

# Digestion, Diet, and Lifestyle for the Doṣhas

**Health in āyurveda** is determined by the proper functioning of agni (metabolism). If the food and mental impressions we take in is digested, absorbed, and eliminated properly the tridoṣha will remain in balance and good health will be the result. When digestion breaks down at any step in this process (due to the improper balance of the doṣhas) āma will accumulate. Āma in āyurveda is the cause of physical dis-ease and it occurs due to the vitiation of the doṣhas.

<b>Āma:</b>	is the term for undigested food particles which cling to susceptible tissues and organs in the body in the form of a foul-smelling, sticky, toxic substance. Undigested food and the resultant āma is the physical cause of dis-ease.
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In the early stages of dis-ease doṣhas become vitiated:

<b>Nirāma doṣha:</b>	Is the imbalance of one or more of the doṣhas without the presence of āma.
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The name for an imbalance of the three doṣhas without the presence of āma is:

<b>Nirāma vāta</b>	<b>Nirāma pitta</b>	<b>Nirāma kapha</b>
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<b>Agni:</b>	Is the name for digestion and metabolism at all levels of the body. "Agni" means "fire;" the power of digestion in the stomach is called "jatharāgni" or "stomach fire".
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The imbalance of the doṣhas (whether for spiritual, karmic, mental, emotion, or physical reasons) invariably leads to the breakdown of agni at some level in the body. The part of the body effected will depend upon the nature of the aggravating factors and the predisposition of the body. When the proper function of agni is impaired by vitiated doṣhas, āma is created. This occurs in the later stages of dis-ease and is a more complex condition to treat because the āma must be removed from the body before the doṣhas may be balanced.

<b>Sāma doṣha:</b>	Is the term for an imbalance of one or more of the doṣhas along with the presence of āma.
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The name for an imbalance of the three doṣhas in addition to the presence of āma follows:

<b>Sāmavāta</b>	<b>sāmapitta</b>	<b>sāmakapha</b>
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Digestion according to āyurveda is of four types: balanced, or disturbed by one of the three doṣhas. This is described in the following chart.

Samāgni (Balanced digestion)	This condition is the ideal of health categorized by normal appetite, easy and painless digestion and elimination, and mental peace. It results from the balanced state of the tridoṣha
Viṣhamāgni (Variable digestion)	This condition creates variable appetite and digestion along with gas, bloating, constipation, and pain. It is caused by an excess of vātadoṣha.
Tikṣhṇāgni (Sharp digestion)	This condition creates intense and constant appetite along with quick but ineffective digestion, and heartburn, acid reflux, ulcers, and diarrhea. It is caused by an excess of pittadoṣha.
Mandāgni (Slow digestion)	This condition creates a dull, steady, constant appetite along with weak digestion, obesity, congestion, dullness, and lethargy. It is caused by an excess of kaphadoṣha.

## Signs and Symptoms of Agni (Metabolism)

	<b>Samāgni</b>	<b>Viṣhamāgni</b>	<b>Tikṣhṇāgni</b>	<b>Mandāgni</b>
Meaning	Balance Metabolism	Variable Metabolism	Sharp / Quick Metabolism	Slow Metabolism
Doṣhic Cause	Balance of the Tridoṣha	Vāta	Pitta	Kapha
Appetite	Normal, regular	Variable, Irregular Intensely unbearable at random times	Strong, unbearable	Low, constant
Number of meals	2-3 normal meals per day	Irregular, frequent snacks	3 or more meals + snacks	1 or 2 meals
Quantity of Foods Eaten	Normal, healthful amounts	Irregular	Large amounts	Small amounts
Cravings	Hot, spicy, dry, and salty foods. Likes beans and salads.	Favors oily, fried, heavy, spicy foods, and coffee. Craves cold things and ice.	Likes cold, moist foods, like milk, dairy, bread, confections etc. Craves hot stimulating things.	Eats a balanced diet of the 6 tastes and does not crave foods.
Snacks Emotionally when:	Does not snack emotionally	Anxious, fearful, lonely	Working, thinking, concentrating	Depressed, sad, or lonely
Aggreivating Foods	Incompatible food combinations, icy cold foods, boiling hot foods, chemicals additives, pesticides, preservatives, left over foods (these disturb all three doṣhas)	Pungent, Astringent, and sour tastes, Irregular eating habits, Beans, sprouts, greens, salads, cabbage family (cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, collards, brussels, etc), light, dry, foods, cold foods, raw foods	Pungent, Sour, and Salty tastes, Overeating, Spicy foods, Chili peppers, ginger, black pepper, oily, fried foods, red meats, coffee, alcohol, ciggarettes, stimulants, nightshade family (tomato, potato, peppers, eggplant), hot foods, salty foods	Sweet, Sour, and Salty tastes, eating too little (or too much), eating too slowly, sleeping after eating, cold foods, commercial sweets, sugar, sweets in general Milk, Dairy, Cheese, Refined grains, Oily, fatty foods, rich foods

