

AYURVEDA SYSTEM OF MEDICINE

Ayurveda is one of the oldest system of medicine which came into existence in about 900 BC.

The word "**Ayur**" means Life and "**Veda**" means Science. Literally Ayurveda means science of life.

Charaka and Sushruta made significant contributions to Ayurveda. The book "Charak Samhita" was written by Charaka and he was known as father of Ayurveda.

Ayurveda is based on the following principles:

- a) Panchabhuta Siddhanta.
- b) Tridosha theory
- c) Guna-Rasa-Virya-Vipaka-Prabhava-Siddhanta

Panchabhuta Siddhanta:

According to this theory, It believes that the whole universe is made up of five basic elements known as "Mahabhutas" and they are present in the human body. They are Prithvi (Earth), Jala (Water), Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire), Akasha (Void/Sky).

Combinations of these five elements form seven basic tissues of the body which are referred as "Sapta Dhatu" which are as follows.

1. Rasa (Lymph/ Plasma),
2. Rakta (Blood),
3. Mamsa (Flesh),
4. Meda (Fat),
5. Asti(Bones),
6. Mojja (Marrow),
7. Shukra (Reproductive organs).

These Sapta dhatu undergo wear and tear to form "Mala" (Excretory products)

Tridosha theory:

According to this theory, the five basic elements (Pancha Mahabhuta) exist in human body in three different forms, together known as "Tridosha", they are

- Vata (Space + Air).

- Pitta (Fire + Liquid).
- Kapha (Liquid + Solid)

These tridoshas when present in balanced form in the body is considered as healthy condition. Any imbalance in tridosha is considered as disease condition. Ayurveda tries to maintain the balance in these elements.

Vata: It regulates the psychic (relating to soul and mind) and nervous system. Imbalance of this leads to disease of ENT, heart, urinary tract, skin, etc.

Pitta: It regulates energy production, digestion, tissue building, etc. Imbalance of this leads to disease like acidity, indigestion, liver and skin disease.

Kapha: It regulates heat, formation of fluids, mucous, etc. Imbalance of this results in joint pain, brain disease, drowsiness, etc.

Guna-Rasa-Virya-Vipaka-Prabhava Siddhanta

These are considered as five pharmacological principles / properties of "Dravya" (drug substance). They are Rasa (Taste), Guna (Taste), Virya (Active principle), Vipaka (Digestive products), Prabhava (Pharmacotherapeutic action).

Diagnosis in ayurveda

Diseases are diagnosed by-

- Observation of Doshas (vata, pitta, kapha).
- Observation of skin, eyes, hair, nails and tongue.
- Recording the pulse.
- Investigation of Mala (urine, stools and sweat).

Treatment

The different treatments in Ayurveda are as follows-

- Elimination therapy
- Alleviation therapy.
- Psychic therapy.

- Surgery therapy.

In addition to single drugs, compound formulations are generally used to treat disease in the form of tablets, pills, powders and syrups.