

Recommendations for Balancing the Tridosa

Vāta

Food Remedies

General Recommendations

It is important to eat warm, nourishing foods regularly, with mild digestive spices. Food and drink should be taken slowly and consciously. Eating every three to five hours for a total of three or four small meals per day is ideal. Eating regularly at precise times helps balance the irregularity of vāta and trains the body to develop hunger at regular times which helps vāta absorb nutrients from food.

Foods to Favor

The best foods for this condition are nourishing grains, root vegetables, summer squashes, organic dairy, nuts, and oils cooked and served warm with mild digestive spices. Astringent, bitter, and excessively pungent foods should be avoided. Beans and legumes should be avoided or reduced (except mung dal, urid dal, adzuki, and tempe). Beans can be made more digestible by cooking them very well and adding oil or ghee and digestive spices like, hing, ajawan, cumin, black salt, lemon juice, and black pepper. Dairy and nuts combined with grains make are good protein sources for vāta.

Foods to Avoid

Light and gas producing veggies like the members of the cabbage family: cabbage, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, etc. should be avoided. If these foods must be consumed, they may be made more digestible in the same ways as legumes. Most fruits will aggravate vāta due to their light and dry qualities. Apple, pears, peaches, plums, in particular can be very agitating due to their very light and dry qualities. Fruits are best cooked with some ghee and mild spices like cinnamon, cardamom, fresh ginger, nutmeg, and served warm. Bananas, mangoes, papaya, kiwi, and blueberries are slightly less aggravating and may be taken in small quantities raw but still may require some spice like cardamom to assist digestion. Milk is very heavy to digest, but can be good for vāta if properly digested. To increase the digestibility of milk, it should be boiled with spices like cardamom, cinnamon, fresh ginger, or tea maasala.

Other Specific Foods

Cooked onions are very good for vāta (though pungent garlic and raw onion may increase it). It is recommended that onions be taken in moderation for those doing spiritual practices due to their mind dulling qualitites. When the is extreme debility due

to excess vāta meat can be a very nourishing food. Vāta dosha does best with a little meat, but it should be limited to a couple times a week, and eaten at midday when the digestion is strongest with plenty of digestive spices. This is recommended by āyurveda when it is needed, and it is said that in this case that it does not produce negative karma. Stimulants like caffeine should be absolutely avoided.

Spices and Herbal Remedies

Digestive Spices

Spices like hing, ajawan, black salt, lemon or lime, cumin, turmeric, fennel, cinnamon, celery seed, dill, cardamom, fresh ginger, black pepper, marjoram, and rosemary are very good for increasing digestion for vāta. In fact, almost all spices are good for vāta with the exception of an excess of very pungent spices like dry ginger, pepper, chili peppers, mustard, or horseradish.

Herbs for Tonification

The presence of vāta dosha in the body is most often associated with conditions of deficiency. When there is extreme deficiency, this often causes anxiety which leads to indigestion and sāma vāta (toxic accumulation due to excess vāta). For such conditions rasāyana (tonic) therapy is a very important therapy for reducing vaata.

Even in the case of sāma vāta it is usually very helpful to take some small quantity of rasāyana (tonic) herbs to help balance the mind and nerves and strengthen the tissues of the body, while also taking herbs to eliminate toxins. Excessive cleansing therapies will lead to an increase of vāta. It is important for vāta to have a combination of strengthening herbs and warm digestive herbs. The best tonic for vāta in general is ashvagandha. It soothes the nerves, mind, and nourishes all seven dhātus. Other warm tonics like vidārī or kapi kacchu can be useful. Cooling tonics like śatāvari, musali (white and black), bala, dang quai, solomon's seal, marshmallow, comfrey root, and slippery elm can be helpful if taken with plenty of warm spices like cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, fresh ginger etc. to help balance their cooling properties. Most tonic herbs are nourishing for vāta but heavy to digest. This is why a combination of tonic (rasāyana) and carminative (dīpana) herbs are proscribed for vāta in combination for imbalances. When there is a sāma vāta condition it becomes doubly important to take tonic herbs always with digestive stimulants. The digestive spices listed above are excellent with hing being one of the best herbs for increasing digestion for vāta. Hingu (asafoetida) also has powerful nervine properties to soothe the mind and nerves.

