

Notes on Ayurvedic Panchakarma Therapy

For our patients to have maximum benefit from Panchakarma therapy, Roscore Clinic has gathered together this information pack based on our study in Ayurvedic hospitals in Kerala, India, the home of Ayurveda.

Ayurveda Means 'The Science of Life'

It is the oldest system of health care in the world. It offers a complete approach to living. It aims to establish the ability to live every aspect of life to its fullest in complete conscious connection to nature's infinite intelligence. Ayurveda studies nature's functioning in depth to understand how the physical and non physical aspects of life function in a coordinated fashion.

Ayurvedic Panchakarma offers a holistic model of healthcare, where mind, body and spirit are given equal importance, a fact which is considered fundamental to life's wholeness and therefore health. Natural medicine recognizes that there are limits to the body-based system response approach offered by allopathic medicine. Ayurvedic practitioners seek to treat the cause of the disease at a deep level and not just respond to symptoms. We do this first by accepting, and then creating the conditions where the body's innate intelligence is mobilized to restore the health balance which is unique to each individual. Panchakarma is the most powerful and effective medical model to achieve this.

Seven Basic Principles of Ayurveda

1. *The Unchanging Nature of Ayurvedic Science*

The same principles and practices are followed today as they were 5000 years ago. Allopathic medical science is not as consistent.

2. *The Subjective Methods of Understanding*

Ayurveda recognises that much of life is not physical and cannot be studied objectively. It therefore uses intuition and logic to gain knowledge in addition to objective means. Ayurveda studies nature's functioning in depth to understand how the physical and non physical aspects of life function in a coordinated fashion.

3. *The Five Element Theory*

SPACE, AIR, FIRE, WATER and EARTH represent the basic building blocks of nature. They control all the functions of creation, including the human body

4. *The Theory of the Three Doshas*

VATA PITTA KAPHA

The three Doshas are unique to Ayurveda, and represent the three types of energy that is responsible for life itself

VATA controls all motion or movement

PITTA controls all transforming processes

KAPHA controls cohesion, growth and liquefaction.

Without the three doshas combined with the five elements there would be no human life.

5. Prakuti Constitutional Types

Each person has a unique combination of the three doshas which are set at the moment of conception. This is responsible for the physical, mental and emotional balance of each individual ie. One's constitution. Health for each person is about maintaining one's Prakuti in other words one's natural born constitution.

6. The Effects of the Seasons

Seasonal change and climatic conditions have an effect on health and can effect the balance of the doshas within the body. These imbalances can be minimized by appropriate changes in our diet and lifestyle and are an important part of treatment.

7. Panchakarma – The Science of Rejuvenation

The human body has a healing intelligence which is capable of constantly rejuvenation itself. This is central to Ayurveda.

These Seven basic principles offer the uniqueness of the Ayurvedic approach which understands that health is the coordinated functioning of mind, body and spirit with everything else in creation.

Panchakarma – Preparatory Procedures – Purvakarma

The preparatory set of procedures of Panchakarma which Ayurveda prescribe to facilitate the removal of toxins (ama) from the tissues is collectively called Purvakarma (Purva – before). In preparation for the main eliminative procedure, the patient receives both internal and external oleation (Snehana), and or, therapeutic heat (Swedana), combined with diet and herbal medicine. These treatments help to loosen toxins and move them out of deep structures into the gastro intestinal tract, where Panchakarma's main therapies can eliminate it from the body. Proper administration of the preparatory procedures for Panchakarma is essential to the success of the treatment.

Oleation – Snehana

This is the first step in Panchakarma. There are two forms of Oleation or oil treatment in this process.

- 1. External Oleation** is where medicated oils are vigorously massaged into the body. A specialist type of massage call Abhyanga is used to apply the oil. This massage method uses only brisk downward movement from neck to the feet and is unlike western massage. The massage is done on a special wooden table and a large quantity of the medicated oil is used. These medical oils are prepared and selected for each individual to enhance their effectiveness for patients. They also soothe the skin and promote stability and strength.

Oleation fulfils five important purposes

- It induces the body tissues to give up their accumulated toxins
- It enhances secretions through which toxins are transported the gastro intestinal tract for elimination.
- It lubricates and protects the body tissue from damage while the toxins are removed.
- It pacifies and nourishes the body and mind, restoring normal VATA function which is essential for the removal of toxins from the body.
- It helps remove obstructions in the channels.

