

## Chapter 3

# Ayurvedic detox programs

~ to maintain the digestive system in a state of balance and harmony ~



The thing we fear the most is not that we will shrivel up and become insignificant little people.  
The thing we fear the most is that we could become as big and grand as we are capable of becoming.

~ Nelson Mandela ~

# Introduction

Every day billions of atoms and molecules are effortlessly replaced and in less than a year we literally have a completely new body. We therefore have the ability to reverse some of the damage we may have caused due to our bad habits, lifestyle choices and poor diet. We can interrupt the process of neglect and decay and replace unhealthy molecules, cells and energy patterns with healthy, life-sustaining new ones.

Once we begin to relax our mind, control our emotions and cleanse our body; especially the gastro-intestinal tract - we begin to experience better health. The colon is intimately connected to all the tissues and organs of the body. This is why the simple process of cleansing the colon can so dramatically affect the whole body and relieve so many of our health issues in such a short period of time.

Poor lifestyle and dietary choices cause the vital systems of our bodies to become energetically imbalanced, our enzymatic activity to decrease and our digestive capacity to be impaired. As a consequence, the food we eat, however wholesome, is no longer able to provide the tissues with the nutrients they need to repair and maintain themselves and our immune system, nervous system and endocrine system all begin to malfunction.

In the short term this may simply result in excess fat, heart irregularities, liver problems, constipation and indigestion. However, as more toxic material accumulates, especially on the intestinal wall, malabsorption increases and assimilation and metabolism of nutrients to our cells and deeper tissues are hindered still further. The long term result is chronic illness, low energy, low self-esteem and a disturbed mind. Fortunately Ayurveda has many solutions to these problems; the main one being Panchakarma therapy.

## How we accumulate toxins in the body

Our bodies are in a constant state of repair and renewal. During this process we naturally produce metabolic waste which must be eliminated effectively in order to stay healthy. We are also exposed to bacteria, viruses and other pathogens on a daily basis. As long as our immune and digestive system is strong, healthy and balanced it is easily able to cope with this onslaught without any adverse reactions or illnesses.

However, if we constantly eat devitalised, refined and processed food; breathe polluted air; drink impure liquids; take pharmaceutical drugs; entertain negative thoughts; fail to exercise; work too hard; suffer from stress; sleep excessively; go to bed late; wake late; eat at the wrong time of day and eat foods inappropriate for our body-type, toxins can build up to levels that the body is unable to cope with adequately. We then become tired and depressed and begin to suffer from ill health.

As the toxins (*ama*) build up they begin to solidify and crystallise and interfere with the functioning of the tissues. Eventually they cause hardening of the joints, muscles and bones, blocking of the arteries and impairment of the digestive process. Chronic constipation, indigestion, bloating, bad breath, excess weight, water retention, fatty deposits, cysts, cellulite, anxiety, heaviness, tiredness, pain in the lower back and joints, persistent headaches, varicose veins and other more serious complaints also begin to manifest.

The white coating on the tongue each morning gives a good indication of the amount of mental stress and physical toxicity in our tissues. If our digestion is strong and the body is healthy this toxic residue (*ama*) doesn't appear - a newborn baby's tongue is pink and lacks the white, toxic coating of many adults today.

*Ama* is essentially undigested food and the coating on the tongue becomes especially thick and profuse if the colon is functioning poorly. It usually becomes even more noticeable after eating and/or drinking late in the

evening. At this time of day the body is unable to digest large quantities of food and undigested residues are left permeating the bodily tissues. This is one of the main reasons muscles can feel stiff, sore, tired and heavy in the morning; the muscle fibres are literally tangled or 'glued' together by thick, sticky mucus or *ama* (the same as the coating on the tongue) and they can no longer glide smoothly and freely over each other.

As soon as we become aware of dis-harmony in the body, whether it be tiredness, stress, negativity, anger, anxiousness, depression or physical symptoms such as nausea, skin rashes, pain or stiffness, we should quickly try and redress the balance by reducing the amount of toxins entering the body whilst also reducing the toxins stored in the body. This can only be achieved by changing our diet and lifestyle, increasing our digestive capacity, cleansing our colon and detoxifying our bodily tissues. Just changing our diet or taking a few herbal remedies will be unsuccessful, or at least limited in its affect, if we do not also cleanse the body at the same time.

Once the digestive system has been purified, balanced and strengthened, the ingestion of pure, unrefined foods and the taking of herbal teas and remedies will start to have the desired affect on the areas of the body we specifically wish to improve. Our ultimate goal should be to create constant energy, vitality, lightness, love, compassion and joy which are our inherent birthright and allow us to act efficiently, effectively and appropriately at all times; they are also the true measure of a healthy mind and body.

To summarise by way of an analogy; perhaps one of the best ways to understand the effects or consequences of toxins in the body is by viewing it in a similar way to a rain barrel. The barrel collects rainwater and as long as some of the water is drawn off regularly it will never overflow and damage the area surrounding it. If we view the human body in a similar way; as long as we don't ingest and fill the tissues with too many toxins, we can flush them from our body before any long-term damage occurs to our vital organs. Furthermore, we are also able to increase the size of the barrel itself through the practice of some of Ayurveda's more subtle healing modalities such as rejuvenation (*rasayana*) therapy, gem therapy, colour therapy, mantra therapy, yoga practice, breathing techniques (*pranayama*) and meditation.

On the other hand, if we constantly ingest toxic material over a prolonged period of time the body finally reaches a point where it is no longer able to process and eliminate them properly and they begin to damage our tissues and organs. Our health suffers and we become prone to diseases of the mind and body - the barrel is now overflowing. The longer we ignore the signs and symptoms and refuse to change our ways, the greater the likelihood of a serious chronic problem developing and the harder it becomes to regain control over the problem.

Twice yearly courses of panchakarma treatments of ten to fourteen days duration help maintain the body in peak condition – they keep the barrel from overflowing. However, once a chronic ailment had become established it may be necessary to undertake a Panchakarma program for up to two months duration before the damage is undone

# Background to panchakarma

*Panchakarma* is the Sanskrit term for detox or purification and translates as the five (*pancha*) actions (*karma*) necessary to cleanse the body of accumulated waste material.

It is a special branch of Ayurveda, an ancient Indian system of medicine, which has been in practice for thousands of years for the purpose of both enhancing health and well-being and rectifying long-standing, chronic diseases. It rejuvenates and revitalises the mind and body and systematically strengthens and balances all the bodies' major tissues and organs using a wide spectrum of therapeutic measures.

The modern trend is to detox the body with herbal concoctions, coffee enemas and colonic irrigation. However, these methods are often only partially successful as they fail to treat the body in an integrated way and only target limited organs of the body. They tend to help with the elimination of water-based toxins only and leave the more resistant, and potentially disease causing, oil-based toxins behind.

Panchakarma treatment however, is unique in its ability to effectively eliminate both water-based and oil-based toxins from the body and in doing so helps to rejuvenate and revitalise the whole body. Through a series of therapeutic procedures that are tailored to the client's individual constitution or imbalance (*prakruti*) it systematically helps release, melt, loosen, mobilise and eliminate toxins and impurities from all the bodily issues.

Once our tissues have been cleansed and our digestive fire has been strengthened, the food and herbs we eat are then capable of being effectively metabolised by the body. Improvement in health is then possible.

## The benefits of Panchakarma

- Cleanses the digestive tract
- Increases energy and vitality
- Balances the mind
- Strengthens the immune system
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Improves digestion, assimilation
- Eliminates disease-causing free-radicals
- Strengthens the endocrine system
- Creates clarity of mind
- Releases negative emotions
- Reduces mental 'chatter'
- Increases muscle strength and tone
- Strengthens and regenerates bone tissue
- Balances the nervous system
- Decreases cholesterol
- Unblocks arteries
- Balances high and low blood pressure
- Eliminates toxins and metabolic waste
- Detoxifies the liver and blood
- Increases health and happiness
- Improves complexion and skin tone

For a detox to be totally successful we must first rest the mind and the digestive system as these are our two most energy-demanding activities. This allows us to maximize the amount of potential energy available for cleansing, re-balancing and strengthening the body. The next step is to gently move waste products and toxins (*ama*) from where they are lodged in the deeper structures of the body and to eliminate them either through the nose and mouth (through *nasya* & *vamana* therapy), the gastro-intestinal tract (through enema or *basti* therapy) or through the pores of the skin (through heating or sweating therapy - *svedana*). Finally, we then need to nourish and strengthen the body. To safely and comfortably flush toxins and impurities from the body requires several important stages.