Herbs for the Nerves and Anxiety

Mild Nervine and sedative herbs may also be useful for reducing anxiety and easing stress to the nervous system. Many nervine herbs help to reduce ungroundedness and to protect from negative spiritual influences, which vāta can be susceptible to due to its ungroundedness. The best nervine herbs for vāta are ashvagandha, śatāvari, yaṣṭi madhu, jaṭāmāṁsi, śaṅkhapuṣpi, vāca, brahmi, harītakī, nutmeg, and kuṣṭha. Herbs with special sedative qualities can be helpful to reduce anxiety and insomnia. The best āyurvedic sedative for long-term use, because it is not habit forming and does not lead to dullness of the mind like stronger sedative herbs like tagar / valerian, is jaṭāmāṁsi. Jaṭāmāṁsi is excellent for calming vāta, but the plant is threatened in its natural habitat so sustainable sources should be sought. Ashvagadha is also very useful in this regard. Other herbs with sedative qualities are brahmi, chamomile, linden flowers, lavender, śaṅkhapuṣpi, and Jaṭi phala (nutmeg). In severe cases when these weaker herbs are not effective stronger sedative herbs like tagar or kava kava may be used. The use of these herb should be limited though because they have a long-term effect of dulling the mind. For a sedative it is usually effective to take some warm boiled milk with nutmeg powder an hour before bedtime. A good general sedative blend to combat insomnia can be made from 3 parts brahmi, and 1 part each: ashvagandha, jaṭāmāṁsi, śaṅkhapuṣpi, and jaṭiphala. Herbs that reduce pain of the body and nerves may also be useful (like guggulu, kuṣṭhā, Myrrh, or Kava Kava). For elimination mild laxative herbs that strengthen and hydrate the colon the seat of vāta. These herbs include isabgol, flax, and harītakī. Mild treatments which are taken regularly and strengthen the body's natural function will lead to the balance needed to restore the bodies proper functions.

Specific Herbal Formulas

Formulas for Digestion

The best herb blend for vāta indigestion is hingvaṣṭak cūrṇa which can be taken before meals to increase digestion and / or after meals to increase digestion in the amount of ¼ tsp. When digestion is very weak and variable citrakādi bati may also be helpful. The many herbal wines are also very useful for vishama agni (vāta indigestion) and the pains and nervous conditions that arise from this condition. Best are jīrakāriṣṭham, aśvagandhāriṣṭham, balāriṣṭham, daśamūlāriṣṭham, drāksāriṣṭham, abhayāriṣṭham, and pippalyāsavam.

Formulas for Tonicification

For tonification preparations of ashvagandha like aśvagandha cūrṇa, or dhātupauṣṭik cūrṇa may be taken along with digestive spices like cinnamon or fresh ginger. AshvagandaariShTham, sarasvat cuurNa are even better because they combine tonic

herbs with digestive herbs. Other useful formulas for tonification are draakShaariShTham, dashamuulaariShTham, and many of the herbal jams which are particular for tonification like cyavana praś or brahma rasāyanam. For tonification basmas of gold, pearl, red coral, yellow sapphire are extremely potent.

Formulas for Reducing Anxiety / Soothing the Nerves

For the mind preparations of ashvagandha, brahmi, śaṅkhapuṣpi, and Jaṭāmārīśī with digestive spices like nutmeg, cardamom, black pepper, or vāca, or kuṣṭha are useful. Brahmī bati and brahma rasaayana are useful. For nerve pain and general pain mahaā yogaraaja guggulu is very helpful. For elimination from the colon mild tonic herbs may be used like triphala 1 tsp made into tea taken with ghee and honey or chyavana prash taken with boiled milk. When there is extreme dryness in the colon, sat isobgul (psyllium) may be helpful. Dashamuula is another formula which can be helpful to tonify the colon and to reduce pain.

Aasana

General Recommendation

Aasana practice for vāta should be gentle, balancing, warming, and calming. Active postures like sūrya namaskāram or active kriyās should be avoided or practiced very lightly, slowly, and carefully under the guidance of a qualified aayurvedic yoga instructor. Vāta should not rush into āsana practice, but take time to calm the mind first. Vāta should practice āsanas very slowly and gently with emphasis on consciously feeling the calming actions of the poses. Vāta should work to slow and deepen the breath by calming the mind and by bringing a calm peaceful awareness to the thoughts and feelings. They should avoid quick movements, over-extension, and over working the muscles. It is important that vāta neither strain nor overwork for Yoga to have its effects on this doṣa. Vāta individuals should try to remember that the purpose of Yoga practice is not to exercise the physical body, but to balance the mind and body in preparation for spiritual realization. Lasting realizations for vāta come once balance is found which requires rest, grounding, calming, and balancing. When the mind and body have been too active, this will cause an increase of vāta, it is important for vāta to work to balance this in the practice of Yoga.

