



From Body to Super Body

Boosting Immunity with Ayurveda

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From body to super-body, from everyday state of mind to transcendental states of mind, and from connecting deep within with our true self to establishing our identity in our universal, divine self– is that not the goal of spirituality, medical fantasy, biological mythology, and new age healing promises?



However, the sages who crafted Ayurveda, the ancient healing art and science of a happy life, health and longevity from ancient India proclaim: Yes, our fantasy can become a possibility. Transformation at every level, body, mind and soul is the promise of Ayurveda. The sages who crafted Ayurveda were consumed with the idea of exploring our inbuilt natural intelligence or immunity principle to withstand the wear and tear of living. They called this immunity principle as “Oja” in Sanskrit. When Oja is consciously cultivated and enhanced, our average bodies with average life expectancy can transform into super bodies with an enhanced life span and

actually manifest a quantum state of health that is vibrant with ease, energy and flow.

Ayurveda recognizes profound interconnections between the three dimensions of our existence, matter, mind and consciousness and declared Oja to be a by-product of a happy balance between the three. The art and science of Ayurveda recommends that we make deliberate attempts to recognize and work with Oja and learn ways and means to nurture; enhance and protect it. Ayurvedic medicine takes it upon itself to restore, make better, optimize and flower the human body to its optimum zenith.



If We Only Knew Better

Oja is our inherent capacity to withstand physical, psychic and existential suffering and recover expediently from disease and even prevent falling sick. However, Ayurveda cautions that in ignorance, we can fritter away the goods and lose our God-given natural immunity, live out a miserable life and die an untimely early death that could have been prevented. Perhaps Oja is a prize that only the wise can claim, through a life lived in harmony with material and spiritual laws of nature... if we only knew better.

Ayurvedic medicine recognizes the amazing regenerative power of the body, its tissues and of each and every cell. Given half a chance, right nutrition and positive living conditions, the body always likes to heal itself.

Body is a Self-healing Entity

Body systems and processes are actively trying to restore equilibrium and return to homeostasis, reports Ayurveda. According to the sages, this is powerful evidence that our body – a miracle of nature and a package of energy, consciousness and intelligence wants us to work with it naturally, using natural laws and principles that it lives by; and it will happily cooperate with us. Every event, big or small, is a metamorphosis of consciousness; and in Ayurveda, the human body becomes a powerful ground or field of transformation of consciousness, and Oja or our immunity is the reward we reap.

Ayurveda does not view our body as a battle ground but as a field of healing potential, in which lies buried the rare and potent, but mostly latent gem of disease prevention, self-healing and self-regeneration. The Shakti or power to self-transform or achieve a total make-over called Kaya Kalpa in Sanskrit, is none other than Ayurveda's rather generous and expanded version of modern day concept of immunity and the field of preventative medicine. Oja bathes each and every cell of our body, imparting them with innate strength and immunity. Oja is prevalent throughout the body, but its main seat is the human heart. Since the heart is the seat of human mind and emotions, the quantity and quality of Oja directly influences the mind-body connections and the nature and quality of physical, mental and emotional life we will experience.



Importance of Digestion for Immunity

The science of Ayurveda declares that optimum digestion is our best ally in building our immunity because Oja is the essence of our digested food. The ultimate, ultra refined, finale of a healthy digestion is Oja.

If we want to build a healthy immunity, we should not merely blindly swallow pills and supplements – but actually take stock of what we are eating in our daily diet, and then survey how we are digesting, adequately or not; and further, eliminating what we have eaten, or not. This is so because Oja is not a direct reflection of what we eat, but rather of that which we manage to digest, and unfortunately also of that, which we fail to digest! When food is digested well, with maximum efficiency and minimum toxic side products, then the quality of Oja produced is also of a higher standard. If the food that we eat is laced with toxins, additives, colors, fillers, chemicals and pesticides and the food is overly processed and on top of that genetically altered, our Oja is also affected.

The Ayurvedic path of healing and reclaiming lost immunity begins with restoring normal digestion. This is accomplished by first establishing a digestion friendly daily routine and eating protocol. Please refer to the chart for Ayurvedic recommendations for a healthy digestion.

Ayurvedic Recommendations for Healthy Digestion

- Discard one size fits all diet recommendation and adapt customized diet solutions that complement your unique Ayurveda mind-body type. It is advised that you visit a qualified Ayurvedic consultant to figure out for your body type.

- Incorporate in your meals six tastes - sweet, salty, sour, astringent, bitter and pungent that help keep the digestive process regulated. Of course, the proportion of intake of the different tastes depends on your unique mind-body type.

- As far as possible, eat cooked foods especially if your digestive activity is lethargic and lifestyle sedentary. Cooked foods are easier to digest and transform into Oja quicker than raw foods that are often hard to break down.