Oleation help prevent physiological wear and tear. All the body's moving parts experience friction and lubrication this protects them from wear and tear.

2. **Internal Oleation** This entails taking a prescribed amount of warm medicated oil, mainly ghee, first thing in the morning. The prescribed dose is increased daily depending on the strength of the patient's digestion or agni (digestive fire) and their constitution. Internal and external oleation continues for five days under the supervision of an Ayurvedic Practitioner. The time is required for the oleaginous substances to reach and saturate all the body tissues.

Signs of Oleation Completion

- The skin displays a soft shiny appearance and smells slightly unctuous
- Elimination is healthy and faecal matter appears yellowish shiny, oily and may smell of ghee.
- Urine is brighter in colour
- Secretions from eyes, nose and ears shine slightly
- Skin and hair becomes softer
- One may feel tired

Swedana – Therapeutic heat

The application of therapeutic heat to the body is to dilate the body's channels so that the oleation objectives of removing toxins from the body tissues can be more easily achieved. Sweat results naturally when channels widen

The purpose of Swedana

- It opens the channels within the body
- It reduces stiffness and heaviness in the body
- It softens the toxin density with in the body
- Toxins get liquefied making it easier for them to be removed
- It mobilizes the channels which are responsible for transporting the toxic waste materials from the deep tissues to the gastro intestinal tract.
- Therapeutic heat assists the process begun by the oleation treatment.

Dilating the body's internal channels create a freer pathway for the removal of toxins and waste products.

Full body therapeutic heat treatment is contra indicated for people with heart disease and hypertension, anaemia and leukaemia. Without these two procedures toxins would not be available for disposal from the body. The preparatory procedures prepare the body in a way that insures that no harm is done to the underlying structures and substances of the body during the cleansing process.

Additional Procedures of Panchakarma

Many procedures are used to replenish and rejuvenate specific areas of the body and generally employ some form of oleation or heat treatment. These procedures can be used outside Panchakarma, or in conjunction with other treatments to achieve palliative or nutritive effects either on the whole body or a localized area.

Dhara

The most common additional procedure is called Dhara. In this treatment warm medicated oil or medicated milk is poured in a steady stream on the forehead across the brow in the region above the eyebrows. Clinical trials have shown that Dhara alters brain wave patterns, and thus can be seen its ancient role in the treatment of many neurological conditions.

Benefits of Dhara

- It calms the central nervous system
- It quiets both the mind and the senses
- It allows the body's natural healing mechanism to release stress from the nervous system
- It improves mental clarity and comprehension
- It opens subtle channels of the head.

Pudi Kiri

This is oil and rice bolus, large quantities of oil are poured over the body while massaging with the bolus of rice wrapped in a cloth. Its main benefit is to eliminate toxins from joints and improves their mobility. It provides a powerful tool for reducing muscle spasm and degenerative muscle disease. This treatment can also be given as a standalone procedure.

Comhairle

Observances to be followed during your Panchakarma treatment. For patients to have maximum benefit from the treatment and experience optimum healing, we strongly advise you to adhere to the following observances. Healing occurs best in an environment free from the physical and mental disturbances of modern life. At Roscore Clinic we strive to make your healing a positive experience. The aim of the Panchakarma treatment is to return you, our patient, to optimum health. Our staff are trained to care for you with professionalism and nurturing care. This is Roscore Clinics' commitment to each patient who enters our care.

During treatment we request that you adhere to the following Comhairle during and after treatment, and for an equal number of days following or as directed by your therapist.

- Use only warm water for all activities – drinking bathing etc....
- Following a vegetarian diet is essential, using only fresh cooked vegetables
- Dietary guidelines will be provided
- Avoid suppressing the natural urges of urination and defecation
- Avoid physical exercise including long walks
- Avoid exposure to sunlight, strong winds and the cold
- Avoid smoking, dust and pollution
- Avoid unnecessary travelling in vehicles, and on animals
- Avoid sitting in difficult postures for any length of time
- Avoid television during all stages of treatment
- Strictly maintain celibacy during treatment
- Engage in gentle breathing, medication and creative visualisation, if inclined
- Sleep with only one pillow under your head
- Rest during the day but do not sleep
- Dwell only on positive thoughts and feelings
- Wear a smile on your face and in your heart
- Listen to mantra chanting, inspiring talks and healing soothing music
- Speak softly and as little as possible
- Avoid contact with people that disturb you