# The seven stages of a panchakarma detox rejuvenation program

## Stage one – palliation (*shamana*)

In order to rebalance the mind and body with these powerfully relaxing and luxurious panchakarma therapies the digestive system needs to be functioning properly and the tissues need to be cleansed of accumulated metabolic waste (*ama*). This is achieved by following a light, easily digestible diet for a period of at least one week before the main treatment program begins. Herbal digestive stimulants are usually given to enhance this process and to spark the digestive fire (*agni*). This pre-detox diet necessitates avoiding heavy foods such as meat and dairy and eating only light food such as rice, vegetables and lentils (*dhal*). Light exercise, walking in the fresh air, meditation and yoga are also indicated. Contra-indications during the seven stages of the Panchakarma program include: anger, excessive talking, shouting, travelling, sleeping during day, sitting too long, over-eating, eating before previous meal is digested, unwholesome diet, coitus, excessive exercise, sun bathing, swimming, extreme heat, extreme cold, windy weather, cold baths and cold drinks.

## Stage two – pre-treatment (*purvakarma*)

Purvakarma involves ingesting a fatty agent (*snehana*) such as ghee (clarified butter) for several days in order to gradually penetrate all seven bodily tissues and release their stored toxins.

- Day 1: Cleanses the colon of *ama* and *mala* (waste)
- Day 2: Balances and nourishes the *vata* areas of the body and calms the mind
- Day 3: Balances and nourishes the *pitta* areas, especially the blood (*rakta*) and lymph (*rasa*)
- Day 4: Draws toxins from the *kapha* areas of the body, especially the muscle tissue (*mamsa*)
- Day 5: Draws toxins from the *kapha* areas of the body especially the adipose/fat tissue (*meda*)
- Day 6: Draws toxins from bone tissue and balances *vata* (*asthi*)
- Day 7: Draws toxins from the bone marrow and nerve tissue and balances *vata* (*majja*)
- Day 8: Draws toxins from the reproductive tissue (semen/ovum - *shukra*)

The *snehana* substance is taken early in the morning and replaces breakfast. We then eat only when this has been fully digested – this may be anything from six to twelve hours depending on the amount consumed. During this phase of the detox it is important for us to eat only when we are properly hungry – often we experience a ‘false’ hunger which can be eased by sipping hot water.

Meanwhile, eating a light diet, low in fat and calories helps break down and release stored body fat and also allows impurities within the fat cells to become more concentrated. Because the ingested ghee that is circulating in the bloodstream is free of toxins and impurities it exerts an osmotic pressure and draws the toxins from the tissue cells and carries them to the liver and intestines. Light, herbalised oil massage, hot baths and steam or sweating therapy (*svedana*) during this time help increase blood flow and allow toxins to be released and directed towards the liver and small intestine more effectively. These preparatory measures, whilst ensuring that the body's channels are open so that toxins can move out, also ensure that nutritive substances can move into the tissues (*dhatu*s). The body is now soft, smooth, light and fluid and adequately prepared for *virechana*, the next stage of the Panchakarma procedure.

**Note on ghee:** this highly nutritious food source contains an excellent balance of health giving fatty acids. It is very low in polyunsaturated fat, moderate in monounsaturated fat and is also a good source of vitamins A, D, E, and K. It has anti-carcinogenic and antioxidant properties due to its linoleic acid content.

## Stage three - purgation (*virechana*)

*Virechana* is an orally administered, herb-induced purgative treatment that moves acidic secretions and impurities (*ama*) from the *pitta* regions (mainly the blood, liver, gall-bladder and small intestines) to the rectum. There are many herbs that may be used for this treatment but castor oil is often the purgative of choice as it is relatively mild and produces the desired affect in most healthy adults. Any physical or mental activity, which would draw energy away from the gastrointestinal tract, is contraindicated during this process as this severely limits its cleansing effects.

It is usually administered very early in the morning, or during *pitta* time when *pitta*-related *ama* naturally accumulates in the *pitta* regions. If *virechana* is administered in the late evening, it is taken two to three hours after a light meal. The meal should be relatively hot, spicy and sour tasting as these tastes help promote *pitta*-related secretions. By late evening the meal will have reached the small intestine and will therefore allow the herbal stimulus to exert its cleansing influence on the *pitta* organs and tissues.

After ingesting the purgative there follows a series of three to fifteen loose bowel movements a few hours later. The number of movements varies depending on the client's Ayurvedic constitution and the amount of *ama* present in the *pitta* region of the body. The fecal matter is usually fairly solid at first, but progressively softens until it is entirely liquid. Mild cramping or burning sensations occasionally occur due to *pitta*-related *ama* being expelled. This can be counteracted by ingesting a small amount of ghee.

If there are less than three or four bowel movements this indicates that *ama* was not fully eliminated from the small intestine and *virechana* therapy needs repeating. If cleansing is incomplete there may sometimes be feelings of bloating or hardness in the abdomen, itching on the skin, a metallic taste in the mouth, or nausea in the stomach due to the retention of gas, feces, toxins and waste products in the small intestines. Ginger tea will help reduce these sensations as will a warm hot-water bottle over the abdomen. Once the bowel movements become completely liquid they may contain some mucus. This indicates that the small intestine has been emptied and mucus from the stomach and the *kapha* areas of the body is starting to come out. Once all the *ama*, waste material and toxins have been expelled from the small intestine the purging process ceases and the urge to evacuate naturally subsides. The body now feels stronger, clearer and revitalized.

Following completion of *virechana* chamomile or licorice tea is drunk to soothe the intestinal tract and rest is taken in a warm, relaxed environment. Exercise and sexual activity is contra-indicated and a light diet of rice water and rice and lentil soup is followed for several days or until full digestive strength returns. It is very important at this stage not to eat or drink anything cold as this will shrink the bodily channels, aggravate *vata* and tax an already weakened digestive fire.

After a successful *virechana* digestion improves, appetite increases, abdominal bloating and heaviness disappear, the mind feels calm and clear, skin inflammation clears and the body feels clean, strong and vital. *Virechana* therapy promotes metabolism and assimilation by enkindling the digestive fires of all the tissues (*dhatu*s) whilst simultaneously cleansing waste products and burning *ama*. It is excellent for all *pitta*-related disorders such as malabsorption, acne, dermatitis, psoriasis, eczema, leprosy, leukoderma, hyperacidity, colitis, urticaria, hemorrhoids, headaches, migraine and allergies. It also reduces excessive body heat and acidity, deeply cleanses the blood, liver and bile, promotes clarity of mind, sharpens the sense organs, strengthens and rejuvenates bodily tissues and improves digestion. It is excellent for persons suffering from gout, fever, skin diseases, hematemesis, hemorrhoids, anemia, worms, headaches, chest pains, burning eyes, cataracts, asthma, jaundice, epilepsy, ascitis, lactation, disorders of the bones and joints and gynecological disorders.

## Stage four – graduated diet (*samsarjana krama*)

*Virechana* treatment temporarily lowers the digestive fire as *ama* is drawn back into the digestive tract and then expelled from the body. As weak digestion creates the potential for disease to arise in the first place, it is of utmost importance that digestion is strengthened at the conclusion of *virechana*.

In order to re-establish full digestive capacity and prevent the formation of new *ama* the diet following *virechana* must be very light to begin with, and only very gradually increase in heaviness over the following few days. Only if this procedure is followed properly will digestive strength be maximized, food and medicine properly digested, absorbed and assimilated and immunity from disease be accomplished.

The diet following *virechana* therefore starts with one or two very easily digested meals of rice water (*Peya*). This is followed by one or two meals of a slightly thicker gruel or watery rice soup called *Vilepi*. Finally a thicker soup of rice, lentils, herbs and spices is taken. A little ghee, black salt and jaggary is added to the first few preparations with fresh ginger, turmeric, cumin, coriander and fennel added in the later preparations to enkindle the digestive fire.

The final preparation of rice and lentils is called *Kichari* and this diet is adhered to throughout the whole course of Panchakarma treatments. *Kichari* is very nourishing, easy to digest, provides complete and balanced nutrition, and is suitable for all types of constitution as it balances all three *doshas*. It strengthens all seven tissues (*dhatu*s) and aids the detoxification process. It is therefore also recommended during any period of illness, detoxification or rejuvenation process. The length of time spent on this diet depends on digestive capacity and is usually determined by the inherent Ayurvedic constitution.

The strength of our appetite is of key importance during this process. Only if it is strong are we ready to eat, as a strong appetite is our body's signal that digestion, assimilation and elimination are working well. Those of a *pitta* constitution may find their digestion is back to full strength after only three light meals, while a person of a *kapha* constitution may find their digestion isn't back to full strength until after ten light meals have been taken. Drinking freshly grated, ginger root tea and cumin seeds will also help restore the appetite.

When a graduating diet is followed in this way after *virechana* the digestive fire (*agni*) is slowly built up, enabling it to become strong and powerful. The process is similar to the steps necessary to build a bonfire. It is started using paper, dried grass and twigs and only when it is burning brightly are larger pieces of wood added. It is then gradually built up using progressively larger pieces of wood. Once the fire is burning at full strength it will burn, and reduce to fine ashes, almost anything that is added to it.

