

Introduction - Ayurveda

Ayurveda is the sister science to Yoga.

Ayurveda is India's traditional, natural system of medicine that has been practiced for more than 5,000 years. Ayurveda is a Sanskrit word that literally translated means "science of life" or "practices of longevity." Ayurveda was the system of health care conceived and developed by the seers (rishis) and natural scientists through centuries of observations, experiments, discussions, and meditations.

For several thousand years their teachings were passed on orally from teacher to student; about the fifth to sixth century BC, elaborately detailed texts were written in Sanskrit, the ancient language of India. For many years Ayurveda flourished and was used by rich and poor alike in India and Southeast Asia.

Ayurveda emphasizes prevention of disease, rejuvenation of our body systems, and extension of life span. The profound premise and promise of Ayurveda is that through certain practices, not only can we prevent heart disease and make our headaches go away, but we can also better understand ourselves and the world around us, live a long healthy life in balance and harmony, achieve our fullest potential, and express our true inner nature on a daily basis.

Ayurveda provides an integrated approach to preventing and treating illness through lifestyle interventions and natural therapies. It is based on the view that the elements, forces, and principles that comprise all of nature - and that holds it together and make it function - are also seen in human beings.

In Ayurveda, the mind (or consciousness) and the body (or physical mass) not only influence each other - they are each other. Together they form the mind-body. The universal consciousness is an intelligent, aware ocean of energy that gives rise to the physical world we perceive through our five senses. Ayurvedic philosophy and practices link us to every aspect of ourselves and remind us that we are in union with every aspect of nature, each other, and the entire universe.

There can be no mental health without physical health, and vice versa. In Ayurveda, symptoms and diseases that could be categorized as mental thoughts or feelings are just as important as symptoms and diseases of the physical body. Both are due to imbalances within a person, and both are treated by restoring the natural balance mentally and physically.

In Ayurveda your whole life and lifestyle must be in harmony before you can enjoy true well being. Lifestyle interventions are a major Ayurvedic preventive and therapeutic approach.

In India, Ayurvedic practitioners receive state-recognized, institutionalized training in parallel to their physician counterparts. The research base is growing concerning the physiological effects of meditative techniques and yoga postures in Indian medical literature and Western psychological literature.

Published studies have documented reductions in cardiovascular disease risk factors, including blood pressure, cholesterol, and reaction to stress, in individuals who practice Ayurvedic methods.

Laboratory and clinical studies on Ayurvedic herbal preparations and other therapies have shown them to have a range of potentially beneficial effects for preventing and treating certain cancers, treating infectious disease, treating diabetes, promoting health, and treating aging. Mechanisms underlying these effects may include free-radical scavenging effects, immune system modulation, brain neurotransmitter modulation, and hormonal effects.

For more information, please visit
<http://www.holisticonline.com/ayurveda/ayv-introduction.htm>