing many things at a time (polyphasic behaviour). Do one thing at time and focus your mind on that. (Start by initially becoming aware of what you are doing and by stopping to do things mechanically.)
4. Avoid mistrusting others or criticising others (start believing - start with your close relatives and friends - slowly expand the list and form a circle of trust. Express outwardly your faith in them and that you believe and trust them, this will be reciprocated and you will start developing a bond with them).

Till the past decade prevention (particularly in the case of Heart Diseases) was never the focus of contemporary medical management, which centered on the surgical correction of the pathology. However, the increasing incidence of re-clogging of the coronary artery added to a steep decline in the quality of life post surgery has forced the medical fraternity to take prevention more seriously. The reason for the short-term survival advantages of people who have gone for by-pass or angioplasty has been attributed more to the adoption of a healthier lifestyle by such patients and not exactly to the surgery or intervention. There is very little scientific evidence that surgery or angioplasty alters the long-term prognosis with CAD. However, by adopting a stringent dietary and lifestyle modification, exercise, meditation and Yoga, one can add more years to their life and heart. It is reveling to note that the concept of Ayurveda, that is at least twenty centuries old has not only withstood the test of time but has overcome it by being ever so applicable even today.

Dr M K Vivek Sanker, is a Final year Post Graduate Scholar at Dr. BNMR Ayurvedic Medical College, Bijapur, Karnataka.

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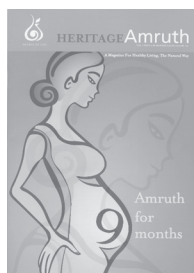
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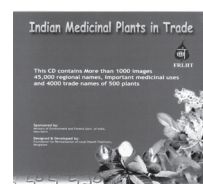
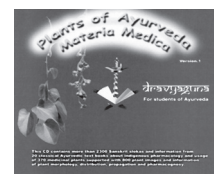
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Keeping fit

Mahesh Krishnamurthy



Twenty eight-year-old Anmol (name changed) is a commerce graduate who was working in a BPO. His timings are typically from 10 in the morning to 6 in the evening or 2 in the afternoon to 10 in the night. He was pretty content with his work and lifestyle until one fine day; all of a sudden he felt severe low back pain. He contacted a physician who diagnosed his symptoms as muscular lumbago. Anmol had become a victim of a commonly seen physical symptom associated with lifestyle change.

Another instance is of Kishore (name changed) who is an interior designer and enjoys working on his projects and traveling. A few months back, he complained of knee pain and pain in his shoulder blade. After undergoing thorough tests his condition was diagnosed with sudden weight gain, constipation, work stress and lifestyle change.

Quite similar to Anmol and Kishore, there are many people today who are battling with such aches, pains and being put up with the suffering and at times, self-medication also.

Changing Lifestyles

Lifestyle change has taken India by surprise. Though almost the entire subcontinent is subject to influence of western lifestyle and culture, it is mostly the metropolitan cities where people are subject to health risks owing to their occupation. Such people need to be continuously reminded by their doctors that they have to stay fit in order to avoid battling any further health issues.

“Health is wealth”, is a saying that holds a prominent place in any society, no matter how backward or advanced that society is. “Wellness centers” is another area besides IT, Telecom and Biotechnology, which has a promising industrial growth potential the world over. Yet, the number of wellness centres that can offer quality fitness packages are very few in comparison to the number of people who require such centres to keep themselves fit.

Health at our Hands

The practice of keeping oneself healthy is packaged in the Indian tradition and interwoven with our lifestyle. One need not put any extra effort to keep him or her fit. It is all there in our daily routines. Most of the Indian spices that are used off your kitchen shelf are of high medicinal value. Turmeric, black pepper, green chilly, clove, cinnamon, raisins, fenugreek, coconut, etc., have their individual properties that are harnessed in the Indian style of cooking. Traditions, which bind themselves with healthcare to such depths, are seen only in India.

Traditionally, we were using a neem stick to brush our teeth. Many people follow this practice to date. Recently, a research conducted in Britain on the use of toothbrush, found that the toothbrush develops bacteria after repeated use and could be the main agent in causing many dental infections. The same team of researchers also found that the brush prepared out of neem stick by crushing it in the mouth for a one-time use, is the best toothbrush ever discovered.

Similarly, Tulasi plant adorns most Indian homes. Yet most of the people do not know the reason behind this and other medicinal plants present in their back yard or the porch. Being one of the most common and potent medicinal plants, Tulasi is used in various health conditions like cold, cough, fever and certain types of allergic dermatitis to name a few. It is also used in the preparation of herbal cosmetics like face pack, certain preparations for prevention and treatment of acne, pimples etc.

Plants and kitchen spices are not the only ones that promote positive health in our tradition. There are several other practices, both physical and mental that play an active role in promoting positive health and preventing ill health. Yoga is one among them. The others are Malkhamb of Maharashtra, Kalaripayattu or traditional martial art from Kerala, Kusti or

traditional Indian wrestling, and the traditional dance forms to name a few.

Yoga and Lifestyle

The practice of Yoga is meant to be a part of our lifestyle literally and it has been so for many centuries. All the pooja that we do, the prayers we chant, the prostrations we perform, the way we eat, are all several practices of being one with yourself, which is the real meaning of Yoga. The Orthodox communities have several practices that translate directly into the practice of Yoga. Today, though many follow this practice, very few understand and associate importance to it.