Once our appetite is back to normal we should ensure that we follow the usual Ayurvedic recommendations for maintaining a strong and healthy digestion. This includes; eating only when hungry, eating until sated and not until the stomach feels full and heavy, eating the largest meal at mid-day, eating a light meal in the early evening, avoiding snacking between meals, not drinking cold drinks (especially with meals), eating in a calm environment, avoiding heavy, fried foods and fasting for a day once or twice a month.

## Stage five: enema (*basti*) therapy

*Virechana* is followed by *basti* which is the main treatment for nourishing and balancing *vata* and also for flushing impurities from the colon. This is a very powerful therapy and Ayurvedic texts state that over 50% of diseases can be resolved by this procedure alone. During *basti*, herbal preparations are administered into the colon via the rectum. However, unlike modern enema therapies, its effect is nutritive and energy balancing rather than simply cleansing. Due to the preparatory treatments given beforehand, *basti* indirectly affects all the other bodily organs and tissues, as the colon is linked to and nourishes, supports and sustains all areas of the body.

The colon is not only the main organ concerned with the absorption of nutrients and the elimination of waste material but it is also the main seat of *vata*, the primary energy that governs all physiological activities in the body. When *vata* is functioning normally its movement facilitates the removal of impurities, toxins and waste matter from the tissues and helps eliminate them from the body. By balancing the energy of *vata* through *basti* we are able to control the onset of disease as we prevent toxins (*ama*) from being carried from the gastrointestinal tract into the deeper tissues where they can generate disease.

*Basti* therapy is used to treat *vata* disorders such as osteoporosis, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, muscular-dystrophy, constipation, low back pain, sciatica, rheumatism, arthritis, gout, epilepsy and mental fatigue.

The first *basti* to be administered is the Anuwasan or oil based enema. It is nourishing and balancing to *vata* and also lubricates, nourishes and strengthens the tissues (*dhatu*s) of the body. As this is a relatively small enema (*matra basti*) it is often retained in the body for over three hours and people with particularly dry colons will often absorb much of the oil. They are usually administered before and after the eliminating *basti*s (*niruha* or *shodhana*) as they counteract the more depleting nature of this powerful purification therapy. Oil based *basti*s are good for treating problems relating to muscles, bone, bone marrow and nerve tissue and are often prescribed for chronic neuromuscular disorders.

The second *basti* administered during a *Panchakarma* detox is an eliminating water-based enema called a *shodhana* or *niruha basti*. This is a cleansing enema containing ghee, sesame oil, honey, black salt, licorice, fennel and *Dashamula*. It removes toxins (*ama*) that have been drawn into the colon from all the tissues and organs of the body during the pre-treatment procedures. This enema is sometimes retained in the colon for over thirty minutes. During this time some of the herbs and oils are absorbed by the colon and serve to purify, nourish, repair and strengthen the entire body whilst the bulk of the decoction is expelled along with metabolic waste, fecal matter and accumulated toxins. Each day the cleansing process reaches progressively deeper levels of the physiology, clearing the energetic pathways of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* and nourishing and purifying the seven tissues (*dhatu*s).

1 <sup>st</sup> <i>basti</i> :	Cleanses the colon of metabolic toxins, impurities ( <i>ama</i> ) and waste products ( <i>mala</i> ).
2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>basti</i> :	Balances, cleanses and nourishes the <i>vata</i> areas of the body resulting in mental clarity and calmness.
3 <sup>rd</sup> <i>basti</i> :	Draws <i>ama</i> from the <i>pitta</i> areas of the body, especially the lymph ( <i>rasa</i> ) and blood ( <i>rakta</i> ) tissues. There is greater strength and vitality as <i>rasa</i> is purified and improved skin tone and colour as <i>rakta</i> is purified.
4 <sup>th</sup> <i>basti</i> :	Draws toxins from the <i>kapha</i> areas of the body, especially the muscle tissue ( <i>mamsa</i> ).
5 <sup>th</sup> <i>basti</i> :	Draws toxins from the <i>kapha</i> areas of the body especially the adipose/fat tissue ( <i>meda</i> ).
6 <sup>th</sup> <i>basti</i> :	Draws toxins from bone tissue and balances <i>vata</i> ( <i>asthi</i> ).
7 <sup>th</sup> <i>basti</i> :	Draws toxins from the bone marrow and nerve tissue ( <i>meda</i> ).
8 <sup>th</sup> <i>basti</i> :	Draws toxins from the reproductive tissue ( <i>shukra</i> ).

## Stage six – rejuvenation therapy (*rasayana*)

After the main *Panchakarma* therapies rejuvenating herbal preparations are prescribed to strengthen the immune system and increase vitality in the mind and body. *Rasayana* herbs are often nourishing herbs rather than cleansing herbs and can be difficult to digest if the body is suffering from an overload of toxins or if the digestion is weak. Thus, the best time to take these powerful herbal formulas is after a course of *Panchakarma* treatments when the body has been cleansed and the digestion is functioning optimally. They are then able to be fully digested, assimilated and metabolized and able to exert their full potential. *Rasayana* formulas may be taken for several months and the specific formulas chosen will depend on your predominant Ayurvedic body-type or the energy, tissue, system or organ of the body that needs to be strengthened and balanced.

There are many traditional *rasayanas*; some nourish the tissues, some are rejuvenating, some strengthen the immune system, some increase strength, vitality and stamina, some balance the nervous system and some strengthen the reproductive system. The most common *rasayana* herbs include:

- *Ashwagandha* which pacifies and balances *vata*
- *Amalaki* which improves clarity of mind while also balancing both *pitta* and *vata*
- *Brahmi* and *Manjistha* which pacify *pitta*
- Turmeric for purifying the blood, eliminating excess mucus and soothing sore throats
- Ginger, black pepper and *Pippali* which improve the digestion and pacify *kapha*
- Aloe Vera which cleanses the liver and blood and is good for balancing *pitta*
- Licorice for balancing *Vata*
- Peppermint for balancing *Pitta and Kapha*
- Cinnamon, cayenne, ginger and clove for removing *ama*

However, one of the most truly magnificent *Rasayanas* is *Chywanaprash* or *Amrit Kalash* which has been used in India as an elixir of life for thousands of years. Scientific studies have now shown that this amazing formula has very powerful antioxidants properties and the ability to arrest and improve many of our modern day diseases such as cancer and auto-immune disorders. *Chywanaprash* is meticulously prepared with up to fifty different herbal compounds and has one of the highest concentrations of vitamin C in any natural product. It balances all three doshas and can be taken on a daily basis to strengthen the physiology and protect the immune system.

## Stage seven – post treatment

After undergoing Panchakarma treatments it is imperative that we graduate slowly back to a 'normal' lifestyle; hopefully with some healthy additions. This ensures that the delicate state of the nervous system at this time is not over-stimulated, the tissues are able to re-build themselves properly and energy levels rise sufficiently to cope with the increase in metabolism necessary for everyday activities. Failing to do this can lead to a drain in energy levels and an increased strain on the immune system – and we end up feeling worse than we did before.

It is also important that we follow the 'Ideal Daily Routine' of waking, sleeping, eating at the proper times, consuming the right foods for our body-type and integrating exercise, yoga, massage, herbal teas and meditation into our daily program. If we finish a ten or fourteen-day detox and then jump straight on the plane or into a stressful office or domestic situation we halt the delicate process of renewal and revitalization before it has had chance to fully carry out its re-integration phase. We then wonder why we feel so tired and become prone to colds and flu more easily, rather than feel energized and healthy. Once we fully understand the profound power of Ayurveda, and especially panchakarma, we take the time to complete the process fully and thereby transform our physiological and psychological resources into storehouses of immense strength and resilience.

Ideally, after panchakarma, we should take at least a week to progress slowly back into our normal daily routine before we face the world head on again, just the same as we would take a little time to adjust to the day ahead after waking from a deep sleep or when coming out of a profoundly peaceful meditation. For panchakarma to be successful we need time to assimilate the benefits and regain our energy levels – we should avoid undue mental and physical stress, late nights, excessive travel, strenuous exercise, prolonged sunbathing, cold water, cold or rainy weather and sexual activity for at least a week following the last treatment. If these guidelines are diligently applied we support and enhance the effects of the panchakarma therapies and assist the body in concentrating its energy on complete rejuvenation and revitalisation.

We should also follow a light, nutritious, vegetarian diet of pulses, grains, fruits and vegetables to ensure that digestive system is restored to maximum efficiency and able to eliminate toxins from the body. Once the digestion is working at full strength the food we eat will be properly digested, assimilated and metabolised. This will ensure that metabolic toxins, *ama* and fat are not deposited within the body. We can then be confident that we are doing our best to remain relatively free from future disease or illness and will be better equipped to enjoy life to the full with optimal health, joy and vitality.

