



## AYURVEDA 101

### The Three Doshas

Vata, pitta, and kapha—collectively known as the doshas—are one of the most foundational concepts in the tradition of Ayurveda. But what are they, exactly?

Each dosha embodies a particular combination of elements and qualities to create a functional entity—an energetic force of nature. The doshas, or some combination of them, can be identified in various seasons, climates, landscapes, activities, plants, and animals. In the context of our bodies, all three doshas are necessary to facilitate important physiological functions. But if they accumulate beyond healthy limits (those determined by one’s constitution), the doshas can also wreak havoc on our health.

DOSHA	VATA	PITTA	KAPHA
<b>Primary Elements</b>	Air + Ether	Fire + Water	Water + Earth
<b>Qualities</b>	Dry Light Cold Rough Subtle Mobile Clear	Hot Sharp Light Liquid Spreading Oily	Heavy Slow Cool Oily Smooth Dense Soft Stable Gross Cloudy (Sticky)

All three doshas are present in everyone, but the ratio between them varies a great deal from one person to the next. Here is an overview of the essential nature of each dosha.

#### VATA

Vata is the energy of air and ether, movement and impulse, creativity and connection. This dosha governs breathing, the pulsation of the heart, muscle movement in general, nerve impulses, sensory perception, communication, and our capacity to experience flexibility, joy, and expansive consciousness.

In excess, vata can cause fear, anxiety, physical and emotional constriction, ungroundedness, poor circulation, constipation, dry skin, cracking joints, emaciation, insomnia, twitches, tremors, and other abnormal movements.

#### PITTA

Pitta is the energy of fire and water, digestion and transformation. This dosha governs appetite, digestion, absorption, assimilation, intelligence, charisma, courage, and ambition.

In excess, pitta can cause anger, jealousy, inflammation, excessive heat, heartburn, loose stools, migraines, rashes, bruising, bleeding disorders, sharp hunger, an overactive metabolism, and difficulty sleeping.

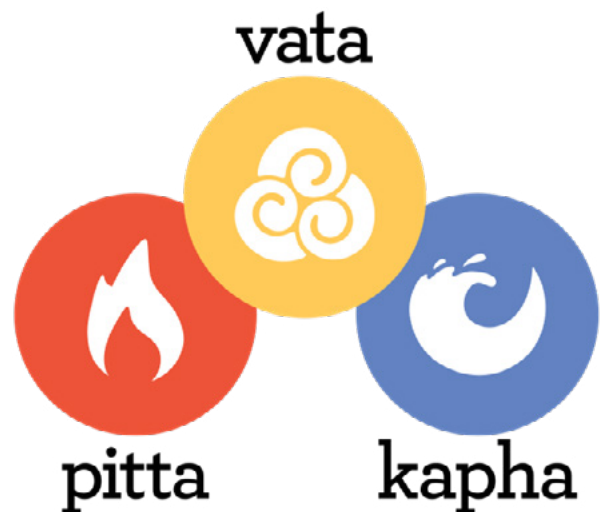
#### KAPHA

Kapha is the energy of water and earth, structure and cohesiveness, grounding and stability. This dosha governs nourishment, growth, lubrication, regeneration, fluid balance, fat regulation, strength, stamina, memory, and our ability to feel compassion and contentment.

In excess, kapha can cause attachment, greed, resistance to change, lack of motivation, heaviness in the mind and body, excessive sleep, depression, a sluggish metabolism, congestion, water retention, hardening of the arteries, and the formation of masses and tumors.

#### BEFRIENDING THE DOSHAS IN YOUR LIFE

It is important to remember that we all have innate strengths and gifts, as well as persistent challenge areas. The doshas are a wonderful tool for understanding both, and also for recognizing and correcting any imbalances at work in our systems. Invariably, the doshas shed light on our personal nuances, guide us in improving self-awareness, and can help us to understand how to offer support—precisely where and when it matters most.



The information on this handout is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. For more information pertaining to your personal needs, please see a qualified health practitioner.



## AYURVEDA 101

### Constitutions and Imbalances

#### BLUEPRINT FOR PERFECT HEALTH

According to Ayurveda, your constitution (*prakriti*, in Sanskrit) is the particular combination of vata, pitta, and kapha that is established within you at conception, cemented at birth, and that remains constant over the course of your lifetime. It represents your natural state of equilibrium, your blueprint for perfect health, and it influences your physiology, your physique, your likes and dislikes, your tendencies and habits, your mental and emotional character, as well as your vulnerabilities toward imbalance and disease. Therefore, understanding your constitution can be truly enlightening.

#### OUR EVER-CHANGING NATURE

If vata, pitta, or kapha become imbalanced, and this baseline state of health is disturbed, the doshas can also cause a great deal of harm. When this occurs, recognizing which doshas are at play and where they have accumulated is a critical first step in discerning how to return to balance. This is why your current state of balance (*vikriti*, in Sanskrit), which reflects the present level of the doshas in your system, is equally important. In contrast to one's constitution, the current state of balance *can* and does change over time, as we move through different climates, different seasons, and the various stages of life. It is also impacted by our daily routines, diet, exercise, relationships, stress levels, and our evolving life circumstances. In fact, it is not uncommon for one's current state to undergo minute changes from one day to the next, or even over the course of a single day.



#### A NEW PARADIGM

Knowing your Ayurvedic constitution and your current state of balance amplifies your capacity to benefit from the wisdom of Ayurveda. It offers insights that can help you better understand yourself, your natural tendencies, as well as your habitual and current vulnerabilities. It also provides an important context for learning the core principles that make Ayurveda such a timeless art and science.

Fortunately, Banyan has developed an assessment tool explicitly for the purpose of establishing your Ayurvedic Profile™. It is a simple questionnaire that, within just a few minutes, helps you to establish both your constitution and your current state of balance. Perhaps even more significantly, your results will generate a personalized set of recommendations and an extensive library of helpful resources tailored to your specific needs. Your Ayurvedic Profile is intended to be a celebration of who you are from an Ayurvedic perspective, and ultimately, it is designed to support you in your pursuit of optimal health.

Create your Ayurvedic Profile at [banyanbotanicals.com/myprofile](https://banyanbotanicals.com/myprofile).



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