

The Doṣic Subtypes

Each doṣa has five sub-doṣas which govern specific aspects of the doṣas activity and which are located in different parts of the body. A more fine-tuned understanding of the function of each doṣa in the body many be understood by the careful analysis of its five sub-types.

Pañca Prāṇa (The Five Vital Airs – Sub-types of Vāta doṣa)

Vital Air	Primary Location	Function	Direction	Governing element
Prāṇa vāyu	The head, mind, chest, throat and throughout the body	The primary air, the vital breath. Governs thought, the mind, the heart, and all movement in the body. It directs the other prāṇas. Governs inhalation, swallowing, spitting, belching, and sneezing.	Downward, Inward	Ether
Apāna vāyu	Centered in the Colon and the lower parts of the body	Governs all downward movements in the body. Elimination of feces and urine, menstruation, childbirth, and sexual activity.	Downward, Outward	Earth
Vyāna vāyu	Centered in the Heart and circulating throughout the body	Governs the heartbeat, the circulatory system, nutrition, oxygenation, and the movement of joints, muscles, reflexes, impulses, and secretions.	Circulating	Water
Udāna vāyu	Centered in the throat and chest	Exhalation, speech, memory, strength, will, effort, complexion.	Upward	Air
Samāna vāyu	Centered in the small intestine and the stomach	Digestion, assimilation, secretion of acid in the stomach and bile in the liver, balance, and equilibrium.	Linear	Fire

5 upa prāṇas (5 Secondary Vital Airs)

There are also 5 secondary vital airs or upa prāṇas talked about in the Ayurveda texts and particularly in the Yoga texts. They each have a specific function and are each governed by one of the 5 principle prāṇas.

Here is a list of the upaprāṇas and their main functions along with the governing prāṇa:

Upa prāṇa	Function	Governing prāṇa
nāga vāyu	burping and vomiting	samāna
kūrma vāyu	blinking	apāna
devadatta vāyu	yawning and sleep	prāṇa and the heart
kṛkala vāyu	sneezing	udāna
dhanañjaya vāyu	swelling, closing the heart valve, nourishment and decomposition of the body	vyāna

Pañca Pitta

These are the five subtypes for pitta doṣa with their names and translations. The location in the body and function are also listed for each pitta.

Vital Fire	Translation	Location in the Body	Function
pācaka pitta	digesting fire	intestines and stomach	absorption of nutrients (called saara) from food
rañjaka pitta	coloring, pleasing fire	liver, spleen, stomach, small intestine	nourishes the blood giving color and health to the blood (rakta dhaatu), it colors the blood, bile, and stool
sādhaka pitta	proving, concluding, cognitive fire	heart and brain	governs in intelligence and understanding, desire, decisiveness, will-power, spirituality, it determines a person's sense of truth or reality
ālocaka pita	Sight causing fire	eyes	governs sight, sharpens the other senses
bhrājaka pitta	shining, making bright	skin	gives luster and warmth to the skin, helps us to experience warmth through the skin

Pañca Kapha

There are also five Kaphas. The Pañca kapha are listed bellow along with translations, bodily locations, and main functions.

Vital Water	Translation	Location in the Body	Function
kledaka kapha	Moistening water	Stomach and mucousy secretion of the stomach	moistens, and governs digestion by moistening the stomach lining so samAna vaayu can move the food and paacaka pitta can absorb the nutrients
avalambaka kapha	Supporting water	Lungs and heart	gives support and aids in the body's formation of muscles and tissues
bodhaka kapha	arousing, indicating water	Tongue and saliva	governs taste and perception
tarpaka kapha	Satisfying water	Brain, spinal fluid, and heart	gives contentment, governs emotions and memory
śleṣaka kapha	attaching, connecting water	Joins and the synovial fluid	lubricates joints, and holds them together, and it keeps skin soft