

Chapter 4

Ayurvedic herbs & oils

~ a glossary of terms & home remedies for health & longevity ~



"When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce.

You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun.

You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person.

But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce.

Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument.

That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding.

If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change."

~ Thich Nhat Hanh ~

(Vietnamese Zen Master)

Classification of herbs used in Ayurveda

Herbs used in Ayurveda are classified according to their taste (rasa), their energetic effect (virya), their post-digestive effect (vipaka) and their post-digestive effect (prabhava). The initial taste (rasa) indicates the properties it possesses and the therapeutic effects it will have. Thus, a bitter, astringent taste will have a very different action on the body than a sweet, sour taste or a spicy, pungent taste.

Sweet taste is composed of earth and water and is represented in sugars and starches. It balances vata and pitta, increases ojas and promotes growth in the body. It nourishes and revitalises the body and creates contentment in the mind. It is found in almonds, dates, raisins, honey, fennel, licorice, sesame seeds, marshmallow and slippery elm.

Sour taste is composed of earth and fire and is present in fermented or acidic substances. It is heating and increases digestive power by enkindling agni, the digestive fire. It balances vata, enlivens the mind, increases strength, reduces bloating and gas and promotes salivation. Typically sour substances are lemon, lime, raspberry and alcohol.

Salty taste is composed of water and fire and is present in salty substances and alkalis. It balances vata, increases agni, acts as a sedative and laxative and promotes salivation. Salt is found in kelp, seaweed, celery, Irish moss, sea salt and rock salt.

Pungent taste is composed of fire and air and is present in most spicy, acrid or aromatic substances. It stimulates the digestion, increases appetite, acts as an expectorant, increases circulation, promotes clarity of mind, kills worms, alleviates kapha, reduces weight, clears obstructions, opens vessels and relieves blood stagnation. Pungent herbs and spices include; asafoetida, basil, black pepper, cardamom, cayenne, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, cumin, eucalyptus, garlic, ginger, horseradish, mustard, onions, oregano, peppermint, rosemary, sage and thyme.

Bitter taste is composed of air and ether and balances pitta and kapha. It is detoxifying, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory. It also cleanses the blood and liver, stimulates the digestive fire and scrapes away fat. It is present in bitter herbs and foods such as aloe, dandelion, echinacea, rhubarb, yarrow and yellow dock.

Astringent taste is composed of earth and air and is present in food and herbs of a constricting nature. It balances pitta and kapha, stops diarrhoea, stops bleeding, heals wounds, stops sweating and is anti-inflammatory. Astringent substances include black tea, beans, mullein, pomegranate, raspberry leaves and witch hazel.

Virya is the energy or potency of a herb or spice and can be heating or cooling. It indicates the effect the substance will have on pitta dosha. Sweet, astringent and bitter tastes are cooling whilst salt, sour and pungent are heating. Heating herbs increase pitta but reduce vata and kapha. They create sweating and increase the digestive fire. Cooling herbs reduce Pitta but increase vata and kapha. For pitta they are refreshing and help cleanse the blood as well as calm the mind.

Vipaka is the post-digestive effect the herb or spice will have on the body. Sweet and salty tastes have a sweet or moistening post-digestive effect; sour has a sour or heating post-digestive effect and pungent, astringent and bitter have a pungent or drying post-digestive effect. Sweet tastes are digested during the first (kapha) stage of digestion; in the mouth and stomach. Sour or acidic tastes are digested during the second (pitta) phase of digestion; in the stomach and small intestine. Pungent tastes are digested during the third (vata) phase of digestion; in the colon.

Thus, we can determine the long-term effect a herb will have on the body. Sweet vipaka will increase kapha and reduce vata and pitta; pungent will increase vata and pitta and reduce kapha; sour will increase pitta and kapha and reduce vata.

Prabhava is a term used to describe herbs and spices that have a 'special' potency or effect that is unique to it and does not always correspond to the rasa, virya or vipaka. Thus, a plant may be classified as 'heating' according to virya but is generally known to be very effective during high fever.

In the west herbalists have classified herbs according to their action on the body:

Alterative: These purify the blood and balance pitta and are mostly cooling and bitter. Typical cooling alterative herbs include: aloe vera, burdock, dandelion, echinacea, manjishta, neem, red clover, sandalwood and yellow dock. Hot, pungent alteratives may also be used if there is an ama condition present. Typical herbs include: black pepper, cayenne, cinnamon, garlic and myrrh.

Anti-parasitical: These destroy worms, bacteria, fungi, yeast infections and ama and are mainly bitter or pungent. Typical herbs include: ajwan, asafoetida, cayenne, black pepper, cloves, garlic, pomegranate, pumpkin seeds, thyme and wormwood.

Aphrodisiacs: These are strengthening, invigorating and rejuvenating to the reproductive system and help nourish all bodily tissues. They also increase the mental energy and improve nerve function. They include; angelica, asafoetida, ashwagandha, asparagus, cloves, fenugreek, garlic, ginseng, gokshura, hibiscus, pippali, rose, saffron, shatavari and wild yam.