Specific Poses

Sitting poses (like daNDaasana, siddhaasana, padmaasana, sukhaasana, and vajraasana), spinal twists (like matyedraasana, jathara pari vartaasana), forward bends (like pashcimotanaasana, or upaviShTha konaasana) gentle back bends (like bhujangaasana, or), and grounding standing poses are excellent (like tadaasana or vR^ikShaasana). The

child's pose is one of the best āsanas for vāta; it increases absorption and clears gas from the intestinal tract. Most other poses should be avoided or practiced extremely gently for a very short duration. Active and aggressive poses like most of the inverted poses should be avoided or practiced with great restraint. It is important that vāta individuals never strain or force a pose. They should be encouraged instead to use bolsters, chairs, walls, pillows, and other props to slowly work into difficult poses without stress or strain. It is important for all dosas to never strain in their practice, but it is extremely important for vāta types who get injured easily. All poses should be followed by relaxing laying poses.

Exercise and the need for Caution

In general exercise should be mild and easy. Gentle walking is the best exercise (though light swimming, dancing, or biking could be done also), and it should be done just until perspiration begins. It is better for vāta to get gentle exercise through activities other than Yoga, because it is easy for vāta to overdo the Yoga practices. In Yoga practice, it is good to stop as soon as results are begun (rather than holding and continuing to open the subtle channels). If vāta continues to practice once the subtle channels are opening, their volatile nature will lead to excessive movements of prāṇa. It is best for vāta individuals to learn to recognize their personal limitations with the help of a qualified instructor who has an awareness of the subtle energies in the body. When the movements of these energies are not kept in balance their effects may be detrimental and even fatal. It is best for vāta types to seek good teachers to help guide them as they work with these inner energies or to avoid the practices of Haṭha yoga altogether. Vāta individuals should remember than none of the practice of Haṭha yoga are needed for the realization of God, and that most of them are likely not good for their bodies. They should approach their practice with extreme care and caution.

Importance of Rest

For vāta rest is equally (if not more) important to exercise. Vāta must be careful to never overdo their Yoga practice. They do best with short time periods like 5-25 minutes per day. An exercise routine or yoga practice should be followed by relaxation techniques like śavāsanam or sitting meditation. Relaxing practices should be done for at least 1/2 of the time of active (āsana) practice, and they should be done for at least 15 minutes for ideal results.

Prāṇāyāma for Vaata

Prāṇāyāma should be practiced with great care, gently, for very short durations of time, and without forcing the breath for vāta. Prāṇāyāma practices increase prāṇa and vāta in the body, and most should be strictly avoided. The most gentle practices may be safe

when practiced in extreme moderation. Ujjayi prāṇāyāma is warming and grounding. It is good for vāta. Ujjayi prāṇāyāma can be preformed in short increments (up to 5 or 10 minutes) with or without the addition of so ham prāṇayāma once or twice per day. Anuloma viloma (alternate nostril breathing) is very balancing and warming and can help reduce vāta. This practice may be done in short durations throughout the day to help calm the mind. It should always be done gently and without forcing or changing the natural pattern of the breath. If there is a feeling of breathlessness or lightheaded-ness the practice should be discontinued immediately. Prāṇāyāma practice for balancing vāta should be easy, non-forceful, regular, and brief. Forceful or excessive prāṇāyāma practice is one of the easiest ways to aggravate vāta and therefore it should be practice with great caution and only under the direct guidance of a qualified teacher. Extended periods of practice are not recommended because they will increase the wind element in the body. Even the passive forms of prāṇāyāma can be dangerous for vāta because when an agitated mind is centered on the breath with attachment, it will tend to agitate the breathing.

Mantra for Vaata

Specific mantras are best recommended by a qualified Guru or Astrologer. In general longer hymns and stotrams are more balancing than short mūla mantra or bija mantras. The energies of the longer mantras are more balancing and safer as general recommendations. Mantra practice should be done gently with love, and warmth, and compassion for vāta. Gentle warming mantras like those of Ganeśa, Subrahmanya, Viṣṇu, and Rāma are best for vāta. Lakṣmi mantras are also helpful because they create fullness and prosperity to balance the deficiency of vāta. Durgā mantra are good for protection. Mantras with agitating energies like those of Nārasimha, Rudra / śiva, Kāli, or Bhairava should be avoided as should those of airy deities like Hanumān.

