

# AYURVEDA FOR LIFE

## 7 Steps to Health

In order to change your health you usually need to change some of your habits. The people who benefit the most from herbal treatment make some positive changes to their lifestyle as well. These changes can be on various levels; emotional, dietary or lifestyle adjustments.

## 7 Steps to Health

- Eat a fresh and healthy diet: Change your diet according to your constitution and the season.
- Seasonal living: Adjust your routine according to the season.
- Rest: Take adequate rest; at least 7 hours of sleep per night.
- Exercise: Take sufficient exercise; four 30 minute sessions of aerobic exercise per week.
- Relax! Learn a relaxation technique; yoga, tai chi, deep breathing and try to practice 15 minutes per day.
- Herbal supplementation: Take herbal supplements regularly to assist your body's own healing powers.
- Peace and love: Make peace with everyone you know, let the love flow, you know it makes sense.

## Lifestyle tips

Help yourself by including each of these recommendations as much as you can in your life. Many research studies have proved that these practices help you feel better and live a healthier life.

- Exercise: Moderate exercise is known to improve health and immunity.
- Yoga: The benefits of regular yoga practice are invaluable to a healthy immune system.
- Breathing: Regular exercises to bring life-giving prana into the system and regulate the flow of vitality around the entire system.
- Meditation: Meditation has been shown to improve cellular immunity in geriatric patients (Kiecolt-Glaser). Relaxation and assertiveness training improves immune helper T-cells in HIV infected men (Antoni). Melanoma patients who learnt stress management had

- improved immune cell function and greater survival rates (Fawzy).
- Emotional expression: Supportive-expressive therapy doubled survival time in women with metastatic breast cancer (Spiegel). It also improved mood and reduced depression, anxiety and anger (Goodwin). Writing about upsets improves immunity and health (Pennebaker, Smyth).
  - Regular massage: Massage improves immune cell activity in HIV infected patients (Ironson). Massage increases weight gain in premature babies (Field). Massage decreases inflammation and increases serotonin levels (Field). Massage reduces pain and anxiety in cancer patients (Corbin).
  - Surround yourself in a pleasant environment: Stressful visual stimulation depresses the immune response; uplifting stimulation enhances it (McClelland). Lavender oil has been shown to reduce aggressive behavior in patients (Lee).
  - Sleep: Getting the correct amount of sleep is essential for your overall well being and immunity. We all know how viruses and bacteria can affect our health but modern research has shown how much our emotions influence our well-being;
  - Loneliness reduces immune Natural Killer (NK) cell activity (Kilecot-Glaser). These NK cells are the first line of defence in mopping up invading bacteria and viruses. Lonely students have reduced NK cell activity and higher Epstein Barr virus levels (the virus implicated in ME and Chronic Fatigue).
  - Excessive stress reduces immunity. It has been shown that caretakers of dementia patients suffer from reduced immunity. People under extreme academic stress show reduced levels of lymphocyte and interleukin production (both responsible for assisting the immune response) and higher cortisol levels, indicating a challenged immune system not functioning as well as it could. (Guidi)
  - Bereavement causes reduced immunity with reduced lymphocyte activity in men (Schliefer) and depression post bereavement causing increased cancer and death.
  - Marital conflict also affects immunity raising Blood Pressure, cortisol and immune NK cell activity (Miller).

### **The Ayurvedic way to a healthy life**

From the Ayurvedic point of view good health is about your whole way of life being rejuvenating and beneficial to yourself and the world around you. Make sure that you get enough:

- Pure air

- Pure water
- Pure food
- Balanced digestion
- Reduced toxins
- A strong heart and balanced emotions
- Avoidance of negative habits and behavioural patterns that can reduce your inherent immune reserve.
- A regular lifestyle: Ayurveda lays much emphasis on prevention so as to prevent the degenerative cascade that can occur. This is an orderly routine that balances personal hygiene, nourishment, exercise, relaxation, creativity, wealth and love.
- Protection: your daily activities should be 100% healing with active avoidance of immune depressing chemicals and foods to keep your immune system intact
- Tonification: daily use of strengthening herbs and foods that will rejuvenate your entire system.