

Ayurveda - Holistic Approach to Good Health

Vinita Rashinkar

BRITISH RULE, AND THE advent of Western medical practices had reduced Ayurveda into a form of medicine, which was considered 'unscientific' and outdated. The past few years have seen Ayurveda make a comeback in India as well as in such countries as Japan, Russia, Europe, and North and South America. Ayurveda ("science of life") which originated in India some 5000 years ago, is a comprehensive system of medicine that combines natural therapies with highly personalized approach to the treatment of ailments. It mirrors what Hippocrates once said: "It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has."

Ayurveda differs from Allopathy in that Western medicine aims to palliate the symptoms and no attempt is made to treat the underlying cause and in doing so, treats the root cause of the disease. The idea is to cure the disease in totality rather than to overcome the symptoms

Ayurveda considers the body type as a blueprint, which outlines the innate tendencies built in to a person's system.

An Ayurvedic doctor determines the prakruti of an individual based on physical characteristics, mental attributes and spiri-

is vibrant health, energy and clarity of mind and spirit. When this delicate balance is disturbed, the body faces ill health and disease.

Ayurveda's main aim therefore is to bring the doshas back into balance. This can be done

the biological clock and retards the ageing process.

Spiritual healing

Ayurveda uses various methods to improve the mind to reach the higher level of spiritual and mental functioning and this is accomplished through the release of psychological stress and unresolved emotions at subconscious levels. In this category are other esoteric sciences as sound therapy, colour therapy, Vaastu, gem therapy, yantra, numerology, etc., contrary to popular belief that Ayurvedic medicine is only about thinking bitter potions, treatments in Ayurvedic medicine are varied and diverse in nature. They include:

- Massage using herbal oils which the skin absorbs and helps in the removal of toxins from the system

- Herbs are used extensively by Ayurvedic physicians, based on their innate qualities, to revitalize the bodily systems

- Yoga help is in strengthening agni the metabolic fire and improves circulation, flexibility and sharpens the mind

- es. Meditation and breath-

Sun: According to Ayurvedic philosophy, the sun is not only a source of heat and light, but also a higher consciousness. It improves circulation, aids absorption of Vitamin D and strengthens bones. The Aditya Hridaya or sun prayer is said to bestow health and remove all obstacles.

Ayurveda offers cures for almost all ailments by modern medicine and this is done using primarily non-evasive treatment modalities. In fact, ancient Ayurvedic texts describe some modern medical developments such as plastic surgery, inoculations and vaccinations and even genetic engineering. Its greatest strength lies in the fact that anyone adopting an Ayurvedic lifestyle can see for themselves the radical change in their physical and mental health. But like all enlightened healing methods, Ayurveda emphasizes prevention over curing disease. **The writer is Manager Marketing and E-Business, IVAC.**



superficially. This "Holistic" approach naturally involves the body, mind and spirit and attempts to bring all three into balance. Western medicine also acknowledges that most illness is psychosomatic but treatment modalities invariably involve the body and rarely bring the mind or spirit into focus.

The first step in Ayurvedic medicine involves the determination of an individual's constitution or prakruti. In fact, Ayurveda is founded on the concept of the metabolic body types or doshas. There are three doshaas -Vata, Pita and Kapha.

tual inclinations. Most people are a mixture of dosha characteristics with one usually more marked than others.

Although each person's prakruti is governed by a predominant dosha, all three doshas are present in varying degrees in every cell, tissue and organ of the body. When the three doshas are balanced in accordance with an individual's constitution, the result

through changes in diet, lifestyle, and medications and in some cases with the use of mantras, prayers and yagnas.

Ayurvedic medicine holds that diagnosis of bodily and mental imbalances are of primary importance to restore good health. An Ayurvedic physician uses the pulse, tongue, eye and nails as diagnostic tools. After diagnosis, four main methods are used to manage a disease. Cleansing and Detoxification

Toxins are considered to be the root cause of disease and are believed to be the result of undigested, unabsorbed or unassimilated food. Vomiting, bowel purging, enemas, nasal douching and blood cleansing (collectively called the panchkarma) are commonly used by Ayurvedic physicians to remove toxins from different parts of the body.

Palliation

This involves balancing and purification of the doshas.

Rejuvenation

Enhancement of the body's inherent ability to function and extends longevity by slowing down

ing are considered a form of mental cleansing. They enhance self awareness and awareness of environment. Pranayama can bring sense of tranquillity and peace.

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