Astringent: These are drying and moisture preserving and have a contracting, condensing and compacting effect on the tissues. Astringent herbs can be classified as haemostatic (stop bleeding), anti-diarrhoea and vulnerary (heal wounds). Common haemostatic herbs include: hibiscus, manjishta, marshmallow, nettle, plantain, raspberry, saffron, self-heal, turmeric and yarrow. Common anti-diarrhoea herbs include: blackberry, comfrey, plantain, raspberry and yellow dock. Others, of a more warming nature and more balancing to vata and the digestive system include: black pepper, ginger, haritaki and nutmeg and poppy seeds. Buttermilk and yoghurt may also be used. Vulnerary herbs include: aloe vera, chickweed, comfrey, honey, marshmallow, plantain, self-heal, slippery elm and turmeric. Comfrey, marshmallow, plantain, self-heal and yarrow are haemostatic, anti-diarrhoea and vulnerary.

Bitter tonic: These are cold, dry, catabolic herbs that stimulate the digestion, reduce heat and clear ama and toxins from the body; especially the blood and liver – they are usually given in relatively small quantities to people suffering from pitta related problems. Many are anti-tumor, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, and anti-parasitical. They include aloe vera, goldenseal, gentian, kutki and neem.

Carminative: These herbs reduce bloating and gas, promote peristalsis and settle the digestion. They work mainly on vata in the digestive tract and help to increase the digestive fire or agni. Typical herbs include: ajwan, asafoetida, basil, bay leaves, calamus, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, garlic, ginger, nutmeg, oregano, thyme and turmeric. Carminative herbs with a cooling nature are less likely to produce aggravate pitta and include: chamomile, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, lime, musta, peppermint and wintergreen.

Diaphoretic: These are mostly heating herbs that increase circulation and perspiration. They are good for the initial stages of colds, fevers and flu as they eliminate toxins from the periphery of the body. They help cleanse the subtle channels and capillaries of the body including the lymphatic system, lungs, respiratory system, sinuses and plasma. Cooling diaphoretics also help cleanse the liver and blood. Heating diaphoretics include: angelica, basil, camphor, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, eucalyptus, ginger, sage and thyme. Cooling diaphoretics include: burdock, chamomile, coriander, horsetail, peppermint and yarrow.

Diuretic: These promote urination and reduce water and toxicity in the body through increasing the action of the kidneys and urinary bladder. They are kapha or pitta reducing herbs and are bitter, astringent or pungent in taste. In regard to pitta they dispel damp heat, cool and purify the blood, reduce acidity, control diarrhoea and dysentery and help in conditions related to the liver and gall bladder. Cooling diuretic include: asparagus, barley, burdock, coriander, dandelion, fennel, gokshura, horsetail, marshmallow, plantain, punarnava and parsley. Heating diuretics include: ajwan, cinnamon, garlic, mustard and parsley.

Emmenagogues: These are pitta balancing herbs that promote the flow of blood and are indicated for problems related to the female reproductive system, especially the menstrual cycle. Cooling emmenagogues include: chamomile, hibiscus, manjishta, musta, raspberry, rose and yarrow. Heating emmenagogues are indicated when causes are more of a vata nature and include: angelica, asafoetida, cinnamon, ginger, myrrh, parsley and turmeric.

Expectorants: These promote the flow of phlegm and mucus from the lungs, nasal passages and stomach and are therefore indicated for colds, flu, cough, asthma, bronchitis and digestive complaints relating to mucus. They mainly help reduce kapha through their drying, warming nature and include herbs such as: calamus, cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, eucalyptus, ginger, pippali and thyme.

Demulcent: These herbs are mucilaginous and alleviate dryness. They are softening, strengthening, nutritive and anti-inflammatory and help feed the mucus membranes and connective tissue to heal wounds, sores and ulcers. They can

also act as moistening expectorants in cases of dry cough. Herbs include: bamboo, chickweed, comfrey root, flaxseed, licorice, marshmallow and slippery elm.

Laxative: These are used in cases of constipation and toxins in the colon as they promote bowel movement and peristalsis. Purgatives have a stronger action and are generally cold and bitter; they may cause diarrhoea and gripping and include: aloe vera powder, castor oil, rhubarb and senna. Milder laxatives are used in more general vata conditions and include: bran, flaxseed, ghee, licorice, prunes, psyllium seeds, raisins, shatavari, warm milk and yellow dock.

Nervines: These act upon the nervous system. They either stimulate or sedate the mind and have an anti-spasmodic effect on muscle tissue. They can help with menstrual cramps, headaches, muscle tremors, nerve pain, lumbago and sciatica. Heating nervines pacify vata and kapha dosha and include: asafoetida, basil, calamus, camphor, eucalyptus, garlic, guggul, myrrh, nutmeg, poppy seeds, sage and valerian. Cooling nervines help pacify pitta dosha and include: bhringaraj, chamomile, gotu kola, hops, jatamansi, mullein, peppermint, sandalwood, St. John's Wort and wild yam.

Stimulants: These are herbs that promote digestion by stimulating agni, the digestive fire. They are mainly heating and pungent and are the best herbs to increase appetite and digest ama or toxins. They increase energy, stimulate the senses and generally increase pitta and decrease kapha. In excess they can disturb vata. Stimulating herbs include: ajwan, asafoetida, black pepper, cayenne, cinnamon, cloves, garlic, ginger, horseradish, mustard and pippali.