Finally it should be noted that while *Panchakarma* may be very successful in alleviating symptoms of disease, its real goal is to eliminate their cause. An absence of symptoms does not necessarily indicate a complete cure - symptoms of disease can often be eliminated or subdued but a complete cure often takes much longer. It is generally accepted that if a person's disease has been slowly manifesting over a number of years it will take at least the same amount of time to completely reverse the damage done and obtain complete relief. To effect real long-lasting change the person must also review and alter his diet, lifestyle, stress levels and negative mental attitudes, behaviour and emotions if he is to eradicate the core and true cause of his illness.

## Foods to avoid on a panchakarma detox



It is important to avoid the following foods, drinks and condiments during the detox program. They have the potential to jeopardise your health when your digestive system is undergoing detoxification. They are hard for the body to digest when the system is attempting to flush out toxins (metabolic waste).

Bottled drinks	Frozen food	Refined food
Canned drinks	Left-over food	Tinned food
Confectionary	Microwaved food	Uncooked food
Deep-fried food	Processed food	Yeast products
Alcohol	Coffee	Pasteurised juices
Carbonated drinks	Milk	Tea
Citrus	Seafood	Un-ground seeds
Dairy	Sour fruit	Very hot spices
Fish	Salads	Soya/tofu
Meat	Whole nuts	Yoghurt
Avocado	Lettuce	Olives
Bananas	Garlic	Onions/leeks
Brussels sprouts	Horseradish	Potatoes
Cabbage	Hot peppers	Parsnips
Cauliflower	Melons	Turnips
Chillies	Mushrooms	Tomatoes
Ketchup	Tamarind sauce	Salt (in excess)
Mayonnaise	Salad cream	Pickles
Soya sauce	Sugar	Vinegar
Brown rice	Pasta	Bread

## Pre & post-treatment meal routines

**Pre – detox recommendations:** twelve days before a panchakarma detox it is beneficial to start graduating towards a light diet as this gives the digestive system a rest and starts the process of cleansing the body of toxins and accumulated metabolic waste. This helps maximise and enhance the detoxification procedures.

Breakfast:	Porridge oats with hot milk	Days 1 - 3
	Toast with ghee & honey	Days 4- 6
	Stewed apples & dates	Days 7 - 9
	Vegetable juice (carrot, apple & ginger etc)	Days 10 - 12
Drinks (am):	Ginger tea, lemon tea or vata tea	Every day
Lunch:	Trikatu (two tablets) or ‘ginger pickle’ (see recipes)	Every day
	Any grain, vegetables and sauce with small side salad	Days 1 - 6
	Any grain, vegetables and sauce	Days 7 - 12
Drinks (pm):	Post-digestive tea, fennel tea, vata tea, ginger tea	Every day
Evening meal:	Red lentil soup with herbs & vegetables	Days 1 - 8
	Mung dhal soup with herbs & vegetables	Days 9 - 12
Drinks (ev):	Almond energy, rajas cup, vata tea	Every day
Before bed:	Triphala (two tablets)	For one month

**Post – detox recommendations:** twelve days after a panchakarma detox it is beneficial to start graduating towards a more normal and heavier, nourishing diet as this kick starts the digestion again and helps maximise and enhance the detoxification procedures.

Breakfast:	Vegetable juice (carrot, apple & ginger etc)	Days 1 - 3
	Stewed apples & dates	Days 4- 6
	Toast with ghee & honey	Days 7 - 9
	Porridge oats with hot milk	Days 10 - 12
Drinks (am):	Ginger tea, lemon tea or vata tea	Every day
Lunch:	Trikatu (two tablets) or ‘ginger pickle’ (see recipes)	Every day
	Any grain, vegetables and sauce	Days 1 - 6
	Any grain, vegetables and sauce with small side salad	Days 7 - 12
Drinks (pm):	Post-digestive tea, fennel tea, vata tea, ginger tea	Every day
Evening meal:	Mung dhal soup with herbs & vegetables	Days 1 - 8
	Red lentil soup with herbs & vegetables	Days 9 - 12
Drinks (ev):	Almond energy, rajas cup, vata tea	Every day
Before bed:	Triphala (two tablets)	For one month

# Castor oil

Castor oil, also known as Eranda, is extracted from the castor plant (*ricinus communus*) and is native to Africa and India. It is an ancient medicinal herb and is classified in Ayurveda as sweet and astringent with anti-rheumatic, analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties. It pacifies *vata*, liquefies excess *kapha* and alleviates *pitta* problems. Applied externally it easily penetrates, cools and softens the skin, supporting growth and strengthening underlying connective tissue. Taken internally, it is purgative, demulcent, anti-flatulent, emetic, mildly expectorant, strengthening and rejuvenative. It pacifies all seven dhatus and promotes metabolism and assimilation by enkindling the digestive fires of all the tissues whilst simultaneously cleansing waste products or burning ama. It should not be used in cases of diverticulitis, ulcerative colitis, diarrhoea, Crohn's disease and pregnancy.

Castor oil is vata and pitta pacifying and thus helps improve the condition and strength of nerve tissue. It increases intellect, promotes clarity of mind and induces calmness while also acting as a topical analgesic for neuralgia and sciatica. One or two drops placed in the eyes at night will help with conjunctivitis and sties.

Castor oil applied to the skin is rejuvenating and helps heal bruises. A paste made from castor oil and baking soda is good for moles and warts and a castor oil, ghee and neem powder mix (ratio of 4:4:1) helps with cases of eczema, fungal infection and herpes zoster. It improves complexion by pacifying *pitta dosha* and, used during massage, is excellent for gout, lumbago, stiffness, aches and strains. As a remedy for hiccups an equal mix of honey and castor oil is made and ¼ teaspoon taken every 15 seconds for two to three minutes. Castor oil packs or compresses on the abdomen will help tone and strengthen the colon and reduce soreness or swelling and promote menstrual flow. Castor oil mixed with flax oil and mustard oil may be used to massage mastic tissue to reduce fibrocystic accumulations. Castor oil massaged into the perineum is good for prostate or cervical problems.

Ingesting castor oil after childbirth facilitates the production of breast milk. For problems relating to the joints taking two teaspoons of Castor oil with ginger tea at night will help release toxins and promote strength and flexibility. It will help remove ama and improve the functioning of the colon and, as it is through this organ that the minerals vital to the nourishment of bone tissue (*asthi dhatu*) are absorbed, it will help rectify disorders related to the skeletal system.

To improve digestion, maintain a healthy colon and maximize the assimilation and metabolism of nutrients to the tissues it is recommended that, once every three months, the colon is cleansed using a strong purgative – castor oil fulfils this role. It clears accumulated mucus, waste and toxins from the intestinal tract by promoting strong peristaltic movements followed by a series of loose bowel movements over the next few hours.

## Instructions for taking castor oil:

- Warm 30mls of castor oil (by immersing the container in hot water or by placing on a radiator).
- Take a hot bath at 7am – make sure the head is kept cool.
- Drink the castor oil and then suck on a piece of orange, lemon or lime to prevent nausea and take away any lingering taste. Drink plenty of ginger tea until you have the urge to eliminate.
- Elimination will usually happen in 1-4 hours (usually 3-10 movements). Stop taking liquids for the next hour.
- Do not eat until you feel hunger and then have a watery rice soup only for the first meal. The evening meal should be a thicker rice soup and the meals on the following day should be dhal soup (kicharee).

# Ghee

Ghee is cow's butter from which the water and milk solids have been removed and can be used for frying herbs, sautéing vegetables and spreading on toast. Ghee is oilier than butter and very health promoting; it has a long shelf life and a beautiful flavour. It pacifies all three *doshas*, strengthens and protects bodily tissue, improves memory, increases mental clarity, promotes stamina, stimulates digestion, produces a healthy complexion and aids rejuvenation and longevity. If taken in moderation (1-2 tsp) with each meal it enhances the digestive process but over two tablespoons per day, especially for a Kapha body type, will clog the system and subdue the digestive fire. In Ayurveda it is often used as a vehicle to carry herbs into the body; it enhances the absorption of beneficial chemicals and antioxidants into the lipid-permeable cell membranes. Applied to the eyes, especially during the Ayurvedic treatment of Netra Tarpana, it can help rectify many eye problems and on burns it helps cool, heal and repair damaged tissue.

Over the past few decades we have been led to believe that all fats are detrimental to health and that they all promote fat production and weight gain. Scientific research has shown that some fatty acids are in fact very beneficial for the body while others are absolutely essential. Fats can be saturated or unsaturated. Saturated fats contain either long-chain or short-chain fatty acids. Long-chain fatty acids may not be totally digested and metabolised by the body and frequent digestion of products which contain them, primarily meat and dairy may, in the long term, lead to excess acidity in the body which can result in cancer, arthritis, rheumatism and thrombosis. However, short-chain fatty acids are digested, assimilated, absorbed, and metabolised very easily and help the body release energy.

