

avayava - "organs" (or body part)

There are Saṁskṛta names for various body parts and internal organs. These concepts are fundamental to the application of āyurvedic theories. For example: yakṛt means "liver; dhamanī means artery; and granthis is the word for glands (or abnormal growths like tumors).

All of the various parts of the body described by modern Western medicine, have been understood by the ancient ṛsis, including the cells, glands, immune system, and endocrine system. āyurveda describes these organs in different ways than modern medicine.

There is not always a direct coorespondence between the āyurvedic organs and the modern organs. āyurvedic organs have been classified according to their functions. Western anatomy has classified organs largely by their physical form. There is no exact match for example in āyurveda for the small intestine. The small intestine in Western anatomy is a tubelike structure. In āyurveda there is a roughly cooresponding organ called the grahani. Graha means to grasp, and the function of the grahani is to "grasp" nutrients from ingested foods. The grahani includes portions of the duodenum and the upper portion of the small intestine. Though this āyurvedic organ is different from its Western counterpart, it is a valid organ. The āyurvedic system of classification of organs is quite advanced because it is based upon a deep understand of the functions of the body parts. It should not be viewed as simple or ignorant just because it is different.

Several organs are very important in āyurvedic practice. A list of a few organs with their Saṁskṛta names follows:

koṣṭha - digestive tract

āmāṣaya (or jaṭhara) - stomach

grahaṇī duodenum - small intestine

pakvāṣaya (or antra))- Large intestine - colon

yakṛt - liver

vṛkka - kidneys

gulma - spleen

svākośa - lungs

Organs and the pulse

The vitality of several organs is read from the pulse. Pulse diagnosis can be a means to early detection of dis-ease. Many conditions may be recognized through the pulse before they can be diagnosed even by the most complex diagnostic tools of modern medicine. One of the best means to prevent dis-ease is early detection. The organs read from the pulse include:

Large intestine
Gallbladder
Pericardium
Bladder
Stomach
Small intestine
Lungs
Liver
Circulation
Kidney
Spleen
Heart

Organs and time of day

āyurveda teaches that each time of day relates to one of the doṣas and also to one of several major organs. āyurvedic practitioners often deduce which doṣas and organs are involved in a disorder by discerning which time of day symptoms manifest most. A list of the doṣas and organs as they relate to specific times of day follows.

3-5 am lungs (vāta)
5-7 am large intestine (vāta)
7-9 am stomach (kapha)
9-11 am spleen (kapha)
11 am - 1 pm heart (pitta)
1-3 pm small intestine (pitta)
3-5 pm bladder (vāta)
5-7 pm kidneys (vāta)
7-9 pm pericardium (kapha)
9-11 pm tridosha (kapha)
11 pm - 1 am gallbladder (pitta)
1-3 am liver (pitta)