We strongly advise that you try to observe silence (ciunus) as much as possible throughout your treatment and concentrate on returning yourself to optimum health. Speaking too much leads to the loss of energy (tosbach)

Diet

The diet prescribed during treatment by the ayurvedic practitioner constitutes a key element in the therapy

- Eat only cooked foods
- Eat only food prescribed by the Clinic
- Avoid all cold drinks and cold foods and raw foods
- Eat light, nourishing and easily digested foods
- Eat only vegetarian food
- Abstain from alcohol and stimulants eg Coffee and fizzy drinks
- Avoid all heavy foods eg sweet, fried food and dairy products
- Avoid salty and pungent foods like chilli, onions and garlic, sour foods like pickles, vinegar and citrus, fermented food like yoghurt, hard cheese, tofu and soy sauce and all food containing yeast and all non organic processed foods.

If these guidelines are followed from the beginning of the pre-treatment stage to the end of the post treatment, the Panchakarma therapy will be successful. The patient will enjoy a strong appetite and digestion and feel light and energetic. The mind will be clear and happy and experience satisfaction and enthusiasm for life and most importantly, the specific condition that required the intensive Panchakarma treatment will be much improved.

Depending on the condition and the patient's strength, Panchakarma treatments may have to be repeated. This will be decided by your Ayurvedic practitioner.

It is very important to have the support of your family during Panchakarma therapy. View the time during your treatment as a health retreat where you will heal holistically. You are a hospital patient and you need to take care of yourself. Put the effort in and the reward will be a return to optimum health. Refrain from the active lifestyle as you go through Panchakarma. The further to pull back into rest, the more dynamic you will be when you spring back into activity once the whole process is complete. Ayurveda Panchakarma requires your complete commitment. You will be supported throughout your treatment by staff at Roscore Clinic and if you have any query please do not hesitate to ask a member of staff. While going through the Panchakarma therapy you may feel tired, it is vital to follow the observances as stated above.

Panchakarma requires that you take a more active part in your treatment, and more is requested of you than is in the case with allopathic treatments.

Main Procedures of Panchakarma used at Roscore Clinic

The four routes to eliminate waste products and toxins are in the mouth, anus, nasal cavity and pores of the skin. These carry toxins and waste either upward or downward or out through the periphery. The preparatory treatment moves the toxins from the deep structures of the body to the gastro intestinal tract ready for elimination by the body's four main outlets. Panchakarma's curative and rejuvenating power, lies in its ability to utilize and stimulate the body's natural intelligence to heal itself and to eliminate the toxins.

Vamana

Therapeutic Vomiting

The procedure used in Vamana is quit smooth and painless with little discomfort. When the body is properly prepared and the treatment correctly administered Vamana is effortless, and efficiently removes toxins from the Kapha Zone ie. The lungs and stomach. Vamana is usually administered for Kapha related disorders and toxins. These include all lung problems, bronchial asthma, allergies, chronic colds, rhinitis, diabetes mellitus, arteriosclerosis, rheumatic disease, arthritis and chronic skin disorders for example Eczema and Psoriasis. It also benefits some viral disorders. Vamana is contraindicated for those who are emaciated or very weak, elderly people who are frail, young children and pregnant women, as well as those with a severe Vata imbalance, heart disease and blood pressure, tuberculosis, pleurisy, collapsed lung and liver disease.

Preparation for Vamana, To prepare for this treatment, oleation and heat therapies are administered for 5 to 7 days , only when internal and external oleation is complete can Vamana be done. The night before Vamana is administered the patient takes spicy and very rich food which stimulates Kapha. Early morning when Kapha is most active is the optimum time for this process. It is the policy of Roscore Clinic to have 2 to 3 staff members present for the duration of the Vmana treatment. This is necessary to provide a safe environment in which to carry out the treatment. In the morning the patient is requested to wear loose clothing, refrain from eating and to empty both bladder and bowels. The patient is then asked to drink two to three litres of a special mix of warm milk and rice porridge over a period of time. After drinking ones fill of the milk formula, the patient drinks a glass of herbs this will begin the process. The herbs are hot, strong and penetrating, their action permeates the fine channels in the Kapha Zone and stir up and liquefy the toxins. Such herbs have an astringent and bitter taste this helps to draw moisture and impurities into the stomach from the surrounding tissues.