Nutritive tonics: They nourish the body and increase body mass and are usually sweet, heavy, oily, mucilaginous and kapha increasing. They can increase ama and reduce the digestive fire and are often combined with more stimulating herbs to counteract this in certain conditions. Nutritive tonics include: almonds, amalaki, angelica, bala, coconut, comfrey root, dates, flaxseeds, ginseng, honey, Irish moss, licorice, jaggery, marshmallow, milk, raisins, sesame seeds, shatavari, slippery elm and wild yam.

Rejuvenative tonics: These are some of the most important herbs or Rasayanas in Ayurveda and are said to increase the subtle qualities of the mind and body, bringing longevity, renewal and revitalisation. They increase the subtle essence of life in the body, ojas and bring clarity to the mind and strength to the body. Rasayanas for vata include: ashwagandha, bala, bhringaraj, calamus, chywanaprash, guggul, haritaki and triphala. Rasayanas for pitta include: aloe vera, amalaki, brahmi, gotu kola, guduchi, saffron and shatavari. Rasayanas for kapha include: bibhitaki, guggul, pippali and triphala.

When an Ayurvedic practitioner has a client with a particular complaint he will aim to determine the underlying cause of the problem and not focus primarily of the disease itself. He will establish which dosha has gone out of balance and then suggest lifestyle and dietary changes to help bring the offending dosha back into balance. He may also suggest ingesting herbal formulas to speed the process along and his choices will be based on the energetic qualities of the herbs used. Thus, if the underlying dosha that is causing the problem is vata, which has the qualities of bitter, light, cold and dry, he may prescribe herbs that have opposite qualities to this; sweet, heavy, warming and moistening. He will also take into account whether heating or cooling herbs (vipaka) are more appropriate and also whether there are any herbs with special properties (prabhava) which may be indicated.

It is usual for an Ayurvedic herbal formula to have many different herbs in it, each creating a particular effect and complementing or balancing one another. If a herb is specifically known to treat the particular condition (prabhava) this will form a relatively large part of the herbal formula. Other herbs will be added to treat the imbalanced dosha, whilst others may be added to treat the tissues (dhatus) and channels (shrotas) involved. The state of the digestive fire (agni) and the amount of toxicity (ama) in the body will also be given due consideration and the necessary herbs added. Thus, some traditional herbal formulas have as many as fifty herbs in them. The vehicle that is used as a carrier for the herbs is also very important so hot water or milk may be used to target vata, aloe vera to target pitta and honey to target kapha. The time of day the herbs are taken affects the manner in which the body will respond as a herbal formula may act on one particular tissue or dosha at 6am and another at 6pm. Also, herbs taken before a meal may have a very different action on the physiology if taken during or after a meal.

Ayurvedic herbs

(a small selection of commonly used herbs and some of their benefits)

It should be noted that no herb or oil should be taken or applied without first consulting with a qualified herbal practitioner, especially in pregnancy or if taking any kind of medication.

Aloe Vera (*aloe barbadensis*): Contains high concentrations of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, enzymes and natural sugars. It is good for the digestion, liver, blood, reproductive system and as a laxative. As a gel it is excellent mixed with ghee for burns and piles. Also helps with constipation, obesity, inflammatory skin conditions and conjunctivitis.

Andrographis (King of the bitters; *Andrographis paniculata*): It stimulates the immune system and is good for influenza, sore throat, gastrointestinal parasites and infections, urinary infections, respiratory infections, inflamed skin conditions, sores and eczema. It is also good for increasing bile flow and clearing liver infections and inflammation. Balances: Pitta and Kapha.

Asafoetida (Hing; *Ferula asafoetida*): Good for digestion and cleansing of digestive tract; it dispels gas and improves the intestinal flora. It is also useful for cramps, flatulence, constipation, arthritis, rheumatism, colic pain and asthma. Balances: Vata and Kapha.

Amalaki (Indian Gooseberry; *Emblica officinalis*): Good for constipation, ulcers, gastritis, colitis, hepatitis and haemorrhoids. It is a great antioxidant and helps lower cholesterol and heal damaged arteries. It is also good for diabetes, anaemia, hair loss/greying and general weakness. Balances: Pitta and Vata.

Ashwagandha (Winter Cherry, Indian Ginseng; *Withania somnifera*): The Ginseng of India with powerful rejuvenating and revitalising properties. It is calming and promotes sound sleep while being good for overwork, stress, insomnia, anxiety, ADHD, multiple sclerosis, emaciation, skin problems, rheumatism/arthritis, anaemia, infertility, fatigue, breathing difficulties, hay fever, allergic rhinitis, convalescence and nervous exhaustion. It improves greying hair, increases vitamin C and calcium levels, strengthens muscles and acts as a pain killer and anti-inflammatory for painful or swollen joints. It also helps relieve impotence, increases sperm count and is a tonic for the uterine muscles. Can also be used for dysmenorrhoea and infertility. Balances: Vata, Pitta and Kapha

Bibhitaki (*Terminalia Belerica*): A powerful Rejuvenative. It helps with liver and heart disease and also improves the voice, vision and promotes the growth of hair. It balances Kapha.