- Meals should be eaten while still warm or even hot, as the heat in the food will ignite the digestive fire and indirectly promote digestion.

- Ayurveda recommends adding at least some fat to meals (such as ghee or clarified butter or natural oil). Fats promote secretion of digestive juices. Fats also invariably nourish all seven bodily tissues and increase the strength (Bala) and immunity (Oja) of the body.

- Each meal should be consumed only after the previous meal is completely digested. Give four to six hours between meals. Snacking confuses or over-taxes the digestive process. Lunch should be the biggest meal of the day.

Evening meals should preferably be taken before sunset or soon thereafter.

- Skipping meals; erratic meal times; taking meals late at night and immediately going to bed produces indigestion, gaseous distention, hyperacidity and disturbed sleep. Give 2-3 hours after the evening meal before going to bed.

- Typically one fourth of the stomach should be filled with solid food, one fourth with semi-solids, one fourth by water and one fourth should be kept completely empty for air so that digestion can take place appropriately.

- Food should be chewed slowly, each bite of food slowly and mindfully masticated. This slowing down will prevent over-eating that occurs when we eat too fast. Ayurveda cautions against eating when we are emotionally unsettled and recommends approaching food with respectful attention and positive expectation.



Digestion Enhancing Beneficial Diet

Cereals	Rice, Wheat, Barley, Pearl Millet, Red rice, Finger Millet or African Millet
Pulses	Green gram (Mung dal), Bengal gram (Chana dal), Red lentil (Masoor dal) Red gram or Pigeon pea (Tuar dal)
Meat	Deer, Goat, common Quail, Partridge, Pigeon, Carp family (Rohu), Cock, White Swan
Vegetables	Chinese melons or Bottle gourd (Dudhi), Horse Radish, Snake-gourd, China spinach, Egg plant, Lemons, Fresh ginger
Fruit	Indian Gooseberry (Amalaki), Black grapes, Mango, Papaya, Pomegranate, Dates, Figs
Dry Fruit	Almond, Walnut, Coconut
Milk	Buffalo's, Cow's and Goat's milk, Ghee or clarified butter from cow's milk, Butter milk
Water	Pure fresh water
Salt	Rock salt
Oil	Sesame oil, Coconut oil
Sweeteners	Honey, Sugarcane juice, Old Jaggery
Spices	Ginger, Asafetida, Garlic, Coriander, Cardamom, Cumin seeds



Special herbs that first and foremost restore the digestive fire, and thereby, ensure their own digestion and transformation first within the body, may also be recommended. Some of the popular and time tested digestion restoring herbs are garlic, fresh ginger, *Cyperus rotundus* (Musta), *Mesua ferrea* (Nagkesaar), *Zingiber officinale* (Shunthi), *Plumbago zeylanica* (Chitrak), *Tinospora cordifolia* (Guduchi), and *Swertia chirata* (Kiratikta).

Immunity Boosters called Rasayanas

Rasayana is an age old clinical specialty of Ayurveda specializing in rejuvenation and boosting Oja. Rasayana therapy enhances Oja production in the body by way of specialized herbs and foods that accelerate the delivery of appropriate nutrition to the body tissues and thereby

tremendously enhance the biological competence of the body systems. Generally, as long as our lab work and basic tests fall within the “normal range” our doctor declares us as “healthy,” no matter we feel like death has visited us already!

Ayurveda's branch Rasayana takes into consideration the fact that what is “good enough” can be made better; and better, can be transformed into magnificent. Ayurvedic sages envisioned a state of health which is a positive, over and above, abundant, fruitful, flourishing and over flowing state of well-being; and not merely the absence of disease that most mainstream doctors shoot for, all over the world.

The sages of Ayurveda prescribed specialized vitalizers by way of food and herbs that replenish the body with vital ingredients or micronutrients. Rasayana therapy boosts our inner healing powers, nourishes the body tissues and vitalizes the juices (rasa) that feeds it, and purifies us at every level



Digestion Enhancing Rasayanas

Ayurvedic scientists identified a critical variety of Rasayanas that directly promote digestion and metabolism and in doing so; enhance indirectly, the nutritional status of the body. Ayurvedic scientists understood that impaired digestion or absorption can lead to mal-absorption and poor quality body tissues and Oja. Rasayanas like (Bhallataka), Piper longum (Pippali), Terminalia chebula (Haritaki), etc. act as anabolizers.

including the mind. In this sense Ayurveda's Rasayana therapy predates the modern trend of dietary supplements, nutraceuticals, and functional foods which are a brave attempt on the part of people to reach this same expansive state of health.