Similarly, unsaturated fatty acids, are either monounsaturated or polyunsaturated. Monounsaturated fats are very healthy while the polyunsaturated are not. This is due to the kind of chemical bonds these fats form - monounsaturated fats form single bonds and polyunsaturated fats form multiple bonds and this is where oxidation takes place during heating or processing causing the fat to become toxic. Foods fried in polyunsaturated fatty acids (sunflower, cornflower etc) become oxidized and toxic; they lose electrons (free radicals) and change the chemical structure of the oil. These free radicals are believed to be the primary cause of most cancers and chronic diseases prevalent in the world today. As the majority of vegetable oils contain predominantly polyunsaturated fatty acids it is not advisable to use them for cooking. Sesame oil, ghee and coconut are an exception as they contain powerful antioxidants and doesn't become toxic on heating.

Margarine is particularly unhealthy as it is hydrogenated and contains a large percentage of trans-fatty acids. These acids, which are chemically altered during processing, are synthetic; they do not occur in a natural form and are therefore unrecognisable to the body. They have been shown to be associated with heart disease and to increase low-density lipoprotein (the bad cholesterol) just as saturated fats do. However, predominantly monounsaturated fatty acids, such as olive oil, mustard oil, canola oil, and rapeseed oil are associated with the prevention of many diseases including heart disease and cancer. Ghee contains 25% monounsaturated fatty acids and only 5% polyunsaturated fatty acids. It contains saturated fats but most of these are short-chain fatty acids with only 10% long-chain fatty acids. As a healthy diet requires and a consumption of both saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, ghee is excellent as part of our daily diet as it contains around 65% saturated fats, most of which are short-chain fatty acids. Ghee is a good source of vitamins A, D, E, and K whilst also having anti-carcinogenic and antioxidant properties perhaps due to its linoleic acid content.

**Instructions for ingesting ghee as part of a Panchakarma detox (only if instructed by your Ayurvedic practitioner):**

- Take a hot bath at 7am.
- Melt the ghee (30mls etc) by placing on a radiator or in hot water until fully liquid.
- Drink the ghee and then suck on an orange segment to take away the residual taste if desired.
- If you feel very nauseous or have very loose bowel movements soon after taking the ghee do not take the next day's ghee and have a day of rest instead.
- Drink fennel, vata or barley tea to enhance the detoxification process and ease any feelings of discomfort.

# Maintaining good health

After Panchakarma therapy our digestion is stronger, the mind is less tired and stressed, the immune system is better able to cope with the demands placed on it and our energy levels are increased. However, if we wish to maintain this more healthy and vibrant state we should adapt our diet and lifestyle accordingly. Below are some of the best ways to maintain the benefits of your panchakarma detox and enhance your long-term health:

- Eat your main meal at midday when the digestion is strong and enzymatic activity is high. This will ensure that you obtain maximum nutritional value from the food you ingest.
- Eat organic, wholesome food which is high in nutritional value and energy.
- Eat lightly in the evening so that you are able to process and eliminate toxins during the night.
- Drink sufficient quantities of water, especially hot water, to aid digestion and lubricate the body.
- Take herbal digestives, rejuvenative herbal formulas, ghee and Omega oils as part of your daily diet.
- Reduce the use of refined white sugar, salt and white flour.
- Eat less hard cheese, red meat, confectionary, processed food, refined food and micro-waved food.
- Reduce the intake of tea, coffee and alcohol.
- Leave at least three hours between meals to allow proper and complete digestion of the previous meal.
- Meditate twice a day to increase mental clarity and balance the nervous system.
- Practice yoga asanas to calm the mind and improve strength, suppleness and flexibility.
- Exercise daily to increase circulation, help assimilate nutrients and eliminate metabolic waste products.
- Oil massage each morning to pacify *vata*, balance the nervous system and remove waste products, *ama* and impurities that have accumulated during the previous day.
- Do not sleep in the daytime as this causes the body to store toxins and become stiff and sluggish.
- Do not eat within three hours of retiring to bed or sleep will be unsettled and digestion impaired.
- Be in bed before 10pm as this allows the mind and body to be purified, renewed, revitalised and repaired during the *pitta* time of night (10pm to 2am).
- Awake at dawn (*vata* time) to imbibe the vibrant and vital energy that is prevalent at this special time.
- Try not to wake or get up after dawn as this will allow the influence of *kapha* to take hold and cause tiredness and sluggishness later in the day. Whilst sleep is the body's greatest healer, if it is of a low quality due to ignoring these natural rhythms and sleeping outside of these hours, the lack of proper sleep will eventually lead to low energy levels and a build up of *ama* in the physiology.
- Spend time each day walking in nature and enjoying the countryside. The life energy or *prana* emitted by the natural environment renews the energy depleted by our urban environment.
- Have some quiet time to yourself each day to settle the mind and balance the nervous system.
- Maintain the company of like-minded people and reduce contact with stressful people.

As negative thought patterns, especially fear, guilt and anger, are the primary cause of disease and stress we should try and reduce their hold on us by following as many of the above recommendations as we are capable of. Some may seem easy to implement and these should be the ones we start with first. Once we have fully integrated them into our daily routine and are reaping their benefits we will then have the strength and courage to implement others. Thus, as time goes by, our lives become healthier and happier and we begin to experience and enjoy the beauty around us.

# Panchakarma therapies

During the various stages of a Panchakarma detox a variety of treatments will be given. They involve the application of warm, herbalised oil through the medium of massage. Many of the massage therapies last over an hour and are harmoniously administered by two therapists working in tandem, one on either side of the body. The aromatic oils help loosen and dislodge toxins and impurities stored within the deeper tissues. Massage therapies may be followed by a second treatment; either svedana - a herbal steam therapy which dilates bodily channels and mobilises impurities trapped within them - or Shirodhara which relaxes the mind and pacifies the energy of *vata* dosha.

The primary oil used in the massage treatment is Sesame oil which has been shown to have powerful anti-carcinogenic, anti-melanoma and antioxidant effects. Its potency is increased by a special 'curing' process and by infusing the oil with a decoction of Ayurvedic herbs. The type of massage selected and the depth and speed of the massage depends on your Ayurvedic constitution (*prakruti*) or imbalance.

**Abhyanga:** A full body massage usually administered by two technicians working in perfect synchrony on either side of your body. Warm, herbalised sesame oil is lovingly and soothingly applied in a continuous flowing sequence to relax and balance the physiology. The oil penetrates the pores of the skin and subcutaneous adipose tissues and loosens impurities and toxins which have accumulated there. The massage may last for over an hour depending on the speed and depth chosen to suit your Ayurvedic body-type.

Other benefits:

- Balances all three *doshas*; *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*
- Promote flexibility and suppleness
- Increases strength, energy and vitality
- Improves the quality of sleep
- Increases softness and lustre of the skin
- Reduces the signs of aging (rejuvenating)
- Decreases stress, anxiety and fear and balances the mind and emotions

**Shiro Abhyanga:** A head, face, shoulder and upper back massage which is often given before Abhyanga. Coconut oil is used on the head as it cools and softens the skin and is strengthening and nourishing to the hair.

Other benefits:

- Balances all three *doshas*; *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*
- Calms the mind
- Improves the quality of sleep
- Helps alleviate disorders of the nervous system

**Vishesh:** An invigorating sports-type massage with firm, kneading actions to help promote the release of deep-seated imbalances, toxins and impurities. It is especially helpful for soothing sore, tired or aching muscles.

Other benefits:

- Balances all three *doshas*; *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*
- Promotes weight loss
- Relaxes the mind
- Lubricates and increases flexibility in the joints

**Pizzichilli:** A unique relaxation experience – two therapists slowly and gently massage and bathe the body in gallons of warm aromatic sesame oil for up to one hour. Aches and pains, cares and worries are effortlessly released in a continuous flow of liquid golden nectar.

Other benefits:

- Pacifies *vata*
- Lubricates and thereby alleviates pain and promotes flexibility in the joints
- Alleviates pain and soothes tired, aching or sore muscles
- Moisturises and softens the skin

**Udvaartana:** A fast, vigorous massage with a coarse herbal paste of barley and chickpea flour. It enlivens and energises the body helping promote better digestion, healthier skin and firmer muscle tone.

Other benefits:

- Reduces excess *ama*
- Pacifies *Kapha*
- Increases circulation to the subcutaneous tissues
- Defoliates and cleanses the skin
- Breaks down fatty deposits and cellulite and helps with weight loss

**Shirodhara:** This amazingly relaxing therapy gently releases stress and tension from the mind and body; it often accompanies Abhyanga or Vishesh. A steady stream of warm, aromatic oil flows rhythmically across the forehead calming the mind and soothing the nervous system.