Bhringaraj (*Eclipta alba*): This rejuvenating herb is excellent for greying and/or balding hair, strengthening bones, teeth and hair and improving sight, hearing and memory. It is the best medicine for cirrhosis and the liver in general as well as being a good brain tonic and sleep-inducer. It is good for the complexion and when applied externally it helps reduce inflammation and draw out impurities from the skin. Balances: Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

Burdock (*Arctium lappa*): A blood cleanser, digestive stimulant and good for skin problems.

Chywanaprash A truly magnificent Rasayana or 'super food' which nourishes and strengthens both the mind and body. It has been taken as an 'elixir of life' for thousands of years and is now proving to be one of the strongest antioxidants known to man with the ability to arrest and improve many of our modern day diseases such as cancer and many auto-immune disorders. It is meticulously prepared with up to fifty different herbal compounds and has one of the highest concentrations of vitamin C of 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.

Devils Claw (*Harpagophytum procumbens*): Good for arthritis, rheumatism, gout and tendon damage.

Echinacea (*Echinasea purpuria*): It cleanses the blood and lymph and destroys ama. It is good for lung problems, colds, flu, wound healing, skin complaints and viral/bacterial infections.

Gingko (*Gingko biloba*): An anti-oxidant and good for circulation, heart problems, memory loss, asthma, bronchitis, tinnitus and vertigo.

Ginseng (*Panax ginseng*): A general tonic for increasing energy levels and promoting weight loss and tissue growth.

Ginger Root (*Zingiber officinalis*): Helps relieve nausea, travel sickness, headaches, coughs, colds, menstrual cramping, poor digestion and poor circulation. It is toxin-digesting and anti-inflammatory for arthritic conditions, clears phlegm in the lungs, increases digestive enzymes, and is effective for gas, griping and *E.coli* or *Shigella bacillus* conditions. Balances: Vata and Kapha

Gotu Kola (Indian Pennywort or Brahmi; *Centella asiatica*, *Hydrcotyle asiatica*, *Bacoppa monniera*): A brain tonic and best taken with honey to reduce stress, insomnia, ADHD and anxiety whilst improving memory and mental abilities. It detoxifies the liver and blood, reduces tumours, improves energy levels and strengthens the kidneys. It also helps with Alzheimer's, acne, urticaria, eczema, arthritis, gout, wounds and skin inflammation. Balances: Vata and Pitta

Green Tea (*Camelia sinensis*): A very effective antioxidant – 200 times more powerful than vitamin E in neutralising free-radicals that attack lipids.

Guggul (Indian Bedellium, *Commiphora mukul*): Good for skin/tissue regeneration and reducing fat/toxins. It is often used to help arthritis. Balances: Vata, Pitta and Kapha

Haritaka (*Terminalia chebula*): A classic brain, nerve, digestive and energy tonic. It also helps regulate the colon and is good for both constipation and diarrhoea. Haritaka is the basis for Triphala. Balances: Vata, Pitta and Kapha

Liquorice Root (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*): Relieves coughs, sore throats, respiratory problems; abdominal pain and hyperacidity.

Neem (*Azadiracta indica*): A powerful anti-bacterial herb and blood purifier and good for many skin complaints (especially inflammation, eczema, psoriasis, urticaria and acne). In the gastrointestinal tract it helps with hyperacidity, ulcers, colitis, crohn's disease, candida, fistulas and haemorrhoids. It can also help reduce inflammation in joints and muscles and regulate blood sugar levels in diabetes. It reduces fever and can also be used as a mouthwash for toothache and gingivitis. Balances: Pitta and Kapha

Passiflora (*Passiflora incarnata*): Promotes relaxation and helps with insomnia, agitation, anxiety, nervousness and stress.

Psyllium Husks Roughage for improving digestion, relieving constipation and cleansing the colon.

Sarsaparilla (*Smilax ornate*): Good for skin problems, digestion/ appetite, flatulence, gout, arthritis, rheumatism and nervous disorders.

Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*): A particularly rejuvenating herb for the female reproductive system as it cleanses the blood and increases fertility. It is good to take during the menopause, as a menstrual regulator and for impotence, dysmenorrhoea, menorrhagia, diarrhoea, stomach ulcers, hyperacidity, cancer and chronic fever. It is also good and for soothing inflammation of the mucus membranes and is useful in colitis, crohn's disease, hyperacidity, ulcers and gastritis. Balances: Vata and Pitta

Slippery Elm (*Ulmus fulva*): Reduces inflammation and is good for lung problems and ulcers.

Spirulina: A very high protein sea-plant that is excellent for weight loss, detoxification and reducing appetite.

St John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*): Calms the nervous system and is beneficial for the treatment of mild depression and insomnia.