For a person to keep fit it is essential for him or her to do several practices as part of their daily regimen that will inculcate a sense of discipline and good health. A sample health regimen can look something like this:

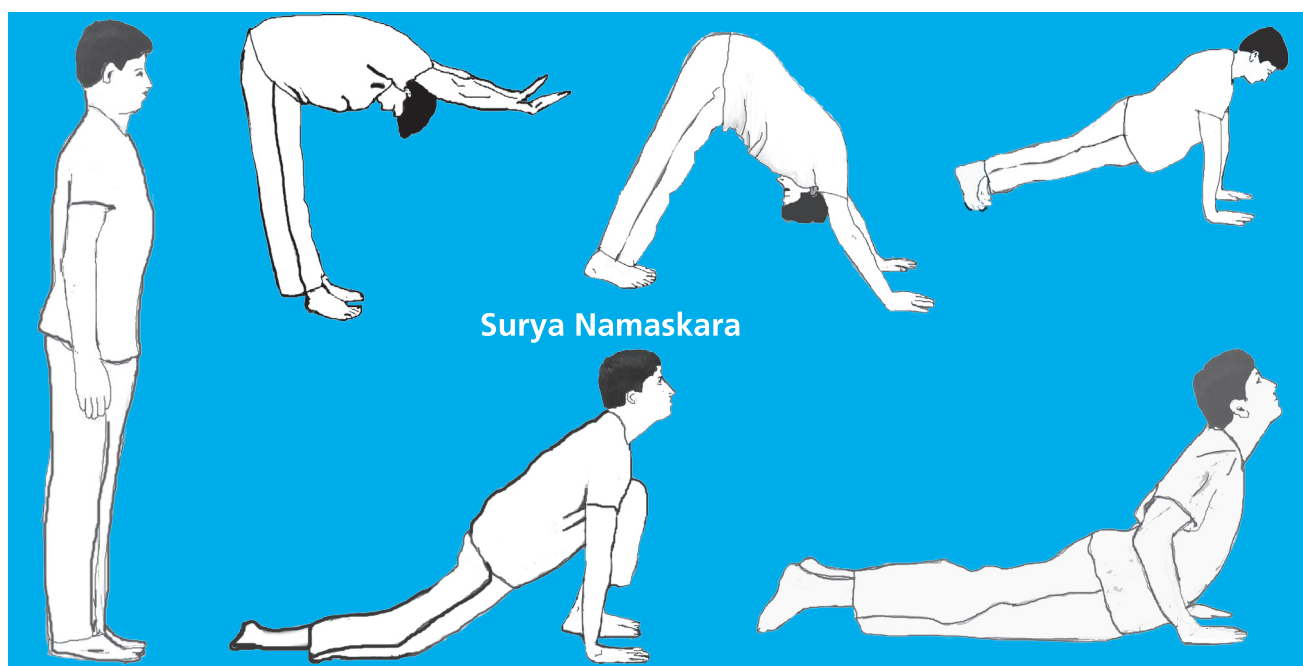
- Rise before sunrise or when the sun is rising. This is very important because, the first sunrays falling on land travel tangent to the earth's surface and hence the ultraviolet light filtering is at its maximum. Sun is the main source of energy. Hence look at the sun at sunrise. The sun is also a source of Vitamin D, which is very good for the skin. So performing Suryanamaskara early in the morning is very beneficial for good health.
- Suryanamaskara consists of either 10-12 postures. This depends on which yoga school or teacher you learn from. The purpose of performing these sets of postures are to flex the body so that the body can eliminate all types of stresses and at the same time expose itself to the sun.
- One has to breathe according to the body movement while performing an asana. The body has to move according to the breath. Only then will one enjoy performing the posture. These are some simple things one should know before attempting any asana or body posture.

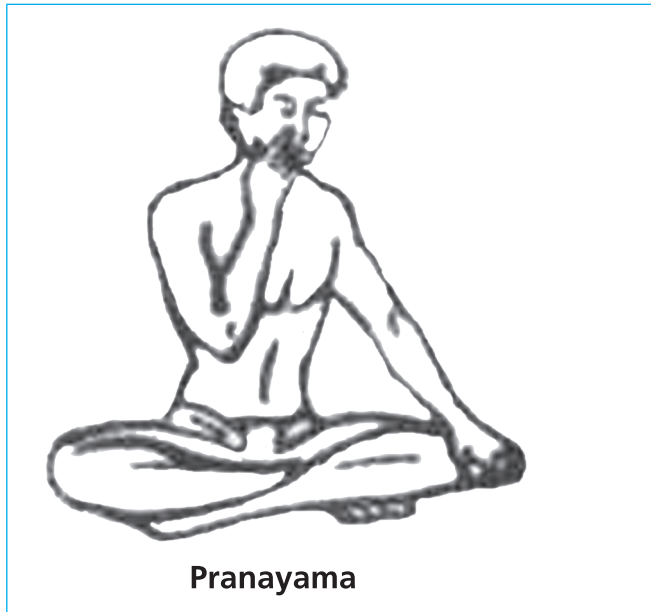
- Pranayama has been a part of our traditional practice. Over time, we have somehow either forgotten this very effective practice or distorted them. Now, it is being learnt by many people to derive benefit from it.