Gemstones for Vaata

Wearing the wrong gemstone can be very dangerous because it can increase the energies of planets which cause illness, suffering, loss, and death. Specific gemstones are best recommended by a qualified Guru or Vedic Astrologer. Vāta dose best with warm, strengthening gems set in gold like yellow sapphire (or yellow topaz), red coral, and rubies. Cooling but calming green emerald and pearl can also be helpful to calm the mind. If one is not sure which gemstone will be best, the substitute stone (uparatna) are always safer and pendants made from all nine stones are balancing to all types.

Remedies for Pitta

Food remedies

General Recommendations

Pitta is pacified by eating foods which are cool (but not cold), cooling in energy, light, and nourishing. Meals should be taken slowly and consciously and snacking should be avoided.

Foods to Favor

In general fruits, grains, legumes, fresh dairy, and vegetables are good. Fresh or cooked fruits are cooling and may be taken liberally, apart from other foods to ensure digestion. Pineapple, sour fruits, citrus fruits, banana, mango (especially when unripe), and papaya (especially unripe) are heating and should be avoided. Most grains are sweet, nourishing, and cooling and can be very useful as the basis of the diet. Rice, wheat, barley, and oats are particularly helpful. Certain grains like corn, millet, rye, and buckwheat are heating and should be reduced. Beans and legumes are very helpful due to their astringent qualities. Though they are difficult to digest, pitta doṣa dose the best with beans. Most legumes are cooling. Heating legumes like urid and fermented bean products like tempe should be taken only in moderation. It is important even for pitta to cook beans with some mild spices like cumin, coriander, fennel, turmeric, fresh ginger, or mint. Fresh milk, cream, cheeses (like paneer, cottage cheese, or fresh mozzarella) are very nourishing and cooling; they are good to help reduce acid and cool tiksṇa agni (pitta digestion). Aged and fermented dairy products like yogurt, American buttermilk, sour cream, and most aged cheeses will aggravate this condition. Vegetables are excellent for pitta. They should be cooked with very mild spices and taken liberally. Green vegetables and bitter greens are especially helpful to cleanse pitta from the liver. During the warmer months salads of fresh greens are very good.

Foods to Avoid

The nightshade family potato, tomato, eggplant, bell pepper, and chili pepper should be avoided due to their heating qualities as should pungent vegetables like radish, onion, garlic, and horse radish. In general pungent, salty, and sour foods should be reduced. Oils, nuts, red meat, sour foods, fermented foods like yogurt, vinegar, alcohol, chili sauces, and soy sauces should be avoided. Most herbs and spices are very pungent and will increase pitta in excess. Very spicy spices like mustard, garlic, chilis, black pepper, dry ginger, etc should be strictly limited. Stimulants should be avoided especially coffee and chocolate.

Spices and herbal remedies

Herbs for Digestion

Mild digestive herbs which do not increase agni but aid in absorption in the liver and small intestine can be useful like turmeric, musta (*Cyperus rotundus*), cumin, coriander, fennel, cilantro, rose petal or water, mint, poppy seeds, lavender, vanilla, and saffron. Some mildly pungent carminative spices like nutmeg, cardamom, cinnamon, bay leaf, dill

seed, or aniseed may be used in small quantities to help digest heavier foods like dairy, root veggies, etc. Onion and garlic should be avoided, though sauteing onions in a little ghee will cause the sugars to caramelize increasing the sweet taste and cooling energy.

Special Refrigerant and Antacid Herbs

Refrigerant herbs like cilantro, cucumber, coconut, coriander, fennel, ushiira, sandalwood, rose may be helpful to soothe the digestive fire. Antacid herbs like cilantro, milk, aamalaki, licorice, and shataavari may be used to counter acid. For acid reflux and heartburn pearl ash, and conch shell ash are excellent. It should be noted that certain cooling foods may reduce acid but increase āma (toxins). Milk, coconut, shataavari, and licorice should be used with caution in cases of sāmapitta (high pitta with toxins from undigested food). Antacids like rose, cilantro, coriander, musta, and aamalaki should be used instead for their power to reduce acid while decreasing āma (toxins).

Liver Cleansing Bitter Herbs

Bitter herbs which cleanse the liver (like brahmi, neem, kutki, kālamegha, bitter melon, bitter greens, dandelion roots and greens, mahaasudarshana chuurNa, etc) and herbs which strengthen absorption in the small intestine (musta, nutmeg, pomegranate, poppy seed, jaṭāmārīnsī, amalakī, and fennel) may also be useful.