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*): Used as an anti-inflammatory and circulatory stimulant. It improves skin conditions such as acne, rashes, dermatitis, eczema, urticaria and psoriasis; relieves pain and has anti-oxidant, anti-carcinogenic, anti-tumour, anti-bacterial, anti-biotic, anti-microbial, anti-viral, carminative and immuno-stimulant properties. It is good for asthma, allergies, burns, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoporosis, obesity, digestive disorders, gallstones, liver disorders, tumours, reducing cholesterol, thinning the blood, cancer and ulcers. It also helps with uterine cysts and fibroids, endometriosis, dysmenorrhoea, amenorrhoea and leucorrhoea. Balances: Vata, Pitta and Kapha

Trikatu A powerful tonic for improving digestion and relieving constipation. It is prepared by mixing ground ginger, black pepper and cayenne pepper (one pinch of each) in a little honey (one teaspoon). It balances Kapha.

Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*): Good for nervous disorders such as tension and anxiety. It is also good for insomnia, fainting and menstrual cramps.

Wild Yam (*Dioscorea villosa*): Helps with hormonal imbalances, period pains, menopause, colic, joint inflammation, flatulence and liver cleansing.

Triphala

Triphala formula contains Amalaki, Haritaki and Bibhitaki is considered a 'tri-doshic rasayana' – it is one of the most popular Ayurvedic herbal remedies as it helps rectify constipation and bowel irregularity but is also something of a universal panacea for a wide range of complaints.

It helps cleanse the blood and detoxify the liver as it possesses bitter anthroquinones which help stimulate bile flow and peristalsis. It is a powerful tonic as it is high in vitamin C, linoleic oil, phospholipids and other important nutrients. It is rich in antioxidants that fight free radicals and has anti-viral (HIV, AIDS, herpes etc) and anti-bacterial properties. It tonifies and protects the heart whilst also lowering blood pressure and reducing fat and cholesterol. It helps with the digestion and assimilation of food, improves blood circulation and has anti-inflammatory properties. It revitalises the whole body by removing toxins, gas and distension whilst nourishing the nervous system. It is good for anemia, fatigue, candida, cancer, allergies, constipation, diarrhoea, yeast infections, indigestion and skin disorders. It can be used for all eye diseases including conjunctivitis, progressive myopia, glaucoma and cataracts.

Traditionally triphala is taken as a churna or powder as the taste on the tongue is important to its action. Two or three grams of the powder can be taken daily with warm water for health maintenance (alternatively, 1g can be taken three times a day between meals). Larger doses are more laxative whilst smaller doses are more gradually blood purifying. The dose taken should be increased or decreased according to the response of the bowels.

Aloe Vera

Known to herbalists and medical folklorists for centuries as the "medical plant" or "the potted physician", this cactus-like plant whose name means "shining bitter substance," was widely regarded as a master healing plant. In recent decades medical research has confirmed that Aloe Vera is a truly amazing plant with an incredible array of medicinal healing properties.

Applied to wounds, aloe gel is a mild anaesthetic, relieving itching, swelling, and pain. It is also antibacterial and anti fungal, increases blood flow to wounded areas and stimulates fibroblasts, the skin cells responsible for wound healing. It also helps relieve burns and psoriasis. It is effective for treating inflammatory bowel disease, detoxifying the bowel, neutralising stomach acidity, relieving constipation and healing gastric ulcers. It has also been shown to reduce blood sugar in diabetics.

Aloe can help prevent arthritis and reduce the inflammation in joints already affected by arthritis. It can also inhibit the autoimmune reaction associated with certain forms of arthritis, in which the body attacks its own tissues.

Aloe could also provide nutritional support for HIV patients as it has properties which reduce occurrences of opportunistic infections, thrush, fatigue and diarrhoea. Research indicates that aloe helps stimulate the body's immune system, particularly the T4 helper cells - white blood cells that activate the immune response to infection. An extract of mannose, one of the sugars in aloe, has been shown to inhibit HIV-1 (the virus associated with AIDS).

Aloe has been found to significantly suppress the growth of cancer cells. It has been shown to help turn on the immune system by activating macrophages (white blood cells which "swallow" antigens), causing the release of immune-activating (and anticancer) substances such as interferons, interleukins, and tumour necrosis factor. In addition, aloe seems to also promote the growth of normal (non-cancerous) cells.

Herbal formulas for common ailments

It should be noted that no herb or oil should be taken or applied without first consulting with a qualified herbal practitioner, especially in pregnancy or if taking any kind of medication. This glossary lists a range of common ailments and the combination of Pukka Herbs remedies (www.pukkaherbs.com) that can help best to restore the body to health.