- The Hindu tradition dates back to the period of the Indus valley civilization. Many of the traditional practices of this religion are woven into a lifestyle that is oriented towards a physical, mental and spiritual health. Sandhya Vandanam is one such practice. In the 18th and 19th centuries, many sects of the Hindu community practiced it, although it was not mandatory for them. Sadly, only Brahmins now practise this practice and here too it is more or less distorted or forgotten altogether. Other communities have reduced the tradition to a mere custom following some of these important practices sometimes only once in a lifetime. Sandhya Vandanam starts early in the morning just before sunrise, after a bath. The practice mainly consists of Pranayama and concentration through mental repetition of a mantra. The practice of Sandhya Vandanam is elaborate and can extend up to 45 minutes.

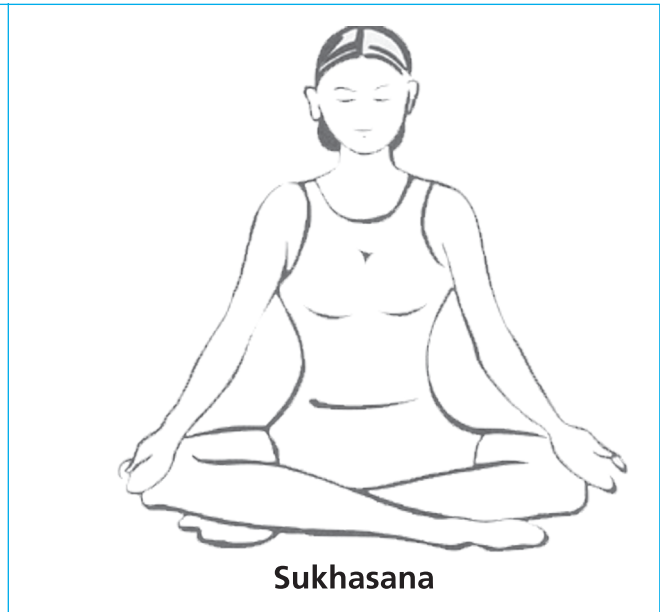
- Nadi Shodhana Pranayama, one of the aspects of Sandhya Vandanam, is given prime importance as the practice calms the mind and keeps it healthy. It also increases one's breath capacity and slows down the metabolism rate thus slowing down the ageing process. This practice is also called as Nadi Shuddhi Pranayama by some schools. Pranayama Photos with breathing technique explained.

- The practice requires one to sit facing east in the morning and before noon (the direction of the Sun) and north in the evening. You must sit firmly on the ground and keep a straight back. You must maintain Jalandhara bandha and a straight back (refer Heritage Amruth, June 2005 issue). When you are ready, exhale completely. Now inhale slowly till you count 4 seconds. Then exhale slowly and count 4 seconds. When you are able to achieve this, then progress to 5 seconds and slowly increase this way till you are able

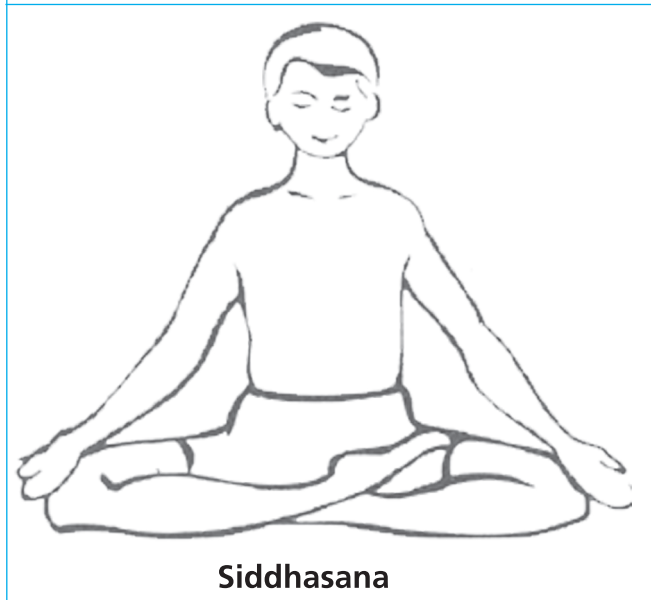




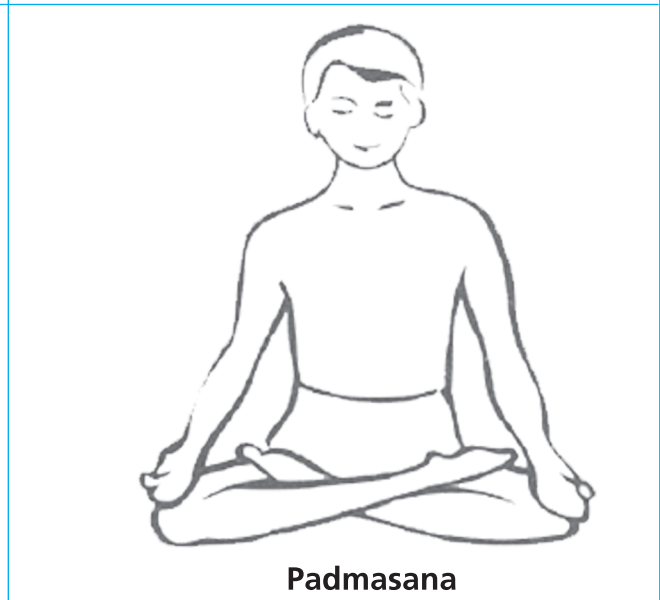
Pranayama



Sukhasana



Siddhasana



Padmasana

to achieve an inhalation and exhalation time of 10 seconds each. Pranayama should calm the mind and keep it healthy and hence the practice has to be done very carefully and the timing should be comfortable and should not be forced.