Herbs for Tonification

Though pitta does not need as much tonification as Vaata, tonification is usually helpful. Cooling tonics are best like shataavari, dang quai, musali, solomon's seal, comfrey, marshmallow, bala, etc. These are best combined with cool and calming nervines like brahmi, gotu kola, jaTAmAMsI, shankha puShpi, rose, sandalwood and amalakii.

Specific herbal formulas

Formulas for Digestion

The best herbs for tikṣṇa agni (pitta digestion) is avipattikar cūrṇa which is one of the best blends for pitta in general. For more difficult cases of acid including ulcer, shankha bati is good. It helps cool pitta as it increases absorption and elimination. For elimination and absorption Triphala is also good.

Formulas for Cleansing and Liver Metabolism

For liver metabolism and elimination ghṛta kumārī (aloe gel or juice) is good. For cleansing the liver where pitta tends to cause congestion mahāsudarśana cūrṇa is best or kutajāriṣṭhā. Also good are herbal ghees like brahmī ghṛta or tikta ghṛta are very good. Ghee has a particular quality to help increase the efficacy of bitter herbs.

Formulas for Diarrhea and Absorption in the Small Intestine

For diarrhea and absorption in the small intestine jaṭiphalādi cūrṇa is good as are certain herbal wines like abhayāriṣṭham, mustakāriṣṭhām, or kumāryāsava.

Formulas for Cooling the Mind

For mental factors of over-active mind brahmī, madhuka parṇi (gotu kola), and Jaṭāmāṁsi are the best herbs. Brahma rasāyanam or brahmi bati is good taken with milk or ghee. Herbs that calm and cool the mind like brahmi, madhuka parNi, ginko leaves, skullcap, rose, chandan (or ushiira) lavender, shankhapushpi, yaShTi madhu, shataavari, sveta musali, and jaTAmAMsI are helpful. JaTAmAMsI, shankhapushpi, and brahmi are the best for calming and cooling the mind.

Formulas for Tonification

The best formulas for tonification are chyavana prash, brahma rasaayana, and amrita chuurna taken with milk. Or the herbal wines balaariShTam or arjunaariShTam, which should be de-alcoholized by adding boiling water and then allowed to cool, before consuming

Yogāsanas for Pitta

General Recommendations

Yoga practice for pitta should be gentle, cooling, and calming. Excessive force is avoided but some effort is exerted to open the heart and the flow of Prāṇa. Pitta types are usually the best at āsana but they must take care not to overdo their practice or to become too competitive or goal-oriented. The worst enemy of pitta in the practice of Yoga is the intellectual mind, which must be gently and repeatedly reminded to let go of its desires to control and understand the practice. Pitta has more propensity than any other dosa to overdo the physical practices (though this is easiest to do for vāta). Pitta types are encouraged to try to silence the mind and to bring the awareness to the subtle energies in the body. Though active pitta types are often very inclined toward physical āsana practice (and some of this is good for them), they usually experience better results through the subtle sitting practices like meditation and gentle cooling prāṇāyāma which. Pitta should practice āsana with a conscious intention of drawing the consciousness inward.

Exercise for Pitta

Pitta types do require some exercise and should be encouraged to do some gentle aerobic exercises regularly. It may be wise for pitta to maintain a physical exercise routine in

addition to gentle Yoga practice. Pitta should work just a little bit beyond the point of sweating, but never over do it. Good exercises include brisk walking, swimming, and gentle biking.

Specific Poses to Favor

Pitta should focus on āsanas which are gentle, cooling, expanding, and relaxing. The sun salutation is not good due to its heating qualities. The moon salutation can be useful when done slowly. Stationary postures are best held for some time. Pitta will have a tendency to move too quickly from one posture to the next, and should be encouraged to slow down and do their practice more consciously, and to hold postures a little longer than they feel inclined. āsanas which open the chest and abdomen are very good for pitta including the fish, the cobra, cobra, the bow. Spinal twists can be good for nourishing the lunar element in the body like matsyendraasana. Forward bends are good in general. Most sitting poses are good and relax the mind for meditation.

Poses to Avoid

Standing poses like the warrior, and heating poses like the lion should be avoided. Inverted poses (and the head stand in particular) increase energy to the head. They should be avoided. The plough, however nourishes the lunar energies in the body and is good for pitta in moderation. Backward bends are generally heating and should be limited by pitta. All these practices should be avoided unless a person knows how to balance their energies which aggravate pitta. It is best to err to the side of caution. After practice a short period of relaxation will be useful. Corpse pose or any of the sitting poses (excluding lion pose) would be useful. Pitta should rest for about 1/3 of the time of practice.