Condition	Treatment Strategy	Action
Acne	Neem & Sarsaparilla formula Triphala plus Neem tincture Aloe Vera juice Aloe gel (external) Neem & Sandalwood cream (external)	Cleanses blood Detoxifies the bowel
Arthritis	Turmeric & Boswellia formula Triphala plus Turmeric tincture Mahanarayan oil (external)	Anti-inflammatory Clears toxins
Asthma - child	Chywanaprash Turmeric tincture Revitalizing tea	Tonifies lungs Stops inflammation and phlegm
Asthma - adult	Licorice & Ginger formula Chywanaprash Asafoetida formula Triphala plus bowel Revitalising tea Mahanarayan oil	Reduces wheezing Tones lungs Antispasmodic Gently regulates the
Back pain	Turmeric tincture Ashwagandha tincture Ashwagandha plus Mahanarayan oil (External)	Stops pain Strengthens spine
Candida	Neem capsule or tincture Asafoetida plus Shatavari plus Triphala plus Detox tea	Kills candida Reduces gas and bloating Clears discharges Regulates bowel Stops bloating
Catarrh	Trikatu Licorice & Ginger formula Nasya nasal oil Revitalising tea	Reduces mucus Clears sinuses
Cellulite	Guggul plus Gotu Kola tincture Mahanarayan oil Shatavari Plus	Reduces fat Specific for cellulite Benefits female health
Cholesterol	Guggul plus Turmeric tincture Aloe vera juice Hemp seed oil Revitalising tea	Reduces cholesterol Reduces cholesterol Reduces LDL and congestion
Chronic Fatigue	Ashwagandha plus Shatavari plus Triphala plus Asafoetida plus Amla & Peppermint formula Chywanaprash	Tonifies – men Tonifies – women When there is constipation Bloating Diarrhoea Boosts immunity
Cold Sores	Andrographis & Holy Basil formula Neem cream	Anti viral

Colds	<p>Trikatu Licorice & Ginger formula Andrographis & Holy Basil formula Nasya nasal oil Revitalising tea</p>	<p>Reduces mucus Recovery from colds and coughs) Reduces infection Clears the nose</p>
Constipation	<p>Triphala plus Triphala Asafoetida plus Chywanaprash Hemp seed oil Aloe vera juice</p>	<p>Evacuates bowel Regulates bowel Bloating and gas Lubricates dryness</p>
Cough	<p>Licorice & Ginger formula Trikatu Soothing tea Chywanaprash Bhringaraj oil</p>	<p>Nourishes lungs and stops coughing Clears phlegm Clears phlegm and soothes throat</p>
Cystitis	<p>Gokshura & Shatavari formula Neem capsules Detox tea</p>	<p>Regulates urinary system Clears infection Eases urination</p>
Dermatitis	<p>Neem & Sarsaparilla formula Neem tincture Guduchi plus Triphala plus Aloe vera juice Neem cream Aloe vera gel Hemp seed oil Bhringaraj oil, Neem oil (external)</p>	<p>Cleans skin Reduces inflammation Clears the liver Clears constipation Anti-inflammatory</p>
Diarrhoea	<p>Amla & Peppermint formula Asafoetida plus Detox tea</p>	<p>Stops cramps Stops cramps</p>
Digestive Problems	<p>Trikatu Asafoetida plus Amla & Peppermint formula Aloe vera juice Detox tea</p>	<p>Stimulates digestive enzymes Erratic appetite with gas Acidity Stops bloating</p>
Eczema	<p>Neem & Sarsaparilla formula Guduchi plus Triphala plus Neem cream Aloe vera juice Aloe gel Peppermint water spray Hemp seed oil Brahmi oil, Bhringaraj oil</p>	<p>Stops inflammation Reduces toxins in liver Clears bowel Stops infections Clears toxins, anti-inflammatory Reduces inflammation Stops itching Anti-inflammatory</p>
Fatigue	<p>Ashwagandha plus Shatavari plus Triphala plus Chywanaprash</p>	<p>Male energy Female energy Clears stagnation</p>
Fertility	<p>Shatavari plus Ashwagandha plus Triphala plus Rose water Chywanaprash Ashwagandha oil</p>	<p>Boosts fertility in women Boosts fertility in men Clears congestion Nourishes uterus</p>
Flatulence	<p>Asafoetida plus Triphala plus Ashwagandha and Gotu kola formula</p>	<p>Stops flatulence Regulates the bowel Reduces stress on the bowel</p>

Glandular Fever	Ashwagandha Plus Andrographis & Holy Basil formula Chywanaprash	For strengthening For clearing the virus
Hair Loss	Amla & Peppermint formula Bhringraj oil Coconut oil	Nourishes hair
Halitosis	Triphala plus Asafoetida plus Amla & Peppermint formula Aloe vera juice Peppermint water spray	To clear congestion To regulate appetite To regulate appetite Regulates bowel
Hay fever	Peppermint & Pippali formula Trikatu Aloe vera juice Rose water eye drops Nasya oil	Reduces inflammation and irritation Anti-histamine, reduces secretions Protects liver Stops itching and soothes inflammation
Heartburn	Amla & Peppermint formula Aloe vera juice Rosewater Ashwagandha & Gotu Kola formula Refreshing tea	Stops acid Cools stomach Antacid Reduces stress reduces burning
Heart Conditions	Arjuna & Hawthorn formula Turmeric tincture Amla tincture Hemp seed oil Love tea	Strengthens heart Increases circulation Strengthens heart Reduces LDL and congestion Soothes heart
Hypertension	Punarnava plus Aloe vera Triphala plus Ashwagandha & Valerian formula Soothing tea	Clear fluids and regulates BP Stops inflammation Reduces congestion Reduces stress
IBS	Triphala plus Asafoetida plus Amla & Peppermint formula Ashwagandha & Valerian formula Aloe vera juice Refreshing tea	With constipation With gas and cramps With diarrhoea and irritation For stress Cleans bowel and stops irritation
Men's Health	Ashwagandha plus Guduchi plus Aloe vera juice Chywanaprash	Tones reproductive system Detox for liver Clears liver and heart
Menopause	Shatavari plus Shatavari Aloe vera juice Rose water spray Refreshing tea Chywanaprash	Stops sweats, mood swings Balances hormones Stops flushes For hot flushes Reduces heat
Migraine	Guduchi plus Amla & Peppermint formula Ashwagandha & Valerian formula Refreshing tea Aloe vera juice, Brahmi oil	Helps to clean liver Prevents irritating acid Calms stress
Mouth Ulcers	Neem tincture Andrographis & Holy Basil formula Amla & Peppermint formula Aloe juice Refreshing tea	Reduces inflammation Boosts immunity Reduces inflammation Heals ulcers