Other benefits:

- Balances *vata*
- Promotes deep relaxation
- Harmonises the hormonal system
- Relaxes the nervous system
- Improves complexion
- Improves memory
- Good for headaches, migraine, insomnia and mental stress
- Good for high blood pressure, restlessness and anxiety

**Svedana:** A herbal steam treatment allowing the body to perspire while the head is kept cool.

Benefits:

- Releases toxins and cleanses the skin
- Softens, soothes and moisturises the skin
- Increases circulation and improves complexion
- Soothes painful, stiff, sore and aching muscles and joints
- Softens and dilates bodily channels (*shrotas*) and increases circulation
- Liquefies impurities hidden in minute channels
- Reduces chest and sinus congestion
- Helps with weight loss and is balancing for *Vata* and *Kapha*
- Good for constipation, earache, headache, asthma, cough, sciatica, dyspnoea, heaviness and neck pain
- Stimulates, lightens and invigorates the body through perspiration
- Reduces stress and improves sleep patterns

**Marma:** This is a blissful healing and energy balancing therapy which works by stimulating the 108 *marma* (energy points) on the body.

Benefits:

- Helps resolve emotional imbalances
- Increased calmness and clarity in the mind
- Increases confidence and feelings of self-worth
- Balances the nervous system

**Netra Tarpana:** This is a cleansing, soothing and cooling treatment for the eyes using warm, herbalised ghee to gently bathe the eyes for five to ten minutes. It pacifies *pitta* and reduces heat, itching, tiredness, graininess and heaviness.

Other benefits:

- Nourishes the nervous system
- Removes impurities from the eyes
- Strengthens the eyes and improves sight
- Effective for 60% of eye-related problems including burning, dryness, itching and eyestrain

**Kati Basti:** Warm, herbalised oil is contained in a dough ring on the lower back for up to 30 minutes.

Benefits:

- Balances *vata*
- Helps relieve spinal problems
- Helps joint problems
- Improves the digestion
- Calms the mind and relieves restlessness

**Nasya therapy (*shirovirechana*):** Herbalised powders, oils and herbs are administered via the nostrils to stimulate the secretion of mucus and thereby dissolve and loosen mucus lodged in the nasal and sinus passages. A vigorous head massage, herbalised steam inhalation and warm towels are applied to the head and face prior to this treatment. It is often given before or after the main detox therapy and is usually administered in the morning (*kapha* time) as this is when *kapha*-related impurities (mucus) are naturally moved from the deeper tissues and organs to the stomach and sinuses.

Benefits:

- Increases oxygenation to the brain and eliminates impurities from the head and chest area
- Removes *ama* and toxins from the nose, sinuses, ears and eyes
- Cleanses the *shrotas* (channels) in the head and improves the functioning of the senses
- Improve brain function and heightens sensory perception
- Good for: dry nasal passages, sinus congestion, cold, sinusitis, allergies, headaches, migraine, epilepsy, mental retardation, dry, itchy or watery eyes, conjunctivitis, glaucoma, hearing loss, tinnitus, and loss of smell.

## The seven *dhatu*s (bodily tissues)

Whilst imbalances in the doshas (*vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*) are the cause of disease the *dhatu*s are the sites of disease. Our tissues are produced from the food we eat - the waste material or by-product is expelled as feces and urine. Each tissue develops from the previous one in a progressive cycle from gross to subtle. Thus, from the grossest tissue, *rasa* (lymph or plasma) the second tissue, *rakta* (blood), is formed and from *rakta*, *mamsa* (muscle) is formed. From *mamsa*, *meda* (fat/adipose tissue) is formed, from *meda*, *asthi* (bone) is formed, from *asthi*, *majji* (bone marrow or nerve tissue) is formed and from *majji*, *shukra* (reproductive tissue) is formed. This process is similar to the production of cream from milk, butter from cream and ghee from butter – the special cooking of one leads to the formation of the other.

Thus, from the basic plasma of the body, *rasa* (lymph), all the other tissues of the body are produced – each is produced from the proper digestion of the other and problems in any one tissue tend to cause problems in the rest. Also, the more subtle tissues support the grosser tissues and store their concentrated energy. Thus blood is concentrated plasma, muscle is concentrated blood and fat is concentrated muscle. The grosser tissues (plasma, blood and muscle) are larger in quantity as only a portion of each is converted into the next more subtle tissue, with reproductive tissue being the subtlest and most concentrated and enduring. It takes thirty-five days for the food we eat to work its way through the seven tissues to become reproductive tissue. As reproductive tissue is the essence of our life-energy and upholds all the other tissues we need to be extra careful that this tissue doesn't become depleted.

**Plasma (*rasa*):** This tissue is composed mainly of water and is that which all the other tissues of the body are suspended. When properly maintained it helps nourish all the other tissues in the body, providing adequate hydration and electrolyte balance. It is the container for *kapha* in the body and its main sites are the skin, heart, blood vessels, lymphatic system and mucus membranes. When there is an excess of plasma, *kapha* increases and we become prone to accumulations of saliva and phlegm, loss of appetite, nausea, congestion, cysts and benign tumours. When plasma is deficient we are more prone to rough skin, cracked, dry lips, dehydration, lethargy, tremors, palpitations, pain and feelings of emptiness. If we maintain plasma in an optimal state we have a healthy, glowing complexion with soft, smooth skin and luxurious, shining hair. Balanced plasma tissue creates vitality, stamina, compassion, contentment, pleasure and a happy disposition generally. It can be strengthened by drinking adequate amounts of liquid, especially fruit and vegetable juices and in particular lemon and lime juice with a little salt. Organic dairy products and particularly organic, unpasturised milk is also good.

**Blood (*rakta*):** This tissue is composed of fire and water and provides oxygen to the tissue cells. It is the container for *pitta* in the body. Excess blood creates skin diseases, abscesses, fevers, inflammation, bleeding disorders, enlarged liver and spleen, hypertension, jaundice, weak digestion and burning or redness in the eyes, skin and urine. Deficient states cause pallor, low blood pressure, rough, dry skin and desire for cold, sour food. In its optimal state it gives rise to a healthy glowing complexion and warm skin, clearness in the eyes, vitality, love, faith and a passion for life. It can be strengthened through eating iron-rich foods such as black grapes, molasses, carrots and beetroot.

**Muscle (*mamsa*):** This is a heavy, predominately *kapha* tissue and makes up much of the bulk of the body – it is composed primarily of the earth element and serves to bind it together whilst giving it strength for action. In excess it creates swelling or tumours in the muscles, heaviness and swelling in the glands, obesity, enlarged liver, irritability and anger. It can also impair sexual vitality and cause fibroids and miscarriage in women. When deficient it creates emaciation, fatigue, lack of co-ordination, fear, insecurity and unhappiness. In its optimal state we have good muscle development and co-ordination, mental and physical strength, courage, confidence, openness, forgiveness and integrity. Muscle is fortified with proteins from grains, beans, nuts and meat.

**Fat (*meda*):** This is another kapha tissue which is composed mainly of water but is more refined type than plasma. It serves to lubricate the body (especially the muscles and tendons) and creates a feeling of being protected or 'cared for' – obesity is often the result of feeling unloved or uncared for; fat acts as a psychological barrier or protection instead. In excess it also leads to fatigue, asthma, sexual debility, extreme thirst, hypertension, diabetes, sagging breasts, belly and thighs and lack of mobility. Emotionally it will lead to greed and attachment. Deficient states lead to brittle or weak hair, teeth, nails and bones, emaciation, enlarged spleen, cracking of the joints, tired eyes and general lethargy. Balanced fat tissue creates ideal body weight, mild oiliness of skin, hair and muscles, a melodious voice, joy, humour and a loving, affectionate nature. It is kept in balance through judicious use of dairy products but more importantly through using ghee and organic, unrefined vegetable oils such as sesame, flax, sunflower, hemp and pumpkin oil.

**Bone (*asthi*):** This tissue is composed mainly of earth and air. It functions to support and uphold the other tissues – it gives them firmness and a strong foundation. Bone is the container for *vata* in the body – it resides in the bone spaces. In excess it can create bone spurs, extra teeth, pain in the joints, arthritis, bone cancer, gigantism, fear, anxiety and fatigue. When deficient it can create dwarfism, poor bone and teeth formation, low energy, falling of hair and teeth and looseness in the joints. When in balance it gives stability, confidence, patience, security and stamina. It also gives strong, white teeth, a tall, strong frame with large joints and flexibility in movement of limbs. It is maintained through eating foods with high proportions of calcium, iron and zinc.

**Bone marrow and nerve tissue (*majja*):** This kapha tissue has an element of earth but is mainly composed of a refined or subtle form of water, which has the power to convey nerve impulses. It provides for the secretion of synovial fluid and for the lubrication of eyes, stool and skin. An excess of this tissue leads to heaviness in the eyes and limbs whilst a deficiency creates weakness or porosity of bones and pain in the joints. There can be dizziness and spots before the eyes, darkness around the eyes, sexual debility and feelings of anxiety and emptiness. When in balance, we have a sense of fulfillment and compassion in life, the mind is clear, sharp and sensitive, memory is strong and the senses are acute and perceptive. Also, the eyes are large and clear, the joints are strong, pain threshold is high and speech is strong. It is best maintained through the oils of butter, ghee, nuts and seeds.