- With the culmination of Pranayama a practice called Nyasa is practiced. This is done to sensitise the nerve endings on the fingers, and prepare for a practice of concentration. The process of concentration involves one to pick a mantra, which is usually initiated by a Guru. There are no set mantras for men and women. However, in the practice of Sandhya Vandanam, the chant is usually that of Gayatri. The mantra is chanted with inhalation and then again with exhalation. Traditionally the mantra is chanted mentally 108 times. Padmasana Posture with techniques explained.

- This practice helps increase the ability of the mind to

focus. However, the mantras are said to be effective only so long as the person chanting them has complete faith in them.

- A regular practice of Suryanamaskara, keeps the body healthy and the practice of Pranayama, and Mantra Japa help keep your mind healthy and strong. A set of 6-12 Suryanamaskaras, a set of 12 Pranayamas and 108 mental chants with breathing should not take you more than 1 hour.

A word of caution before I conclude, these practices that have been mentioned above should not be learnt from any book but only through a practitioner who has the understanding and the clarity about these practices.

[Mahesh Krishnamurthy is a Yoga Researcher at FRLHT.](#)



S. Raneesh

Water is a precious commodity no doubt, but have we realized this fact? Are we aware of the role played by this vital element in health and disease? Do we make judicious use of water?

पानीयं प्राणिनां प्राणा विश्वमेव च तन्मयम् ।
न हि तोयाद्विना वृत्तिः स्वस्थस्य व्याधितस्य वा ॥ (अ० संग्रह)

'Jala' or water is said to sustain life in all living beings. The entire universe is made of it. We know that water constitutes 3/4th of the earth and so is the living body. There is no activity in a healthy or a diseased body without water.

'Water', 'food' and 'wise sayings' are said to be the three gems in the world. But not valuing these, the unwise remains in search of stones named as gems. It is realized when we look at the magnitude of diseases caused by contaminated/ unsafe water.

Rain Water

Rainwater is said to be purest source of water, when it is collected before it touches the ground. At the same time, water collected from lakes and rivers during rainy seasons is to be avoided as it collects all sorts of impurities from the ground.

Just as by birth all children are the same, what shapes them are the

parents and the external environment, quite similar is the rainwater. The basic quality of the rainwater is of benevolent nature. The rainwater acquires the attributes of the earth, with which it comes into contact and so this explains the diverse attributes of water in various geographical locations.

दिन्यं वारि वरं वर्षे नादेयमवरं परम् ।

Judicious use of water

It is good to purify water by appropriate means before drinking, especially in the rainy season. Traditionally, water is purified as follows:

Water from wells, bore wells and other sources devoid of contamination is collected by filtering through a clean cloth and boiled well (boiled water

means that which is reduced to 1/2, 1/4th or 1/3rd of the original quantity). The water is further made clear by adding the seeds of 'Clearing Nut' (*Strychnos potatorum*) or dolomite stone and stored in a clean vessel. One should not drink water of different sources without a sufficient time gap.

It is only after a particular type of water has been digested that the other water can be used. If plain water taken at any given point of time is not digested do not take boiled water and vice versa. Here, how do we know about the digestion of water? This is by the feeling of thirst. We feel thirsty when the body requires water and it is only then we are supposed to take water. We should understand the body language first i.e. eat when hungry and drink when thirsty.

केवलं सौषधं पक्वमामसुष्णं हितं च तत् ।



Water plain, boiled or cooked along with herbs becomes useful when used as per the specific requirement and not otherwise. For instance cold water (that which is at normal temperature or that is added with coolants such as khus is advised after consuming wheat while lukewarm water is good after consuming sticky substances such as ghee or cream.

Boiled water

Very often, you must have noticed your doctor advising you to drink boiled water, but have you ever thought over the benefits of boiled water? Water boiled and consumed in lukewarm state is easily digestible, kindles appetite, cleanses the urinary bladder and gives relief from hiccough and flatulence.

Boiled water, which is completely cooled, is also easily digestible and is preferred by those who do not wish to drink warm. It is suitable for those who have a predominance of body heat. But, water which has been boiled and kept overnight is non conducive to health, so it is advisable to drink fresh-boiled water.

Cold water

Cold water relieves alcoholic intoxication, exhaustion, fainting, fatigue, giddiness, excessive thirst and other 'Pitta' related conditions such as burning sensation in the body, excessive body heat, increased sweat and so forth. Cold water is to be avoided in those suffering from 'Vaata' diseases (simple headache, body ache, joint pains, paralysis and other musculo-skeletal disorders, sinusitis, flatulence running nose, hiccough, acute fever) and also after the intake of ghee or similar unctuous substances.

Medicated Water

In the following conditions, medicated water proves beneficial:

- Excessive thirst: Coriander seeds boiled in water
- Skin disorders: Water boiled with the heartwood of *Acacia catechu*
- Indigestion and flatulence: Water boiled with dry ginger.
- Difficult and burning micturition: Water boiled with the fruits of *Tribulus terrestris*
- Excessive thirst and vomiting: Water boiled with burnt earthen pieces.
- Diarrhoea and dysentery: Water boiled with the fruit rind of pomegranate and the tubers of *Cyperus rotundus* respectively.

How much of water to drink?

समीक्ष्य मात्रया युक्तममृतं विषमन्त्रथा ॥३१॥

Used judiciously in appropriate quantity, water acts as nectar or else it can be poisonous also. Intake of large quantities of water even when thirsty causes an increase in Kapha and Pitta doshas (a sticky nature in the body) especially in a person suffering from fever. It increases Aama, thirst that is pathological and induces sleep, non-receptiveness, flatulence, heaviness of the body, cough, weak digestion, nausea, excessive salivation, difficulty in breathing and running nose.