The patient is asked to drink until they feel full up to the top. Within a few minutes the patient will feel hot, will sweat a little the stomach will churn and will begin to feel to urge to vomit. The patient is encouraged to allow the stomach to empty without resisting, vomiting comes in bouts and usually occurs without strain. The patient should continue vomiting until there is a bitter, sour taste in the mouth, this indicates that the stomach is empty. Within the hour the entire procedure is usually finished. At this point the urge to vomit automatically stops. It is not uncommon to have loose bowel movements during the next 12 hours.

Virechana

Therapeutic Purgation

Virechana is the purgative treatment that cleanses the small intestine and associated Pitta dominant organs for example Liver, Gall Bladder and Pancreas. It works in the downward direction to eliminate Pitta related toxins and excess Pitta in the form of acidic secretions. Virechana also helps to remove toxins and waste products from the blood. Virechana herbs induce the purging process which automatically ceases once the accumulated toxins are gone from the body. Virechana is administered for all Pitta related disorders for example. Hyperacidity, Urinary problems, acid peptic disorders, haemorrhoids, chronic headache, migraine headaches, skin disorders such as acne, dermatitis, psoriasis and eczema. It is contraindicated for those with weak digestion, ulcerative colitis, dehydration and acute fever, the elderly, babies and pregnant women.

The preparatory therapy is 5 to 7 days of oelation both internal and external and or heat treatment. The internal ghee is made with a decoction of 53 bitter herbs. This works on the organs in the Pitta are as well as all the tissue types in the body. The patient's constitutional type and gastrointestinal sensitivity determine the type and amount of purgative and medical oil required. Kapha individuals have slow bowels and need strong laxatives, Vata tends towards dry hard bowel movements, they will require and purgation mix which will include some oil. The patient is usually asked to eat a hot spicy meal for the evening meal prior to the Virechana day. The herbs are administered in the morning and the patient is required to remain free from stress and refrain from stress and refrain from physical activity. Bowel movements will usually commence within one to three hours after receiving medication and the patient should note the following for the Ayurvedic Physician:

- Frequency of bowel movement
- Quantity of bowel movement
- Odour of bowel movement
- Colour of stool and presence of mucous
- Consistency of bowel movements – hard, soft, loose, watery
- Any cramping or pain or any usual symptoms

During the virechana therapy only small amounts of warm water should be sipped, mild cramping may occur during the process. The faecal matter will be solid at first but will soften until entirely liquid which will contain some mucous. When this occurs the purging process is complete and the urge to go will stop.

Post Treatment

After Virechana is finished, it is very important to completely avoid cold drinks and cold baths. It is advised to rest, stay warm, and avoid exercise and sexual activity. Drink warm herbal Tea. Virechana is draining of the ability to digest robustly (digestive fire) and it is

therefore necessary to avoid all heavy food for three days after treatment. It is vital to follow a special diet of easily digestible cooked foods to help the digestive fire regain its normal strength. After successful Virechana the patient feels clean, light and strong. Abdominal bloating and heaviness dissipate. The body feels light and the mind clears.

Consult your Panchakarma medical herbalist to clarify issues and follow instructions carefully.

Post Panchakarma

The post Panchakarma period should be used to re-establish healthy metabolic function and immunity. If these post procedures are neglected, digestion does not normalise. Weak digestion generates new toxins and the body tissue continues to receive toxic material instead of nutritive, strengthening substances. The body then finds it difficult to re-establish its natural immune function and is more likely to fall ill again. It is crucial for the success of Panchakarma that the patient follow a regulated lifestyle immediately after treatment. The Panchakarma treatment dramatically affects the digestive process because the Gastrointestinal tract provides the primary route for the elimination of toxins. The digestive fire is weakened by the process of toxins being drawn back into the digestive tract and expelled from the body. Since faulty digestion creates the potential for illness to arise in the first place, special attention is given to strengthen digestion at the conclusion of Panchakarma, food is the fuel that ignites our activities, if at the end of the procedure the food ingested is too heavy for digestion, it then becomes toxic and the disease process starts again. By following the recommended diet, the digestive tract has time to regain strength. The signal of this is a strong consistent appetite. The patient can then return to normal diet. The length of time it takes for patients to return to a normal diet depends on their digestive capacity. On average it takes six to seven meals, the ayurvedic practitioner will monitor this and adjust the diet accordingly.