**Reproductive tissue (*shukra*):** This is again a kapha tissue and is the essential or causal form of water – it has the power to create new life. In excess we are prone to anger and unhealthy sexual desires, semen stones, inflammation of the prostate and cysts in the ovaries and uterus. A deficiency leads to lack of vigour, lack of sexual desire, impotence, dry mouth, lower back pain, lack of vaginal lubrication and slow, difficult ejaculation. Emotionally there can be fear, anxiety and a lack of love and compassion. When in balance the eyes are clear, the hair is lustrous and strong, sexual organs are well formed, the body is attractive and we exude a loving, charming, compassionate nature. This tissue is maintained through taking milk, raw sugar, ghee, nuts, seeds and eggs.

# Panchakarma - FAQ

## Why do I need to eat a light vegetarian diet during my detox?

A light vegetarian diet allows your body to detox more efficiently and effectively. Your digestive system uses a large amount of energy when it has heavy foods to break down and digest. If less energy is spent on digesting food there is more energy available to release metabolic wastes and toxins from your body. Animal products are very difficult to digest and are therefore strictly contra-indicated during a detox.

## Why is it important to also follow a light diet before and after my detox?

A light diet before a detox helps prepare the body for the elimination of impurities. It ensures the body has energy available to thoroughly detox the body, which naturally begins clearing our waste products once conditions are favourable. It also ensures that the detox progresses smoothly and effectively without shocking the body and causing a 'healing crisis' (a reaction to excessive toxins being released into the bloodstream and causing the liver to struggle to eliminate them properly). After a detox a light diet is important because it helps the digestive system gain strength and efficiency as it gradually increases its digestive capacity.

## Why are rice and dhal so beneficial during a detox?

Rice and dhal are light and nutritious and are very easily digested. They take only small amounts of energy to be metabolised which allows your body to have the energy it requires to detox efficiently and effectively.

## Why do I need to take ghee during the Panchakarma detox?

Ghee is similar in quality to the fat in your body. However, it has one the main difference; it has no toxins or impurities stored in it. As toxins gradually build up in your fat tissues they become increasingly more likely to cause chronic health conditions. However, the ghee circulating in your bloodstream during the early stages of the detox gradually draws them out ready for elimination.

## Won't the ghee raise cholesterol and make me fat?

No, quite the contrary. Taken in small amounts, especially as part of a panchakarma detox procedure, it will help reduce the 'bad' fat stored in your body and will therefore lead to weight loss rather than weight gain.

## Why is ghee taken very early in the morning?

During the early morning your metabolism is very slow and sluggish so the ghee is digested very slowly. It stays circulating in the bloodstream for longer than it normally would and is therefore able to absorb toxins from the fat in your deeper tissues.

## Why do I need to take castor oil during the Panchakarma detox?

Castor oil has a stimulating or 'contracting' effect on the colon and helps induce peristalsis – it therefore helps eliminate the toxins and metabolic wastes that have been drawn from the deeper tissues by the action of the ghee. It also cools and purifies the blood and liver and helps eliminate excess Pitta (heat or acidity) from the body.

## Why do I need to take Trikatu or Ginger Pickle before meals?

Trikatu and Ginger pickle are digestive aids that promote the production of digestive enzymes in your stomach – they enkindle the agni (digestive fire) and ensure that the food you consume is fully digested. Trikatu is also very effective for burning ama (metabolic waste and toxins) which is the prime cause of all disease.

## Why do I need to take Triphala at bedtime?

Triphala is an Ayurvedic herbal formula composed of three fruits (Haritaki, Bibhitaki and Amalaki). Together they help tone and strengthen your digestive tract and promote regular and complete evacuation of the bowels. They also help increase the digestion, absorption and assimilation of nutrients from the food you consume.

## Why is it important to drink hot water during a detox?

Hot water in your body acts in a similar way to hot water applied to your greasy pots and pans – it helps loosen and dissolve the dirt or impurities and melts the fatty deposits. When it is combined with digestive herbs and fresh lemon juice it has an even stronger action. However, cold water will cause the fat in your body to congeal and harden and will therefore result in a lowering of your digestive power, increased deposits of fat in your body and excess weight.

### Why are bastis (enemas) so important to the success of the Panchakarma detox?

The ancient Ayurvedic texts state that bastis or herbal enemas account for over 50% of the overall effectiveness of the whole Panchakarma detox procedure. They nourish the colon and deeper tissues (bone and nerves) and help eliminate toxins and metabolic wastes from the body. They not only release toxins from, but also penetrate and nourish, the lymph, blood, muscle, fat, bone, nerve and reproductive tissue. They cleanse and strengthen the entire endocrine, digestive and immune system and thereby cut off disease at its source.

### What is Rasayana therapy?

Rasayana therapy is undertaken after your Panchakarma detox treatments to rejuvenate the whole body. After your tissues and digestive tract have been cleansed your physiology is in a more pure and receptive state for herbal preparations to nourish and strengthen your deeper tissues and organs. There are many Rasayana formulas but three of the most common are Ashwagandha, Shatavari and Chywanaprash and these are often recommended after a course of detox treatments.

### What is the purpose of the Ayurvedic massage therapies?

Their primary purpose is to nourish and cleanse the deeper tissues through the application of specialised herbs and oils. Base oils, such as sesame, coconut, sunflower and olive oil, act as carriers for herbs which have been infused into them. These herbs target specific dhatus or tissues and rebalance Vata, Pitta and kapha, the energetic aspect of the body. The lighter, gentler massage therapies help balance the mind and nervous system whilst the deeper, more vigorous massage therapies serve to stimulate the mind and release deeper-seated toxins and impurities. However, the body will only release deeper-seated toxins once it is in a relaxed state and this is accomplished through the lighter massage therapies.

### Why can't Ayurvedic massage therapies be administered in the evening?

Massage therapies are contra-indicated in the evening because your body is in a very sensitive, vulnerable and delicate stage at this time of day – this is especially so if you are undergoing intensive detox treatments. During daylight hours massage therapy facilitates the generation and release of energy into your body. However, massage administered in the evening causes energy to be lost from your body – it depletes your body of vital nutrients and lowers the immune system. Furthermore, if massage therapy is administered after eating, or before eating, your evening meal it will interfere with your digestive system and will cause ama (metabolic waste) and toxins to be created. The person carrying out your massage therapy also suffers in a similar way. Their digestive system will be compromised and they will suffer from a lack of energy and a build up of toxins the following day. This will adversely affect the success of your detox treatments as your own energy will be drained as a result.

### Why can't I have massage treatments during the morning of my castor oil detox?

Massage therapy administered during the hours following purgation therapy with castor oil are contra-indicated because they will interfere with the detoxing that the castor oil has induced in your tissues. The detox process carries on for many hours, even after elimination has ceased, and it should be allowed to come to its natural conclusion for maximum benefits. Also, the digestive fire is very weak at this time and even though the oil is applied to the skin, it penetrates to the deeper tissues and needs to be digested.

### Why should I refrain from mental or physical activity (including sex) during my detox?

The more energy your body has at its disposal the more effective it is at flushing out waste materials from your tissues. Your metabolic rate is reduced during the detox as the action of the ghee, castor oil and basti therapies lower your agni or digestive 'fire'. Your body is in a sensitive state during detoxing so mental and physical stimulation will result in energy being drawn away from the digestive system and will therefore reduce the effectiveness of the detox.

## Other Detox Options - Introduction

The purpose of an Ayurvedic detox is to naturally and gently purify, rejuvenate and revitalise the body through the removal of toxins, impurities and metabolic waste (Ama). Ama is undigested food and if this toxic residue is left in the body it interferes with the functioning of the tissues and leads to imbalance, illness and disease. This creates fatty deposits, water retention, excess weight, painful joints and cellulite.

The goal of an Ayurvedic detox is to systematically release, melt, loosen, mobilise and eliminate these impurities from the body before they build-up and create more serious complaints in the areas they have lodged.

A detox creates balance in the body whilst also nourishing and cleansing the intestinal tract. This results in more available energy for strengthening the immune system and maintaining the body in a state of relaxation, health and vitality.

The detox diets on the following pages can be safely followed by most people. However, diabetics and people with sugar intolerances should consult a qualified medical practitioner before undertaking the 'Lemon Detox'. The diets can be tailored to your own preferences and time constraints – just choose a diet you feel comfortable with and try it for a few days. It is always advisable to start slow and build up.

It is best to start with the one or two days on the Mini Detox first. If this is comfortable, and leaves you feeling refreshed and energetic, build up to four or five days the next month. If you are happy on this diet try introducing the Dhal Detox for a couple of days the next month and on the following month try a five-day Combination Detox. The options are endless but we've given you a few ideas in the 'Recommended Options' page.