We do come across people who take 10 or 20 glasses of water without any thirst and that too on empty stomach. Such habits basically ignore the body language. We also see that in doing so they have insatiable thirst, which is the pathological thirst. The analogy given

is to pour water over the Homa or the sacrificial fire, which in turn puts off the fire similar to the digestive fire. It is only during summer that one can take plenty of water so as to balance the water loss. Here too, water is taken in small quantities at frequent intervals and not to drink litres of water at one stretch.

Water and food

Water consumed before food dilutes the gastric fire and so the person eats less food, which leads to emaciation of the body. When consumed in between meals, water maintains the body and when consumed after food, it causes an increase in weight and makes the person obese.

अजीर्णं भेषजं वारि, जीर्णं वारि बलप्रदम् ।
भोजने चामृतं वारि, भोजनान्ते विषप्रदम् ॥ (वृद्धवाणस्प)

Water is a good remedy in indigestion (use lukewarm boiled water in sips). When consumed after the complete digestion of food, it promotes strength. When taken during meals, it is similar to nectar and when consumed after the meal it acts as a poison.

Further, one has to fill 50 % of the stomach with solid foods, 25 % with liquids and the rest of the space is left empty so that proper digestion takes place.

Considering the above facts, should we not make use of water judiciously??

Dr S Raneesh is an Ayurveda Physician, working in the TSM group of FRLHT.



Scientific Studies on Lipid Lowering Drugs

Aashish Phadke

It is quite interesting to note that there is a growing awareness regarding the increasing episodes of CAD (Coronary Artery Diseases). Coronary heart disease develops when one or more of the coronary arteries that supply the blood to the heart become narrower than they used to be. This happens because of a buildup of cholesterol and other substances on the wall of the blood vessel, affecting the blood flow to the heart muscles. In fact the percentage of these episodes are found out to be on higher side in India as well due to several reasons. Therefore the quest for finding the new safe and effective drug for dyslipidemia (lipid lowering drug) has been a continuous process amongst the scientific fraternity. Apart from the synthetic modern drugs like clofibrates, statins, there are efforts to find out herbal drugs possessing lipid-lowering activities.

Outlined here is a small effort to introduce readers about a few such studies

Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*)

The lipid lowering and antioxidant potential of ethanolic extract of *Zingiber officinale* (family, Zingiberaceae) was evaluated in streptozotocin (STZ)-induced diabetes in rats. The results indicate that ethanolic extract of *Zingiber officinale* can protect the tissues from lipid peroxidation. The extract also exhibited significant lipid lowering activity in diabetic rats. Over the years, it has been well established that ginger has a tonic



Ginger



Ginkgo biloba



Coconut

effect on the heart, lowers cholesterol and inhibits blood platelet collection. Ayurvedic physicians suggest that eating a little bit of ginger every day will help prevent heart attack.

Soybean

Convincing evidence shows that soy protein intake has beneficial effects on lipid changes, but it is unclear which components of soy protein are responsible. Studies have shown that Soy protein significantly reduces serum total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and triacylglycerol and significantly increases HDL cholesterol.

Ginkgo biloba

It has been found in one of the animal studies that *Ginkgo biloba* leaf extract lowers the free cholesterol level in the body. The leaf extract of the Chinese herb *Ginkgo biloba* is known to be hypoglycaemic and lowers blood cholesterol.

Coconut oil

Studies carried out with coconut oil have proved beyond doubt that it reduces total cholesterol, triglycerides, phospholipids, LDL, and VLDL cholesterol levels and increases HDL cholesterol in blood and tissues.

Niger (*Nigella sativa*)

Petroleum ether extract of *Nigella sativa* has been shown to have a slight anorexic effect, along with its hypolipidemic activity.

Bitter gourd (*Momordica charantia*)

Various experiments conducted have shown Karela to be very effective in lowering hepatic triglyceride levels. In these experiments, the effects on serum lipids were found to be only marginal.

Garlic (*Allium sativum*)

Garlic is one of the most commonly used herbal remedies and is considered to have hypocholesterolemic as well as other cardioprotective properties. Epidemiologic studies have suggested that fresh garlic has lipid-lowering activity.

Garlic as a herbal remedy reduces a multitude of risk factors which play a decisive role in the genesis and progression of arteriosclerosis: decrease in total and LDL-cholesterol, increase in HDL-cholesterol, reduction of serum triglyceride and fibrinogen concentration, lowering of arterial blood pressure and promotion of organ perfusion, and, finally, enhancement in fibrinolysis, inhibition of platelet aggregation, and diminution of plasma viscosity.

Garlic is a wonder drug for heart. Clinical trials have shown that fresh garlic and garlic supplements may lower cholesterol levels, prevent blood clots, and destroy plaque. When people with high blood pressure were given one clove of garlic a day for 12 weeks, their diastolic blood pressure and cholesterol levels were significantly reduced.

Vidanga (*Embelia ribes*)

Embelia ribes (family: Myrsinaceae), known commonly as Vidanga, is used in Ayurveda for its anthelmintic activity. Ayurveda describes Vidanga as pungent, causes increase in digestive fire, and cures flatulence and colic. Its lipid lowering activity has also been established by various studies conducted.