Rasayanas delay aging and enhance Oja and promote "intelligence, memory, strength, youth, luster, sweetness of voice and vigor." By nourishing in successive order plasma, blood, muscle, adipose, skeleton, nerve and sexual tissues of the body, the entire being is slowly but steadily fed, revitalized and supported at a deep level. Further, the Rasayanas not only qualitatively feed the tissue cells but also ignite and support the metabolic processes of the body that make possible permanent transformation at a cellular level. Also, Rasayanas do not have side effects, and only impact positively to qualify as Rasayanas. They are non-toxic in normal doses and are amphoteric, in that they won't "over-tonify" the body.

Rasayanas include single and simple herbs to compound herbal medicines such as the well-known immunity boosting jam *Chywanprasha*; food-based nutrition is also recommended by the sages of Ayurveda such as ghee (clarified butter), cow milk, almonds, honey, dates, figs, cumin, coconut, sesame, etc. These Rasayanas, when consumed consciously and systematically, over a period of time, in a measured quantity, add to the pool of nutrition that the body uses for its development, maintenance and excellence purposes.

When the tissues that compose the human body are of superior quality due to superior nutrition, the level and quality of Oja increases in the body. One can expect increased life span enhanced immunity, and finally, improved mental competence. These three pluses together bring about profound rejuvenation in the human being.

Channel Cleansing Rasayanas

Another group of Rasayanas promote the functioning of the micro-circulatory channels (srotas) in the body. Various bio-channels circulate and deliver nutrients to the various tissues, and thereby, ensure tissue perfusion. It is therefore important that these channels are never blocked. There are special Rasayanas that cleanse obstructions from all types of channels and can be considered as nature's sweepers that clean and remove build up, plaque and debris and sticky toxins from the insides of large and subtle, visible and invisible networks of channels that constitute the human body.

Guggul is one such famous cleansing Rasayana that works on the bio-channels in the body (anti-coagulant, hypo-cholesterolemic). The now famous garlic (rasana) has been used for ages in Ayurveda to de-clog body channels (normalize lipid metabolism), etc.

Ayurvedic scientists researched for optimum Rasayanas and prescribed them based upon age. The chart below shows recommended Rasayana for various age groups:

Age-wise Rasayanas

Age	Desired effect/System under pressure	Recommended Rasayana
1-10	Strength	Gmelina arborea (Kashmari)
11-20	Growth	Withania somnifera (Ashwagandha)
21-30	Complexion	Embllica officinalis (Amalaki)
31-40	Mind	Convolvulus puricaulis (Shankapushpi)
41-50	Skin	Eclipta alba (Bhringraj)
51-60	Eyes	Celastrus paniculatus (Jyotishmati)
61-70	Reproductive	Mucuna prurita (Kapikacchu)
71-80	Motivation/courage	Sida cordifolia (Bala Mool)
81-90	Intellect and sense organs	Bacopa monniera (Brahmi)
91-100	Organs of action	Sida cordifolia (Bala Mool)

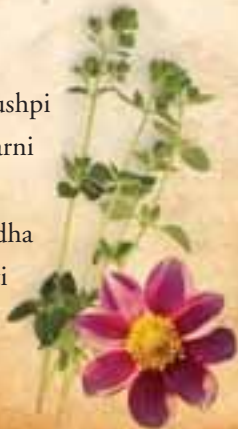


Rasayanas for the Mind

There is an entirely specialized group of Rasayanas called Medhya Rasayana. The herbs belonging to this group are excellent for rejuvenating both body and mind and revitalize mental faculties and functions like memory, intelligence, will power, resolution, mental alertness, dexterity etc.

Regular intake of these Rasayanas keeps the mind more balanced (neither too high nor low nor fluctuating) and these brain tonics are not addictive and can be consumed by children and adults alike. The Medhya Rasayanas listed below exhibit psychotropic and anti-anxiety benefits according to science of Ayurveda.

Bacopa monniera	Brahmi
Convolvulus puricaulis	Shankapushpi
Centella asiatica	Mandukparni
Acorous calamus	Vacha
Withania somnifera	Ashwagandha
Celastrus paniculata	Jyotishmati
Nardostachys jatamansi	Jatamansi
Terminalia cordifolia	Guduchi



After undergoing a course of Rasayana therapy, you may look the same, but you are not the same anymore. In fact, on closer examination you may have a new luster and healthy glow that you have never had before. Now, you are healthier, inside out. That's the level of transformation that Ayurvedic Rasayana therapy, conceived thousands of years prior to the modern day explosion in sales of vitamins and health foods, can deliver.

The dietary supplements and health food industry is one of the fastest growing industry today and it is fueled by none other than people's desire for positive, better, and preventive health. Now, even modern medicine is beginning to acknowledge (and even advocate) that after all, perhaps the good old secret to health is nothing more than "good food and exercise." As simple as that!

Panchakarma, which is a series of Ayurvedic body performed once a year in a particular season is another excellent way of normalizing the inner bio-forces called Doshas, enhance Oja, increase natural strength, boost ability to work and promote resistance to disease (vyadikshamata), naturally.