Thirst	Normal	Irregular	Excessive	Little
Body weight	Normal	Underweight or losing weight	Moderate weight	Overweight or gaining weight
Digestion	Normal	Quick then Slow (variable) This tendency is aggravated by irregular eating	Quick (even when eating heavy foods). Tend toward low blood sugar	Slow, dull (even when eating light foods)
Digestive Symptoms	Painless, easy, thorough, and timely digestion	Gas, belching, bloating, abdominal pain, pricking pains	Nausea, vomiting, burning pain, acid reflux, heartburn – tends toward ulcers	Heavyness, dullness, mucus, lethargy, dull pain
Bowel Movements	Normal, well-formed, banana-shaped feces without excessive smell. Bowel movements regular, upon waking in the morning.	Dry, small, dark, foul smelling, hard feces. Constipation. Bowel movements variable; every couple of days	Medium sized, light, floating, loose yellow or greenish feces. Diarrhea. 3 or more bowel movement per day after food.	Large, light, well-formed, feces with white mucus. Bowel movements in morning and evening
Food allergies or hypersensitivity	None	Nightshade family (tomato, potato, eggplant, and peppers) and certain dry fruit.	Citrus, vinegar, acidic foods, tomatoes	Dairy and bleached wheat products
Gas	None	Painful, noisy, difficult, with foul smell	Burning sensations, warm gas and feces, sour smell	Little gas, more mucus, soft silent gas, foul-sweet smell
Belching	None	Irregular, loud, unproductive	Acidic	Burps undigested food
Tongue Coating	Clear, healthy looking tongue	Back portion coated, with a thin dark black, brown, or purple coating, teeth marks on tongue, dry, hairy, cracking tongue	Central portion of tongue coated with a moderate coating of a Yellowish-green color. Tender redish tongue	Thick white coating on the whole tongue.

Mouth	Pleasant Taste	Dry, metallic taste	Moist, sour taste	Excessive salivation, drools, foul but sweet taste
Breath	Pleasant	Foul smell. May smell like rescently eaten foods	Sour, metallic smell	Sweet smell somewhat like beer or yeast
Energy	Strong endurance	Low, variable endurance, tires easily	Good endurance, tires when hungry	Tires after eating
Mental state	Clear, peaceful, aleart	Fearful, anxious, lonely, un-grounded, distracted, aggitated, restless	Irritable, angry, judgmental, intellectual, analytical excessive thought	Dull, heavy, cloudy, depressed, slow, attached, sad
Concentration	Clear prolonged concentration	Restless mind, poor concentration	Concentration is dominated by analytical thoughts and judgments	Concentration degenerates into sleep
Sleep	Falls asleep easily Sound sleep for 6-7 hours per night	Insomnia, interrupted sleep, little sleep irregualr sleeping hours sleeps 6 or less hours per night	Difficulties falling asleep, awakens around 11 pm Sometimes there is difficulty to wake in the morning Sleeps 7-8 hours per night	Sleepy after eating, long deep sleep, excessive sleep, feels tired upon waking Likes napping Sleeps 8-10 hours per day
Likely Dis-eases	None	Driness, arthritis, rheumatism, sciatica, nerve conditions, colon problems, mental confusion, bi-polar disorder, psychosis	Skin disorders, acne, rashes, ulcers, colitis, hypo-glaucemia, anemia, hypertension, bleeding disorders, irritability, severe chemical depression	Edema, pallor, frequent colds, congestion, cough, diabetes, high cholesterol, high triglicerides, dull depression

## Treatment and Digestion for the Three Doṣhas

	<b>Samāgni</b>	<b>Viṣhamāgni</b>	<b>Tikṣhṇāgni</b>	<b>Mandāgni</b>
Diet	2 or 3 healthful meals per day	Regular meals (no snacking) Warm cooked foods. Small meals 3 or 4 times per day	Eating less (no snacking) Cooling foods, small meals 2 – 3 times per day (3 – 4 meals for hypo-glaucemia)	Eating less, light warming foods, occasional fasting, 1-2 meals per day
Balancing tastes	All tastes	Sweet, Sour and Salty	Sweet, Bitter, and Astringent	Pungent, Bitter, and Astringent
Balancing foods	All fresh, natural organic foods	Nourishing foods like grains, dairy, nuts, oils well cooked with some mild digestive spices	Cooling foods, Raw foods, salads, fruits, veggies, bitter greens, beans, and cooling foods like coconut, cucumber, cilantro	Light, digestible foods well cooked with digestive spices like ginger, chili, pepper; veggies, beans, and a little whole grains
Foods to Reduce	None	Excessively spicy foods, cold foods, ice, beans, raw foods, sprouts, salads, cabbage family, stimulants like coffee	Hot foods, oily, fried foods, salty snacks, red meat, egg yolks, shell fish, alcohol, coffee, chocolate, nightshades	Milk, yogurt, dairy, cold foods, ice cream, pie, cake, cookies, refined grains, sugars, nuts, oil, butter, meat
Herbs for digestion	Not needed Equal parts Cumin, coriander, and fennel can be made into a tea for maintaining digestion	Mild digestive herbs like, cumin, coriander, nigella, cinnamon, cardamom, fresh ginger, turmeric, salt, lemon juice, marjoram, thyme,  Hingvashtak, a	Mild, cooling digestive herbs and bitter herbs, fennel, cumin, coriander, mace, poppy seeds, cilantro, turmeric lavender, mint, rose petals, bitter melon, neem  Avipattikar cuurna cools	Spicy carminitives (digestive herbs) black pepper, dry ginger, mustard, horseradish, chili pepper, citrak, pippali, galangal, cinnamon, cloves, rosemary, basil, oregano