Rest

Pitta needs some rest after practice. Some simple sitting poses or corpse pose may help to restore the body after yoga practice. Sitting for prāṇāyāma or meditation after practice is especially good for pitta.

Prāṇāyāma for Pitta

Gentle prāṇāyāma can be very good for pitta. Prāṇāyāma is one of the best ways to calm the mind when done with awareness and without force. Pitta will have to counter the tendency to force and strain the breath. Sītalī prāṇāyāma and its variations are excellent for pitta due to their cooling energy. They are powerful to calm angry emotions and to soothe stomach acid and to lower the body temperature. The breath should not be deepened or forced, but allowed to pass naturally through the tongue. This practice should be done regularly in short intervals of up to about 7 minutes. They may be used for acute symptoms of anger or acid reflux. Left Nostril Breathing is also very good for

pitta. It directs consciousness into the lunar channel cooling and calming the mind and emotions. This may be practiced in short times once or twice per day or more as needed. It is important with prāṇāyāma to start with a little and gradually increase. So ham prāṇāyāma can be good to calm and balance the mind. This practice can be done to help overcome the tendency toward excessive thought.

Mantra for Pitta

Mantra recommendations should ideally be made by a qualified Guru or Astrologer. Mantras of peaceful and cooling aspects of God are best for pitta. The best are Lakṣmi, śiva, Pārvati, Kṛṣṇa, and the Moon. Hanuman, Kṛṣṇa, or Viṣṇu can be good to open the heart and increase devotion. Pitta does well with the forms of a Divine mother. The divine Mother helps to cultivate patience, love, and compassion like a loving mother. Hot fiery forms of God like Karttikeya, the Sun, Nārasimha, or Durgā, Rāma. Gaṇeśa's energy is balancing and useful to pitta, but may increase heat too much. Aspects of God relating to violent and destructive energies are especially dangerous for pitta like Rudra, Kālī, Nārasimha, Durgā, and Bhairava.

Gem stones for Pitta

Wearing the wrong gemstone can be very dangerous because it can increase the energies of planets which cause illness, suffering, loss, and death. Gem stone recommendations should ideally be made by a qualified Guru or Astrologer. In general the cooling and nourishing gems like pearl, diamond, and red coral are best for pitta. Red coral helps purify the blood. Pearl is calming for the mind. Diamond is a great cooling tonic which is good for the heart. Green emerald and blue sapphire can also be useful to help cool the system and remove toxins. Extreme caution should be employed with the use of Blue Sapphire, to ensure that the placement of Saturn will cause beneficial results. If one is not sure which gemstone will be best, the substitute stone (uparatna) are always safer and pendants made from all nine stones are balancing to all types.

Kapha Dosa

Food Remedies

General Recommendations

Lighter meals of easily digestible food should be taken warm or very warm. It is not recommended that anyone take foods which are very hot or cold. Meals should be once or twice a day and snacking should be avoided. The largest meal should be taken at midday when the digestion is the strongest. Occasional fasting is helpful to clear toxins and reset the digestion. It is generally safe for Kapha to fast from food but not water 1 day per month. With the guidance of a qualified Vaidya (Ayurvedic physician) it may be

acceptable to fast more often; even once a week). Mono fasts (eating one simple food like pongal which is a combination of mund dal and rice) are a safer practice and may be practiced for up to a week several times a year as an extended fast / cleanse. Digestive spices should be taken as teas between meals to increase the digestion and appetite.

Foods to Favor

Fruits (taken 15 mintues before; or 1 hours after other food), fresh vegetables, and legumes, and whole grains should be taken cooked well with pungent carminative herbs to help stimulate digestion. Light foods in smaller quantities should be favored. Most fruits are light and dry and therefor very good for Kapha in moderation. Excessive fruit may increase kapha by its sweet quality. Certain tropical fruits like mango, papaya, and avacado are particularly bad for kapha. Fruits which are very dry and somewhat astringent are best like apples, pears, peaches etc. Grains are an important basis for the diet for all doshas. Kapha needs the least of these however. The sweet taste of grains makes them likely to increase kapha in excess. Whole grains (including the hulls) are less sweet and better for kapha. They are more difficult to digest and should be taken with plenty of spices. Beans are good in general because they are light and dry. Beans and legumes are however difficult to digest and should be taken with plenty of spices. All foods should be well cooked to help increase its digestibility. Bitter green and most vegetables are very good. Sweet root vegetables should be minimized and particularly potatoes. Digestive spices which help increase digestion include ginger, thyme, pippali, black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, turmeric, or bay leaf. Though these are the best for kapha, almost all spices are useful. Pungent spices like mustard, chili, ginger, pepper, horseradish etc. are excellent for stimulating digestion and should be included in every meal. They warm the body and stimulate the mind and facilitate the release of toxins.

