

## SEASONAL PRACTICES & HOW TO AVOID IMBALANCE

### SPRING: MARCH - JUNE / KAPHA

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna reveals his predominant attributes in the eleventh chapter: “I am the should in the body, mind and in the senses, the eagle among birds, the lion among animals, among all trees, I am the sacred Body tree, and of the seasons, I am spring.”

Spring is a season characterized by warmth (or at least less cold), moisture, and a palpable softness. It is a season revered for its gentle, nurturing presence. Spring embodies the heaviness of increased moisture, and it tends to feel slower than summer or fall.

These are just a few of the characteristics that align spring with kapha dosha. In fact, the Sanskrit word kapha means “*that which flourishes in water,*” and what season is more defined by the presence of water than spring? Clearly, the spring season and kapha dosha have a great deal in common.

Ayurveda teaches us that like increases like. So by its very nature, springtime tends to increase kapha. And when we consider that by winter’s end, a bit of kapha accumulation is somewhat inevitable for most of us, spring has the potential to add insult to injury in the kapha department.

But just as spring melts the lingering ice and snow, it liquefies accumulated kapha (ideally, so that it can be eliminated from the body). This process can either be a revitalising event, or it can trigger a number of health challenges.

### SIMPLE HERBS FOR SPRING

Ginger, black pepper, tea of cumin, coriander, and fennel (equal portions).

### EXCERSIZE

Consider biking, jogging, hiking, or swimming and try to exercise in the morning, between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. If your schedule cannot accommodate a morning workout, evenings are an excellent time to exercise as well (again, ideally between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.).

## **FOODS TO MINIMIZE IN THE SPRING**

Foods that are best avoided during the spring include fast foods, sweets, soy products, nuts, excessive amounts of bread, and chilled or refrigerated foods - especially when eaten cold, heavy or watery veggies like avocado, cucumber, olives, sweet potato, squash, or zucchini. Oily and fried foods, lots of snacking, dairy, all iced foods.

## **FOODS TO FAVOR IN THE SPRING**

Bitter, pungent, and astringent foods, all legumes, such as yellow split peas, red lentils, and garbanzo and pinto beans, radishes, spinach, okra, onions and garlic with hot spices (careful with this if you are Pitta dominant). After meals drink a tea of ginger, black pepper and cinnamon.

## **SUMMER: JULY - SEPTEMBER / PITTA**

During the summer, the sun evaporates the moisture of the earth, therefore inducing hot, dry and sharp qualities. Thus, the main recommendation for everyone, especially Pitta dominant individuals is to keep cool, and not allow Pitta to become aggravated.

### **SIMPLE HERBS FOR SUMMER**

Brahmi, neem, shatavari, and manjistha will help you stay cool during summer months

### **EXCERSIZE**

Avoid strenuous exercise. If you are a runner or prefer cardio, do it in the early morning, as this is the coolest part of the day. Gentle yoga and meditation twice per day are best, along with Shitali pranayama.

### **FOODS TO MINIMIZE IN THE SUMMER**

Avoid hot water, and hot drinks, lean toward cool or room temperature (remember in Ayurveda we do not recommend ice ever, as it slows digestion and creates toxins in the body). Sour fruits, beets and carrots, garlic, onion, chilli, tomato, sour cream and slated cheese. Dark meats. Hard alcohol and wine.

### **FOODS TO FAVOR IN THE SUMMER**

Apples, mellons, pears, plums, prunes, watermelon, lime, juices of watermelon and lime, steamed broccoli, cucumber, Brussel sprouts, basmati rice, kitchari made from basmati and mung bean with ghee and coconut. Fresh salad, but best eaten at lunch to allow time for digestion. Meats: turkey, chicken and shrimp one time per week. Beer in moderation is ok.

**FALL: OCTOBER - NOVEMBER / VATA**

Fall is dry, light, cold, windy, rough and empty (leaves fall from the trees). All of these qualities provoke cats. So naturally the guidelines for fall revolve around pacifying vata.