** Please consult with a qualified Ayurvedic consultant and your MD before you take any herbs and Ayurvedic treatments.*

Our Personal Choices and Oja

Our Oja is hard earned. While we are all born with a fixed amount to get us going (starter pack - so to say); we soon begin manufacturing, storing and circulating our own via food and via the happy comforts of a life lived in balance, and a mind seeking and radiating harmony. Oja, which is our ability to cope with a variety of stressors, and ultimately transcend, both physically, and mentally; is the end result of a long process of digestion that begins at the mouth.

Upon reflection, the mouth is hardly the beginning of this process. This process of immunity is like a tree; it has its roots in our life itself, and its branches spread throughout our body. Oja comes from our life's choices, it is shaped by the life we choose to lead, and then it turns around and protects this very life. This tree of our life draws its health giving ingredients from our lifestyle, our food habits and from our day-to-day experiences. These inputs in the form of life experiences, thoughts and foods can be either flung into our body "unconsciously" as in fast life, fast food, chaotic and jam packed schedules; or, these inputs are offered into the body as flowers would be offered to an altar - with mindfulness, loving care, fine attention, discrimination and with responsibility.

Thus, all that we eat, think, do ultimately transform into our Oja and plays a role in shaping the quantity and quality of our immunity. Stressful events eat away the Oja, and, life lived in surrender to what is and choosing to be at peace with what is — nourishes Oja. This is why many diseases manifest when a person is under prolonged stress. Even sudden unmanageable amounts of stress can quickly deplete Oja and even cause death.

Since Oja is really a product of food, naturally what we eat will affect the quality of our Oja. And what thoughts we choose to think and what actions we do as a consequence will affect the quality of what we eat. Our life then dictates the foods we eat, where we obtain them, how we cook them. Our foods - are they generally natural and organic, or are they more often than not canned, frozen, and preserved, simple or complex, old and stale leftovers or freshly cooked, inspired or expired, alive or dead?

Our life, as we choose to uniquely lead it (after all, we all have free will), gets sucked into the roots of this tree — idiosyncrasies, eating and lifestyle habits, moment to moment choices, conditioning, frozen and canned foods, frozen and canned belief systems — the whole deal; and ultimately it manifests into the fruit of Oja, that sparkling magical fruit that once eaten to full, every piece savored, delighted and rejoiced... makes us immortal, undefeatable, and impregnable forts of immunity, strength, and power.



Oja – Hard Earned Indeed

Thus, for reclaiming and enhancing our immunity, this Oja is a precious ingredient indeed! Oja is not to be found on supermarkets shelves, or inside beautifully designed jars and tubes, certainly not waiting for us inside pharmacologically manufactured state-of-the-art drugs and least of all present in chemically synthesized vitamins and supplements.

Our Oja is right inside us, ready to sprout forth with our calm and nurturing choices tempered with wisdom; like a tender first flower, fragile to the abuse of wrong foods, chemically manufactured drugs, and havoc releasing lifestyles. Oja cannot and will not thrive in flooded bodies, stuffed digestions, and stressed minds. Oja will come forward spontaneously in a life lived consciously, peacefully and in harmony with all that one sees, thinks, does and is.

Behavior that Boosts Immunity

At every moment, when faced with a myriad of conflicting choices, we can decide if we want to go over board and follow some short lived logic, fad, connection or even so called clinical proof that fails us in time; or do we follow the good old middle path of sanity, moderation and memory?

Why memory? In the process of reclaiming and enhancing our immunity, it is for us to remember the truth that deep within each one us is the spiritual womb of the Self, and from there emanates within each one of us, a profound wisdom and power to self-heal and self-transform. This is why the sages of Ayurveda created a whole different class of Rasayana called Achara Rasayana or behavioral code of ethics that points to the immune enhancing effect of life lived in dedication to a quiet spirituality, humane truth, peace in relationships, and self-control of senses, courage and calmness in adversity.

The sages encourage developing healthy habits and living by disciplines, cultivating pleasant speech, practicing compassion towards all beings and creatures and if possible, doing active philanthropy. Ayurveda also recommends regular introspection and diligent mindfulness over anger, greed, jealousy and other negative emotions that deplete



Oja. Healthy behaviors and attitudes, consciously chosen and practiced in day to day life, positively impact the quality of our life and thereby boost immunity or Oja exponentially.

Thus, the sages of Ayurveda revealed in one master stroke their understanding of the role of stress and negative thoughts on immunity; and proceeded to teach the rest of us how to reclaim lost strength, vitality and our ability to resist disease and untimely decay – Oja — by consciously enhancing the quality of our consciousness, modifying the content of our thoughts and improving the quality of our food. ●



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