Foods to Avoid

Meat and dairy in particular should be avoided. Meat is too heavy to digestion and dairy is very cold and mucous forming. Goat's milk may be substituted for cow's milk because it is warming and slightly sour. Or soy milk or rice milk may be used; though they are cold and heavy, they can be less aggravating than cow's milk. Any of these milks should be boiled with digestive spices like ginger, thyme, pippali, black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, turmeric, or bay leaf. Heavy, oil, sweet foods like sugar, butter, dairy, and sweets in particular should be avoided. Ice cream, cakes, pastries, cookies, brownies, pies, laddus, candy bars, and other confections should be avoided. Honey is a better sweetener for kapha (because it is heating) or fresh fruits, but both of these should be taken in small quantities. In general cold food and drink should be avoided, and foods should be taken warm in small but nourishing quantities.

Additional Recommendations

Meals should be reduced to two times per day and snacking should be avoided. Aerobic exercise is very good for getting the digestions, body, and mind moving. Walking a little

after meals helps to stimulate digestion for kapha. Kapha does the best with stimulants like caffeine a few cups of coffee, may actually be helpful for kapha. Kapha does the best with garlic and raw onion, but we still recommend they avoid these due to their excessively rajasic qualities. A little of these can be good to help stimulate the tamas of kapha. Drinks should be taken warm and sugary beverages avoided.

Herbal Formulas

Formulas for Digestion

The best herbal formula for manda agni (kapha digestion) trikaṭu the three pungent herbs (black pepper, pippali, and dry ginger) which is the best blend in general for stimulating agni (the digestive fire). hingvaṣṭaka cūrṇa or citrakādi bati may also be used for stimulating digestion. Herbal wines can be taken adding boiling water like jīrakāriṣṭham, drākṣariṣṭham, vidaṅgāriṣṭham, or pippalyāsva.

Formulas for Clearing Toxins

Herbs for clearing accumulated toxins like guggulu are excellent due to the excess of āma (toxins) for kapha. Triphala guggulu may be used for reducing āma and excess weight. For high blood sugar and diabetes gokṣurādi guggulu or amṛtādi guggulu may be used along with specific herbs for sugar like neem, turmeric, gurmar, cinnamon and shilajeet.

Mental Stimulant Formulas

Herbs that stimulate the mind while maintaining sattva are excellent like brahmi, madhuka parṇi (gotu kola), skull cap, (these three are somewhat cooling and should be balanced with warmer herbs like:) jyotiṣmati, vāca, kuṣṭha, st john's wort, roaemary, pippali, bibhitaki, and ginger.

Expectorant Formulas for Clearing Mucous

Herbs that clear the lungs like puṣkarmūl (elecampane), pippali, vāca, vāsa, and thyme are helpful to clear mucous... or chavana prasha or vāsāvaleha can be taken with tea made from betel leaves or fresh ginger. Alternately ½ tsp sitopalādi cūrṇa or talīsādi cūrṇa may be taken with honey.

Formulas for the Heart

For high blood pressure and heart conditions arjun is the best herb. It can be taken with amalakī, cardamom, punarnava, and a little guggulu or arjunāriṣṭham can be taken warm before meals (triphalāadi guggulu is also good).

Bitter Formulas for Clearing Oil and Fat

For toxins and congestion in the liver and gallbladder and excess of mucus and oil, mahaasudarshana chuurNa may be taken with honey or very warm water with lemon juice.

Yogāsanas

General Recommendations

Heating stimulating Yoga practices are best for kapha. Kapha requires the most exercise of any of the doshas. Exercises should be continued beyond the point of sweating to ensure a good aerobic workout. Active practices like the Sun Salutation are excellent for stimulating kapha. These practices can be practiced vigorously for a long period of time (20-45 minutes). Active practices help to stimulate the circulation and improve the health of the heart and body. Jogging on a soft surface (like a track) or vigorous biking or sports are excellent forms of exercise for kapha. It may be good for kapha to supplement their Yoga practice with plenty of aerobic exercise. In Asana practice, kapha can generally benefit from holding poses the longest. This is not aerobic exercise, which must be gotten in other ways, but it does stimulate and open the channels when the Asanas are held for extended periods of time. Kapha should start with a shorter time and work up to 5-10 minutes per pose. Their overall practice may be the longest out of all the doShas which helps to allow for this longer time for each specific pose.