Dietary Guidelines Post Treatment

Only eat when you have an appetite

- Do not eat to full capacity, always leave a little room in your stomach at the end of each meal
- Avoid drinking cold liquids with your meal
- Eat your main meal at noon time when the environmental energy is strongest, and eat a light meal in the evening, as late night eating is strongly discouraged.
- Eat in a calm atmosphere and sit down when you eat
- Avoid snacks between meals and avoid eating before going to bed
- Once every week or two, fast or eat lightly, to give your digestion a rest
- Avoid food that is deep fried or heavy.

The patient is strongly urged to move back to regular activity gradually, if the contrast between the deep rest of Panchakarma and the fast pace of life is too sudden, the body may experience a shock, and one can feel weak for quite a while. During Panchakarma it is advised that the patient look at ways to reduce the high levels of stress of modern life, have a look at ways to ensure quality to unwind after work. Meditation and listening to relaxing music would be a good start. Consider walking in nature or taking up a hobby, change the

old patterns of life and the benefits of your treatment will last. Create your own level of health by making changes. Panchakarma helps provide the kick start to a better health. 'Ayurveda and Panchakarma add years to your life, and life to your years.'

Basti

Therapeutic Enema

Basti is one of the main procedures of Pancha karma. The main method to administer Basti is the introduction of medicated fluid into the colon. Basti therapy balances and nurtures Vata. As Vata is governed by movement, it plays a major role in the disease process, because it can move both nutrients and toxins around the body, and if unbalanced, can cause disease. By managing Vata we gain control of the disease process before it goes into the migratory phase. Ayurved uses the colon as the primary eliminative pathway in the body. When Basti is used in conjunction with Panchakarma it cleanses more than just the colon, it helps to purify toxins from all over the body. The entire body can benefit through proper care of the colon.

Basti introduces medicated oils and medicated decoctions into the colon to be retained and absorbed by the body. It treats the entire length of the colon. In addition to getting rid of toxins it restores health function to the colon and through the colon nurtures and rebuilds the body's tissues. Basti therapy treats disorders of Vata imbalance and is always prescribed for acute Vata conditions. These include chronic constipation, lower back pain, sciatica, rheumatism, gout, arthritis and neuromuscular disorders e.g. Parkinson, MS and atrophy of the nerves and muscles, it also benefits disorders of bones and reproductive and urinary systems. Basti is contraindicated for infants, those with rectal bleeding, ulcerative colitis and colon cancer.

Types of Basti Therapy

One type of Basti treatment eliminates toxins that have gathered in the colon from throughout the body

- Medicated liquid given as a Basti into the anus rectum colon
- Uttari Basti, medicated liquid introduced into the vagina to cleanse, nourish and treat area
- Basti used to cleanse and irrigate wounds and abscesses
- External localised Basti; although not introduced into the body they are still called Basti, because medicated lubricated substances are retained on areas of the body for a period of time. These include :
 - **Netra Basti:** applied to the eyes. The medicated liquid is contained in a dam, made from dough, around the eye sockets. This Basti is very nourishing for the eyes, it removes eye strain and improves vision and can be used to treat eye infections.
 - **Kattin Basti :** retained on the lower back, benefits muscle spasm, lower back pain. It strengthens the bone tissue in that region.
 - **Uro Basti:** Retained on the heart and chest area, it reduces pain the sternum area and strengthens the heart.
 - **Shiro Basti:** Is retained on the head using a special head dress. This type of Basti revitalizes the sensory function. Shiro Basti is a useful treatment for vascular headaches, memory loss, glaucoma, and sinus headaches etc....

References

If you wish to learn more about Ayurveda, the following books are recommended

Ayurveda and Panchakarma
The Science of Healing and Rejuvenation
By Sunil V Joshi.
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers PVT LTD

Ayurveda and the Mind
The Healing of Consciousness
By Dr David Frawley
Motilal Banarsidass Publishers PVT LTD

Secrets of Ayurvedic Massage
By Atreya
Published by Lotus Press