Bhumi amalki (*Phyllanthus niruri*)

The lipid lowering activity of *Phyllanthus niruri* has been studied and it has been found to inhibit hepatic cholesterol biosynthesis, an increase in faecal bile acids excretion and enhanced plasma lecithin: cholesterol acyltransferase activity.



Bitter gourd



Garlic



Vidanga



Kokum



Ajamoda

Kokum (*Garcinia cambogia*)

Extracts from *Cocos nucifera*, *Myristica fragrans*, *Saraca asoka* and *Garcinia cambogia* have been shown to exert hypolipidaemic activity. Lipid lowering activity was maximum in rats administered extracts from *Garcinia cambogia*. A dose response study revealed biphasic activity. Higher doses were less effective in reducing lipid levels in serum and tissues, although devoid of toxic effects.

Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*)

Arjuna is a coronary vasodilator. It protects the heart, strengthens circulation, and helps to maintain the tone and health of the heart muscle. It is also useful in stopping bleeding and to promote healing after a heart attack. Current scientific research has proved that *Terminalia arjuna* contains specific medically active constituents namely triterpene glycosides like arjunetosides I, II, III, IV, arjunine and arjunetein. Bark of Arjuna tree has been found to be rich in Co-enzyme Q-10, which is highly prescribed in cardiology departments now days to prevent heart problems. *Terminalia arjuna* tree bark powder has significant antioxidant action that is comparable to vitamin E. In addition, it also has a significant hypocholesterolaemic effect.

Ajamoda or Celery (*Apium graveolans*)

3-n-butylphthalide (BuPh), a unique compound in celery has previously been reported to have lipid-lowering action. At the end of the experiment, a significant reduction was found in the serum total cholesterol (TC), low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C), and triglyceride (TG) concentrations with the celery-treated test models.

Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*)

In research studies carried out, administration of fresh leaves of *Ocimum sanctum* (Tulsi) mixed as 1 g and 2 g in 100 gms of diet given for four weeks, brought about significant changes in the lipid profile of normal albino rabbits. This resulted in significant lowering in serum total cholesterol, triglyceride, phospholipid and LDL-cholesterol levels and significant increase in the

HDL-cholesterol and total faecal sterol contents.

Guggul (*Commiphora mukul*)

Guggul has been shown to lower blood-fat levels while raising levels of HDL, the so-called "good cholesterol". It is useful in atherosclerosis, psoriasis and cardiac ischemia.

Meshashringi (*Pterocarpus marsupium*)
Research studies carried out by administering extract of *Pterocarpus marsupium* for 14 consecutive days on test models produced a significant reduction of serum triglyceride, total cholesterol, and LDL- and VLDL-cholesterol levels without any significant effect on the level of HDL-cholesterol.

Banana (*Musa sapientum*)

The pulp of banana fruit (*Musa sapientum*) was examined for its cholesterol-lowering effect with male rats fed on a diet containing lard (50 g/kg) and cholesterol (5 g/kg). Freeze-dried banana pulp showed a marked

cholesterol-lowering effect when incorporated into a diet at the level of 300 or 500 g/kg, while the banana pulp dried in a hot-air current (65 degrees) did not. Starch and tannin prepared from banana pulp were not responsible for the cholesterol-lowering effect. The results also suggest that banana lipids did not affect the concentration of serum cholesterol.

Apamarga (*Achyranthus aspera*)

Studies carried out with *Achyranthes aspera* have significantly shown to lower serum cholesterol (TC), phospholipid (PL), triglyceride (TG) and total lipid (TL) levels.

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) & Jatamansi (*Nardostachys jatamansi*)

An extract of *Curcuma longa* (tuber) and *Nardostachys jatamansi* (whole plant) feeding elevates HDL-cholesterol/total cholesterol ratio. The extracts also caused a significant reduction in the ratio of total cholesterol/phospholipids. *Curcuma longa* exhibited better

cholesterol and triglyceride lowering activity as compared to *N. jatamansi*.

Ayurvedic aspect on Dyslipidemia –

In Ayurveda, lipids can be equated with Medodhatu. Therefore the drugs that act against Medodhatu or Kapha dosha might act as Lipid lowering agents. In Ayurveda, the group of drugs such as Medoghna, Lekhana, Kaphaghna gana which might demonstrate the activity. The most common amongst them are the contents of Triphala, i.e. three myrobalans viz. Amalaki (*Phyllanthus embelicus*), Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*) and Bibhitaki (*Terminalia bellerica*), Trimada i.e. Vidang (*Embelia ribes*), Musta (*Cyperus rotundus*) and Chitrak (*Plumbago zeylanicum*) and many more herbs given in a dosage form of Guggulu pills with a base of Guggul (*Commiphora mukul*).

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Tulsi



Guggul



Turmeric

Natural Products Scrutinized



Swarnalatha C

Go Green, or herbal or natural has become the 'mantra' of the day. Be it cosmetics, or food products or the medicines, the emphasis is on being natural. But the underlying question is how natural these herbal products are, and above all, the tall claims made about their efficacy.

Extracts from the leaves, stems, roots and flowers of herbs and plants have been used to great effect in Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani, and indeed, has spawned an ancient but revived the branch of Herbology, so much so that people are willing to blindly believe that all plant-based stuff is safer. However, all the hoo-haa about botanicals could blur some facts about their relevance and efficacy.

Natural Products

Natural and herbal-based cosmetics claim to be better than the ordinary chemical-infused products a woman uses on her body, hair, face, skin, lips, and eyes. Ideally speaking, any natural product should not make use of artificial dyes, scents or preservatives.