Specific Poses

Stimulation is needed for kapha but care should be taken not to over-strain the heart if there is heart disease. Standing poses are good especially active poses which incorporate movement or stretching. Virabhadraasana is excellent. Backward bends are good because they are warming and open the chest, like the upward bow, camel, locust, and maricyaasana . Heating and stimulating āsanas are good like the lion pose and warrior pose and headstand. The bow pose is very good for stimulating digestion and is an excellent pose for kapha. Inverted poses are stimulating and good for kapha like the head stand, shoulder stand, and plow.

Poses to Avoid

Sitting poses increase kapha and should be avoided. The best sitting pose is simhāsana (lion pose), which can be used for meditation. Forward bends are not very good due to their cooling effects. In general all easy and restful poses should be avoided.

Care not to Strain

Kapha bodies tend to be bulky and lack flexibility, so care must be taken not to strain and over extend themselves. They should take care when practicing āsanas like the lotus, and not force their bodies to assume postures which are unnatural for their build. Kapha types and women in general must be encouraged to accept the natural, hefty build of their bodies. They should not try to make themselves thin. They should be encouraged to love their bodies as they are and not try to fit the media stereotypes for women.

Rest

Kapha needs the least rest of all the doṣas, but some small amount of rest is good for them after strenuous practices. They should take care not to fall asleep. A few minutes (5 or so) of corpse pose or a relaxing sitting pose like the easy pose is good for kapha. It is good for kapha to do some prāṇāyāma after āsana practice and active meditations.

Prāṇāyāma for Kapha

Prāṇāyāma can be a powerful way to stimulate kapha. The more forceful techniques of prāṇāyāma are best for kapha, but these should be done cautiously for their extreme power to influence the body and mind. They should be learned from a qualified teacher and practiced with great caution in the case of heart disease. If there is any pain in the chest, the practice should be stopped immediately. Bhastrikā and kapāla bbāti prāṇāyāma are good for kapha. They are very heating and stimulating. These practices in particular should be done only under the guidance of a qualified teacher. They should be done for an extremely short duration due to their intense power (5-10 minutes per day). People should start with a minute or two of practice and gradually increase. Doing these practices for much longer will not benefit the health and it will start to bring up many karmas. This is an intense process which can only be safely endured under the guidance of a qualified Guru. A shorter practice as described above will help to increase warmth, stimulate the mind, and clear mucous from the chest and lungs. It can counter fatigue and help to reduce excess fat. Vāta and pitta are both dramatically increased by these practices, but kapha may benefit from small amounts. Nāḍī śodhana (purification of the subtle channels) can be practiced occasionally for cleansing the subtle body and physical body. Right nostril breathing is a warming, stimulating practice which may be practiced freely to counter all types of kapha imbalances. If the breath is not strained, this practice may be safely performed by kapha for long periods (up to 45 minutes at a time). This technique may also be combined with bhastrika or kapala bati to further increase their heating and stimulating qualities.

Mantra for Kapha

Mantra recommendations should ideally be made by a qualified Guru or Astrologer. Without these recommendations it is best to use hymns and stotras which are somewhat more balancing than the shorter seed mantras and root mantras for the deities. Hot

stimulating mantras are best for kapha. Mantras of Rudra, Durgā, Kālī, Nārasimha, Subrahmaṇya, Rāma, the Sun, Gāyatrī, and Bhairava are best for kapha. The stimulating mantras of Hanuman and Sarasvati are also useful. Cool mantras and mantras which increase bulk and steadiness should be avoided. This includes the mantras of Gaṇeśa, Lakṣmi, śiva, Pārvati, Viṣṇu, and Kṛṣṇa.

Gem stones for Kapha

Wearing the wrong gemstone can be very dangerous because it can increase the energies of planets which cause illness, suffering, loss, and death. Gem stone recommendations should ideally be made by a qualified Guru or Astrologer. The best gems stones for Kapha in general are Warm stimulating stones like Ruby, Yellow Sapphire, or Tiger's eye. Blue sapphire, though cooling helps to clear toxins and may be useful. Great care should be taken when using blue sapphire to discern the effects of Saturn in the birth chart. If one is not sure which gemstone will be best, the substitute stone (uparatna) are always safer and pendants made from all nine stones are balancing to all types.