Osteoporosis	Ashwagandha plus Shatavari plus Turmeric & Boswellia formula Chywanaprash	Tonifies skeletal system Regulates oestrogen/progesterone balance Increase blood flow to bones
Painful Periods	Shatavari plus Turmeric tincture Aloe vera juice Triphala plus Soothing tea	Stops spasms Reduces inflammatory prostaglandins Clears congestion If associated with constipation For painful periods
Piles	Triphala plus Gotu Kola & Turmeric formula Guduchi plus Aloe vera juice	Gives soft stool Reduces venous congestion Regulates portal vein
Pregnancy	Shatavari Rose water spray	Increases lactation Uplifts mood
Prostatitis	Gokshura & Shatavari formula Detox tea	Eases urination, reduces blockages
Psoriasis	Neem & Sarsaparilla formula Triphala plus Aloe Vera juice Neem cream Aloe gel Hemp seed oil Brahmi oil, Neem oil (external)	Clear lesions Clears bowel Protect liver Reduces inflammation
Sinus	Trikatu Licorice & Ginger formula Nasya nasal oil Revitalising tea	Opens sinuses Prevents blockage Stops congestion
Sleep	Ashwagandha & Valerian formula Sedative	
Stress	Ashwagandha & Gotu Kola formula Ashwagandha & Valerian formula Brahmi plus Brahmi oil	Day stress Night stress For concentration
Thyroid	Guggul plus	Regulates thyroid
Travel Sickness	Asafoetida plus Ashwagandha & Gotu Kola formula Trikatu	Settles digestion Relaxant Regulates appetite
Varicose Veins	Gotu Kola & Turmeric formula Turmeric	Increases venous return Increases circulation
Weight Loss	Guggul plus Punarnava plus	Reduces cholesterol and weight Clears fluids
Women's Health	Shatavari plus Shatavari Aloe Vera juice Aloe gel Rose water spray	Nourishes reproductive system Balances hormones

* Reproduced with the kind permission of Sebastian Pole of Pukka Herbs (see resources).

A guide to using aromatic essential oils

Essential oils are an aromatic constituent of many plants, flowers and shrubs and have powerful healing properties if distilled and applied correctly. Only organic, grade A (clinic/therapeutic grade) oils with ISO/AFNOR certification should be used if you wish to ensure that the oils you purchase will be safe and have the desired therapeutic effect. If essential oils meet the above criteria then many may be safely used to flavour beverages or food, added to base oils for massage, mixed with bathwater, evaporated in aroma burners, applied topically to the body and inhaled from diffusers.

To prepare a herbal tea, add one or two drops of essential oil to a one-litre thermos flask. Be sure to only use oils that are recommended for oral consumption. When using essential oils on the skin it is best to mix them with a base oil such as sesame or almond in order to prevent possible skin irritations or sensitivity and also to increase their therapeutic value (a mix of 20:1 base oil to essential oil is ideal). If used neat on the skin it is important to test on the back of the hand first to check for skin sensitivity. Do not use undiluted anywhere on the skin if a reaction occurs.

Serious complaints and imbalances in the body have often taken many months or even years to manifest as physical symptoms. Essential oils can help heal the underlying problem and can thereby reduce or eliminate the outward symptoms. However, this healing and balancing process may take weeks or even months depending on the severity of the problem being tackled so patience and perseverance are vital. Prescribed drugs may well clear up outward symptoms of a disease very quickly but they are generally toxic to the body and can further weaken an already compromised immune system. Furthermore, they don't often address the underlying problem but simply suppress the condition and drive it even deeper into the tissues. As with any medical condition, the disease, illness or complaint is both a warning sign that you are treating the body incorrectly and also the body's way of releasing toxins or impurities. If you suppress that process with drugs you have a short-term gain but a dangerous long-term loss because the real problem hasn't been addressed and dealt with.

The causes of specific ailments or conditions are manifold but are often a combination of wrong diet, wrong lifestyle, stress and lack of exercise. Eating well-balanced, freshly cooked, nutritious meals, reducing stress levels and exercising regularly go a long way to preventing the onset of disease processes. However, the judicious use of essential oils will undoubtedly help with any complaints or conditions you may be suffering from. However, herb and oils are powerful remedies and should only be taken or applied after first consulting with a qualified herbal practitioner, especially in pregnancy or if taking any kind of medication.