A product can be called botanical/organic/natural/herbal at least if 50 per cent of its ingredients are plant extracts. Here is where the unwanted elements enter, selling 'botanical' creams and lotions which sometimes have less than 10 per cent of plant-based ingredients. It helps them, of course, but we are still not too careful when it comes to reading the fine print on packaging.

The Ploy

First, usually the department store cosmetic counters are known to use engaging promotional ploys. Big-time brand

names command high prices and compete with big promises. Enter the "naturals" to health food stores and the Internet. You will recognize them by words like "organic" and "holistic." Are these features worth it in cosmetics? Or is it hype? Truly speaking, it really is a marketing hype.

Plant extracts are undoubtedly superior to chemical-based ingredients. They are complex and tough to duplicate, with a distinct smell and texture. The moot point is, when a manufacturer claims a plant-based hair product tames tresses better just because it is made of plant extracts, it need not be true. This fudging of basic facts extends to aromatic oils that profess to calm nerves, decrease stress levels or relax limbs. Part of the claim and its acceptance both, is psychosomatic, part based on our rich history of plant-based healing.

Naturally Good

Let us look at some of the more popular herbs and their attributed benefits. Kumari (Aloe vera - Aloe) is an excellent wound healer but can cause allergy if used in large doses. Aragvadha (Cassia fistula - Ring worm plant) is supposed to cure warts, Sarpagandha (Rauvolfia serpentina - Rauvolfia) to cure insomnia, Tila parni (Eucalyptus) is a stimulant, Lavender is supposed to balance the nervous system, Usira (Vetiveria zizanioides) is a coolant, Candana (Santalum album - Sandal) is an efficacious sunscreen. Well, specialists refuse to give any of the above plants unqualified approval, saying that indiscriminate use of plant extracts can do more harm than good. At best, say specialists, most of these herbs and plants assist in healing skin conditions.

Well anyway, you add in your bath water with some peppermint oil and emerge minutes later, feeling refreshed

A product can be called botanical / organic / herbal / natural at least if 50% of its ingredients are plant extracts



and content. Now is that the mind taking control over the body? The jury is still not out on that. Likewise, Aloe vera and lanolin is a proven skin-soother in cases of inflammation or burns.

Plant extracts are by no means inexpensive so most of these natural products, the top-draw ones that is, invariably cost more than your other cosmetics. Extracts are processed and become less valuable henceforth giving minimum effect. Then again, one must remember, the absence of harm does not always equal benefit, or does it? Of course, it probably does not do any harm, since most manufacturers always err on the side of caution and use very limited amounts of these extracts.

Aroma therapists will tell you that it takes 2,000 kilos of rose petals to make a kilo of oil. While these products are biodegradable, they do have a limited shelf life in the case of lotions and creams. Add to that the time and effort in locating and processing these extracts, and overheads for the 'different' packaging, though no one will admit to that. Another blurring occurs when it comes to the chemical-botanical mix.

Dermatologists will tell you that if you dip your unsterilized finger into a jar of botanical cream, you are only helping bacteria flourish. The result will show on your face and the pot of cream. So, some synthetic preservatives are invariably added to keep the product from changing colour, consistency or separating, to ensure you can leave it around in the sun or inside a dark drawer without it going bad. As a process, this is pragmatic, useful and not in the least harmful because years of experimentation has eliminated toxic chemicals, but manufacturers just do not talk about these things because it dilutes that image of pure, plant-based creams and lotions for you to soak in.

So there you have it: plant-based, no animal testing done, eco-friendly, with some proceeds even going to charity! Yes, there is a peculiar paradox here; the run for natural and herbal cosmetics is increasingly plundering the earth's resources. Well, no one is talking about that, either. Be an educated consumer because price has nothing to do with quality. Know that "all-natural" products have gone through

more rigorous regulations to make the claim than products that say "natural."

Beware

Many women do not realize how irritated their skin is with synthetic, artificial chemicals until they make the switch to natural lines. Women get used to dry, broken out, scaly, tight, itchy, blotchy skin when it is not normal. It should have a glow, some colour. You should switch 100% if you want to go with all-natural products, so your skin goes through its two-week adjustment just once. If you think your skin is sensitive, avoid fragrances, alcohol, artificial colours, and mineral oil. Mineral oil is everywhere and the more you use, the drier your skin will get.

If you are prone to acne, learn to read labels. If your skin is more mature, you need moisturizing ingredients. Others need to prevent allergies. Hypoallergenic means it is free of offending ingredients. It does not mean a product will prevent breakouts or acne. Many so-called natural products use exotic ingredients, but they are really functioning as high-priced moisturizers. There are many fine humectants (the ingredients that bind water to skin) in products at all price ranges. More women should adjust the consistency of their skincare products with the season. Use creamier products for winter, then lotions in the summer. There are a plenty of natural skincare claims that "are a lot of bunk". Plain and simple is often better. Look at the top of the ingredient list because they are ranked in order of volume. Be sure the best ingredients are on the top of the list. Keep the list, which is usually on the box you throw away, so if a product irritates you will know what was in it.

What matters is our skin or hair type. First know your skin and hair type. Learn which herb is used in which condition. Then accordingly use the product with that prioritised herb that best suits your skin or hair type and then experience and enjoy the effect.

Dr Swarnalatha C is an Ayurvedic Physician, working in the TSM Department of FRLHT.