# Mini Detox



The 'Mini Detox' is a light vegetarian diet and can be followed for one or two days each week to allow the body to detox and flush out toxins and metabolic wastes which have accumulated in the blood, tissues and organs.

## Morning

7.00am: Lemon tea  
 8.00am: Carrot & apple juice  
 Stewed fruit  
 9.00am: Ginger tea  
 10.30am: Vata or Pitta tea  
 12.30pm: Trikatu tablets (2) or Ginger Pickle  
 1.00pm: Lunch

## Afternoon

3.00pm: Carrot & grape juice  
 4.00pm: Vata or Pitta tea  
 6.30pm: Trikatu tablets (2) or Ginger Pickle  
 7.00pm: Evening meal  
 8.30pm: Vata tea  
 9.00pm: Bedtime tea (1 cup)  
 Triphala tablets (x2)

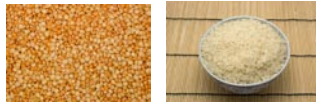
## Lunch

**Vegetables:** Asparagus, Butternut squash, Carrots, Celery, Eggplant, Fennel, Green beans, Mangetout, Red pepper, Yellow Pepper, Spinach, Sweet Potato, Zucchini  
 (choose three veg types)  
**Grain:** Basmati rice, Buckwheat, Quinoa, Barley or Bulgarwheat  
**Sauce:** Make by liquidising part of dhal or vegetable soup  
**Condiments:** Vata or Pitta churna, rock salt and black pepper may be added after serving (to taste)  
**Drink:** Digestive herbal tea

## Evening Meal

**Soup** Dhal or vegetable soup (butternut squash, asparagus, zucchini etc)  
**Condiments:** Vata or Pitta churna, rock salt and black pepper may be added after serving (to taste)  
**Drink:** Digestive herbal tea

# Dhal Detox



This is more intense form of the Mini Detox and can be followed for two to three days each month. This light diet allows the body to flush out toxins and metabolic wastes even more efficiently and effectively because less energy is used for digesting heavier food and more energy is available for detoxing.

This detox can be greatly enhanced by also following the 'ideal daily routine' – arise at dawn, massage and then practice yoga and meditation. Yoga and meditation can also be practiced in the late afternoon. Try to rest or have a light workload on the days you are detoxing and retire to bed before 10pm.

<b>Morning</b>		<b>Afternoon</b>	
7.00am:	Lemon tea	3.00pm:	Carrot & grape juice
8.00am:	Carrot & apple juice	4.00pm:	Vata or Pitta tea
9.00am:	Ginger tea	6.30pm:	Trikatu tablets (2) or Ginger Pickle
10.30am:	Vata or Pitta tea	7.00pm:	Evening meal of dhal soup
12.30pm:	Trikatu tablets (2) or Ginger Pickle	8.30pm:	Vata tea
1.00pm:	Lunch of dhal soup	9.00pm:	Bedtime tea (1 cup)
			Triphala tablets (x2)

## Lunch

<b>Soup:</b>	Dhal soup (with pureed butternut squash or asparagus)
<b>Condiments:</b>	Vata or Pitta churna, rock salt and black pepper may be added after serving (to taste)
<b>Drink:</b>	Digestive herbal tea

## Evening Meal

<b>Soup:</b>	Dhal soup
<b>Condiments:</b>	Vata or Pitta churna, rock salt and black pepper may be added after serving (to taste)
<b>Drink:</b>	Digestive herbal tea

## Taking ghee: (this is an optional extra and should only be added to your detox routine if prescribed by your Ayurvedic practitioner).

- Measure out 25mls ghee, 35mls ghee and 50mls ghee into separate pots (order ghee at [www.maharishi.co.uk](http://www.maharishi.co.uk)).
- Day 1: take 25mls of melted ghee. Day 2: take 35mls of melted ghee. Day 3: take 45mls of melted ghee.
- Melt the ghee on a radiator or place jar in hot water until fully melted. Take at 6am each morning. Suck on an orange segment to take away taste if desired.
- Drink ginger, fennel or barley tea to ease any feelings of nausea if necessary.

# Lemon Detox



This is a purely liquid diet and is excellent for cleansing the kidneys and digestive system, eliminating waste and hardened material in the joints and muscles, relieving pressure and irritation in the nerves, arteries and blood vessels, keeping the skin soft, elastic and youthful, promoting weight loss and relieving constipation. It can be undertaken for one to five days every three or four months. The Lemon Detox is very easy to digest which is why it is so effective as part of a detox and weight loss program. It provides ample nutrition (vitamins and enzymes etc.) to keep the mind and body in peak condition with enough energy to maintain a normal daily routine.

## Lemon Detox Tea

Squeeze half a lemon into a 10oz. glass and add one or two tablespoons of maple syrup and 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper. Top up glass with hot water and drink each time you feel hungry.

## Instructions

For two days before you intend undertaking the 'Lemon Detox' avoid alcohol, tea, coffee, meat and dairy products. On the day before the 'Lemon Detox' follow the 'Mini Detox' or 'Dhal Detox'. During the 'Lemon Detox' diet drink the tea whenever you feel hungry (up to ten times a day if necessary). You may also drink plain hot water or Vata tea throughout the day to aid the cleansing process. On the day after the 'Lemon Detox' follow the 'Mini Detox' or 'Dhal Detox' for one or two days.

## Daily Routine

8.00am:	Lemon Detox Tea	3.00pm	Lemon Detox Tea
9.00am:	Vata tea	4.00pm	Vata tea
10.00am:	Lemon Detox Tea	5.00pm	Lemon Detox Tea
11.00am:	Vata or tea	6.00pm	Vata tea
12.00pm:	Lemon Detox Tea	7.00pm	Lemon Detox Tea
1.00pm:	Vata Tea	8.00pm	Vata tea
2.00pm:	Lemon Detox Tea	9.00pm	Triphala tablets (2-4)

# Combination Detox



This is a more intense and deeper detox which combines the Mini Detox, the Dhal Detox and the Lemon Detox. It can be undertaken for five to ten days every three to six months.

## 5-day Combination Detox

- Day 1: Follow Mini Detox
- Day 2: Follow Dhal Detox
- Day 3: Follow Lemon Detox
- Day 4: Follow Dhal Detox
- Day 5: Follow Mini Detox

## 10-day Combination Detox

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Day 1: Follow Mini Detox  | Day 6: Follow Lemon Detox |
| Day 2: Follow Mini Detox  | Day 7: Follow Dhal Detox  |
| Day 3: Follow Dhal Detox  | Day 8: Follow Dhal Detox  |
| Day 4: Follow Dhal Detox  | Day 9: Follow Mini Detox  |
| Day 5: Follow Lemon Detox | Day 10: Follow Mini Detox |

# Recommended Detox Options

## Weekly Detox

Option	Detox type	Duration
1.	Mini Detox	1 day
2.	Dhal Detox	1 day
3.	Lemon Detox	1 day

Follow one of these detox options each week

## Monthly Detox

Option	Detox type	Duration
1.	Mini Detox	3 days
2.	Dhal Detox	3 days
3.	Lemon Detox	3 days

Follow one of these detox options each month

## Three Month Detox

Option	Detox type	Duration
1.	Mini Detox	5 days
2.	Dhal Detox	5 days
3.	Lemon Detox	5 days
4.	Combination Detox	5 days

Follow one of these detox options every three months

## Six Month Detox

Option	Detox type	Duration
1.	Mini Detox	7 days
2.	Dhal Detox	7 days
3.	Lemon Detox	7 days
4.	Combination Detox	10 days
5.	Panchakarma Detox	10 days

Follow one of these detox options every six months

# Healthy drinks

If you wish to follow a healthy daily routine of liquid intake throughout the year the recommendation below may be followed. However, it is best to consult an Ayurvedic practitioner who will be able to tailor it to your own specific body type or imbalance and also to the season of the year.

Time	Activity	Drink	Cups
<b>Morning</b>			
6-7am	On waking	Lemon Tea	1-2
7-8am	Before breakfast	Carrot & apple juice	1-2
8-9am	After breakfast	Ginger or mint tea	1-2
9-12pm	During the morning	Rajas Cup with Almond Energy Kapha or Pitta tea	1-2 1-2
<b>Lunch</b>			
1-2pm	After lunchtime meal	Digest tea or Pitta tea	1
<b>Afternoon</b>			
2-6pm	In the afternoons	Rajas Cup with Almond Energy Vata tea Carrot & apple juice	1-2 1-2 1-2
<b>Evening</b>			
6-7pm	After evening meal	Digest tea	1
7-10pm	In the evening	Slumber Time tea Vata tea Rajas Cup (made with milk)	1 1 1



Most of the herbs and teas mentioned in this pack can be purchased from either:  
[www.maharishi.co.uk](http://www.maharishi.co.uk) (UK)  
[www.mapi.com](http://www.mapi.com) (USA)



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