Commonly used essential oils:

Basil: Use for migraines, mental fatigue, scanty periods, relaxing muscles, insect bites and chest infections. Apply diluted to the temples, crown, forehead, heart and navel. May be added to food and water. Balances Vata and Kapha.

Cedarwood

Good for combating hair loss, insomnia, skin problems, nervous tension and anxiety, dandruff, cystitis and fluid retention. Apply diluted to problem areas. Balances Vata.

Cinnamon

Use for improving circulation, coughs, exhaustion, digestion, rheumatism and warts.

Apply diluted to the feet, ankles and wrists. May be added to food and water. Balances Pitta.

Clove: Good for fighting infectious diseases, intestinal parasites, respiratory infections, pain, toothache, scabies, infected wounds, warts, mouth/skin sores, skin cancer/disease, dermatitis, rheumatism, arthritis, cystitis, diarrhoea, acne, halitosis, headaches, nausea, insect bites and neuritis. Use diluted with sesame oil as a mouth gargle and apply diluted to problem areas. Balances Vata & Kapha.

Eucalyptus globules: An excellent oil for: healing wounds; using as an insect repellent; for asthma, coughs, diabetes, herpes, hypoglycaemia, lung problems, headaches, aches/pains, arthritis, burns, ulcers and general sores. Apply diluted on location and use for steam inhalation. May be added to food and water. Balances Kapha.

Fennel: Very good for improving the digestion. Also use for cystitis, nausea, menstrual pains, spasms, gout, constipation, hormone balancing, internal cleansing and respiratory complaints. Apply diluted to problem areas. May be added to food and water. Balances Vata, Pitta & Kapha.

Frankincense: Use for asthma, depression, ulcers, stress, allergies, insect bites, bronchitis, cancer, respiratory infections, headaches, herpes, high blood pressure, inflammation, stress, warts. Apply diluted to problem areas. Balances Vata.

Ginger: Good for motion sickness, arthritis/rheumatism, digestion, alcoholism, appetite, respiratory problems, coughs, nausea, sprains, sinusitis and sore throats. Apply diluted to problem areas. May be added to food and water. Balances Vata & Kapha.

Lavender: Strong antiseptic and good for burns, wounds, skin care, nervous disorders, sunburn, allergies, headaches, indigestion, insomnia, high blood pressure, nausea, menstrual pains, scarring, arthritis/rheumatism, asthma, insect bites, infections, hives and depression. Apply diluted to problem areas. May be added to food/water. Balances Vata & Pitta.

Lemon: Use for skin care, warts, varicose veins, throat infections, asthma, bleeding, herpes, anaemia, lowering blood pressure, improving digestion, healthy nails, improving memory, boosting immune functioning and respiratory problems. Apply to problem areas diluted with sesame oil or as a floral spray mixed with peppermint. May be added to food and water. Balances Pitta.

Nutmeg: Good for fighting fatigue and increasing energy levels, improving appetite/digestion, gallstones, halitosis, rheumatism, nausea, pain, frigidity, impotence, menstrual pains and bacterial infections. Apply diluted to problem areas. May be added to food and water. Balances Vata & Kapha.

Peppermint: Good for the liver strengthening cleansing, improving digestion, nausea, respiratory problems, improving concentration, itchy skin, asthma, candida, diarrhoea, heartburn, halitosis, haemorrhoids, menstrual pains, headaches, motion sickness, tumours, shock, throat infections, varicose veins, skin problems, arthritis/rheumatism and toothache. Apply diluted to the stomach, feet, temples and tongue (for increased concentration, alertness and memory). May be added to food and water. Balances Pitta.

Pine: Good for respiratory problems, as an antiseptic, muscles/joint problems, infections, fatigue, asthma, lungs, diabetes, sinusitis, rheumatoid arthritis, coughs, cuts, lice, sores, stress and increasing blood pressure. Dilute to avoid skin irritation and avoid low cost adulterated oils. Do not use if epileptic, under doctor supervision or have high blood pressure. Apply diluted to problem areas or use for steam inhalation. Balances Kapha.

Rosemary: Use for improving concentration, arthritis/rheumatism, liver cleansing, menstrual pains, asthma, digestive problems, breathing difficulties and nervous tension. May be used for steam inhalations or applied diluted to problem areas. May be added to food and water. Balances Kapha.

Sandalwood: Good for nervous disorders, circulation problems, insomnia, enhancing meditation, infections, depression and skin problems. Apply diluted to problem areas. Balances Pitta.

Spruce: Use for athlete's foot, fungal infections, respiratory problems, arthritis/rheumatism, painful joints, nervous disorders, hormonal imbalances and respiratory problems. Apply diluted to problem areas. Balances Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

Tea-Tree: Use for athlete's foot, fungal infections, respiratory infections, bronchitis, gum disease, rash, sore throat, sunburn, tonsillitis, vaginal thrush, acne, burns, candida, cold sores, warts, wounds. Apply diluted to problem areas. Balances Pitta.

Please note:

'The Essential Oils Desk Reference' published by Essential Science Publishing (www.espublishing.com) is an excellent guide to using essential oils.



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PO Box 5761, Burton-on-Trent, DE13 9YW

Tel: 0870 744 1508

www.ayurveda.uk.com

info@ayurveda.uk.com

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