**SIMPLE HERBS FOR FALL**

Ginger, cardamom, nutmeg, ashwagandha, cumin, coriander, fennel

**EXCERSIZE**

Grounding yoga, alternate nostril breath. Try to wake up early when the energy is calm.

**FOODS TO MINIMIZE IN THE FALL**

Black tea, coffee, fasting, salads, raw foods.

**FOODS TO FAVOR IN THE FALL**

Cumin and coriander tea after meals, warm cooked foods, oatmeal, cream of wheat, tortillas, basmati rice, mung bean kitchari.

**WINTER: DECEMBER - FEBRUARY / KAPHA / VATA**

Cold, cloudy, damp and heavy is the season of winter: generally a kapha season. Kapha pacifying actions should take place now, especially for Kaphas. Also note, that cold and windy days will provoke Vata as well.

**SIMPLE HERBS FOR WINTER**

Ginger, cinnamon, cloves, liquorice, ginger, black pepper, turmeric.

**EXCERSIZE**

A strong yoga practice along with breath of fire, and baktrika pranayama (be careful if you are pitta dominant!). Increased sex is a good idea during the winter ;)

**FOODS TO MINIMIZE IN THE WINTER**

It is best to avoid chilled beverages and cold food since it may have an adverse effect on the immune system.

**FOODS TO FAVOR IN THE WINTER**

Opting for warm cooked food and warm beverages can help balance the Vata and Kapha perfectly for the season. Oatmeal, cornmeal, barley soup, tapioca, katchari, chicken, turkey, light fasting is ok. Dry red wine is ok to help with digestion and improve circulation. You can up the spicy food and warm foods.

## AVOIDING IMBALANCE BY KNOWING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GUNAS, DOSHAS AND FOODS.

| FOOD    | TAMASIC                            | RAJASIC   | SATTVIC  |
|---------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| FRUIT   | Avocado, watermelon, plum, apricot | Sour fruits, apples, bananas, guava   | Mango, pomegranate, coconut, figs, peaches, pears      |
| GRAINS  | Wheat, brown rice                  | Millet, corn, buckwheat   | Rice, tapioca, blue corn                               |
| VEGGIES | Mushrooms, garlic, onion, pumpkin  | Potato, nightshades, cauliflower, broccoli, spinach, tamdinro, pickles, winter squash | Sweet potato, lettuce, parsley, sprouts, yellow squash |
| BEANS   | Black, pinto, pink                 | Red lentils   | Mung, yellow lentils, kidney, lima                     |
| DAIRY   | Hard aged cheese                   | Sour milk, cream  | Fresh homemade yogurt and cheese                       |
| MEAT    | Beef, lamb, pork                   | Fish, shrimp, chicken   | None   |

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DOSHAS AND THE GUNAS

There is not a direct correspondence between the Doshas and the Gunas, however there is a distance relationship (like cousins vs siblings).

### **Sattva**

Pitta as knowledge and underling

Vata as clarity and lightness

Kapha as forgiveness and love.

### **Tamas**

Heavy and dull in Kapha.

Aggressiveness and competitiveness in Pitta

Very little in vata, but shows up as confusion

### **Rajas**

Vata and Pitta as hyper and active

Virtually absent from Kapha

## HOW THE GUNAS TYPICALLY SHOW UP IN THE DOSHAS

**Vata** is about 75% Rajas, 20% Sattva, 5% Tamas

**Pitta** is about 50%+ Sattva, 45% Rajas, 5% Tamas

**Kapha** is about 75% Tamas, 15-20% Sattva and very little Rajas

| DOSHA | SATTVA   | RAJAS   | TAMAS   |
|-------|--|---|---|
| VATA  | Clarity, creativity, lightness                       | Hyperactive, nervousness, fear, anxiety, ungrounded | Confusion, lack of direction, indecisiveness, sadness |
| PITTA | Knowledge, understanding, comprehension, recognition | Aggressiveness, combativeness, power, prestige      | Anger, hatred, envy, jealousy                         |
| KAPHA | Love, compassion, forgiveness                        | Attachment, greed, possessiveness                   | Deep confusion, unconsciousness, coma, depression     |