Drive away your doubts

Get answers to your health related queries straight from our renowned Vaidya GG Gangadharan, Joint Director at FRLHT, Bangalore.



For Increased Appetite

I have a 4 years 8 months old son. He is very low on appetite. His birth weight was very low, 1.4 kilos but the growth seems to be very normal. His weight was 7.7 by first year and now he is now 14 Kilos. He just does not feel like eating. We land up force-feeding and he struggles and sometimes throws out. He does not want anything in the morning, maximum, he will have a glass of milk, and even for school lunch he eats only 5 cashews everyday. For afternoon meals he eats a little bit and drinks milk after eating rice and vegetables. Evening generally fruits and dinner is very minimal. He drinks a glass of milk at bedtime again.

Actually, he eats one meal only properly even though the quantity is less. Other times he should be fed with some diversions. I have tried many Ayurvedic medicines, if they are choorna or rasayana form, he cannot take them. Only syrup, I can get him used to. Can you suggest something that can help his appetite? Also, please tell me if they can be sweetened and in thin liquid form. Do you think giving supplements help him? What should they be?

VS BSSM, via e-mail

I have replied in one of the earlier issues about lack of appetite in children (Amruth, September 2004), please refer if you have a copy. For children of this age, this kind of disinterest is very usual

and normal but healthy indications like height – weight ratio and general enthusiasm in studies and hobbies are to be noted.

However, please give the following formulations to your child for one month. These are sweet and good in taste. Hence, you will not have problems in giving these to him.

Aravindasava - 1 tablespoon
Mustarishtam - 1 tablespoon
Mixed with two tablespoon of water.
Give three times a day after food.

Rajaynadi Choornam, 10 gms mixed with honey, give him once a day after food. Give him a whole body oil massage with luke warm coconut oil. If you know to prepare coconut oil from

coconut milk, please use that otherwise use ordinary coconut oil.

Give him food in small quantity several times a day rather than 3 times a day as in the case of adults. Also give him daily warm, well-cooked and macerated yellow dal (Tuvor dal) with rice, ghee and pappad. All children normally like this. In the morning as a soup give him Coconut milk boiled and seasoned with sesamum.

Immunity Boosters

I have a question about Amla and few other herbs. Amla is considered as an Immune Booster. But can you please tell me if it is okay to give a preparation that may contain Amla, Guggul, Guduchi, Indian Madder, Licorice and Horseradish tree to a baby who is 17 months old? Please let me know the consequences or side effects involved in giving these to the small baby. This information will help me a lot. Any detailed information, that you can provide me, is appreciated.

Babu Ramadoss USA, via e-mail

Even though Amla is an Immunity enhancer, other ingredients in the combination you mentioned are not good for children. Guggul and Licorice are not advisable for infants and small children. Regular intake of Guggul can lead to hyper fat metabolism and can cause thinning of blood etc. Licorice also is not good for children for prolonged use. It is used as a curative measure in some conditions of Kapha origin. Amla and Guduchi are good for





children. This can be given with honey once a day in the morning. Indian Madder is also is not a good option for children.

In future, whenever you give anything especially to children, infants and old people, get advice from experts. Even very good things like honey and ghee are toxic if given in equal quantity. Give the child honey with Amla powder daily.

Natural cure for Diabetes

My father has been suffering from diabetic neuropathy and has been taking insulin as well as few other medications for neuropathy. He has got numbness on both the legs and hence cannot walk properly. On search of the proper center I came to know about your hospital in Bangalore and thought to contact you for further details.
Sundeep Sunny via e-mail

The insulin dependent diabetes is not easy to control with medicines. But we can give complimentary treatment to improve strength, immunity and to avoid other complications like Retinopathy, Niritis, etc. which are common in Diabetes mellitus.

Lower Back Pain

I am a 28-year-old software engineer, glued to my chair, 10 hours a day. Six months ago, I suddenly experienced excruciating pain in my lower back. Preliminary investigation with an orthopaedic surgeon revealed mild scoliosis and 'muscular lumbago' & suggested some exercises. I am keen to regain my fitness and would like to know whether Ayurveda and yoga can help.
Ashish K, Bangalore

For this condition simple "Pichu" (application of cotton soaked with Chinchadi thailam) for one hour is very useful. Also an enema (matrabasthi) after lunch with 75 ml. of Dhanwantharam mezhupakam for 14 days will be very useful. You can also apply after Pichu, Marma gulika mixed with lemon juice for 30 minutes. If there is no narrowing of the spinal canal (stenosis), this treatment will be useful. Complete rest for two weeks is very essential for the body to regain the posture.

Amoebiasis

My fourteen-year-old daughter suddenly started having severe loose motions. We consulted a gastroenterologist, who has diagnosed

her condition as amoebiasis. She is under medication, but this is tiring her and as a result she has become very weak. Is there any remedy?
Ratna Prakash, Varanasi

For two weeks, give your daughter only bland food without oil, chillies and tamarind. Try the following food regimen for 14 days:

- Fresh buttermilk boiled with turmeric and ginger with curry leaves can be given with rice.
- A glass of milk boiled with a pinch of turmeric powder
- Green gram soup with ghee, pepper and little salt
- Black tea with lemon is advisable.

Give twice a day before food 5 gms of Dadimashtaka Choornam with honey. Follow one course of Sukumaram Kashayam 15 ml. with 45 ml. of water at 06:00 AM and 06:00 PM on an empty stomach.

Vaidya G.G. Gangadharan

Readers can send in their queries addressed to:
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