

# Vata-Type Elimination

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Excess vata in the channel of elimination tends to cause scanty, dry, hard stools that can be difficult or painful to pass. Vata can also cause gas, bloating, gurgling intestines, colicky pain, irregularity, and [constipation](#).<sup>1</sup> These symptoms are usually accompanied by an irregular appetite and variable digestion; some people also tend to alternate between constipation and diarrhea. Related ailments caused by excess vata include low back pain, sciatica, non-bleeding hemorrhoids, prolapsed rectum, and fissures or fistula.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Constipation During a Cleanse

It is very common for mild constipation to crop up during a cleanse, especially if it involves eating only kitchari, which is a particularly astringent food. If you would be interested in some gentle measures that you can take to support proper elimination during a cleanse, without drastically altering the structure of your cleanse, [click here](#). That said, if you are working with a practitioner, it is always preferable to seek personalized support.



## Balancing Vata

In general, when vata is elevated, we need to balance vata's cold, dry qualities with warmth, oil, and lots of fluid in order to return to balance. It is therefore important to slow down, keep warm, and stay hydrated. In addition, the following diet, lifestyle, and herbal recommendations will help to pacify vata so that the channels of elimination can return to balance.

### Diet

- Focus on eating a [vata-pacifying diet](#), and on eating three solid meals each day (ideally at about the same time each day).
- Increase the amount of quality oils in your diet (especially [ghee](#), [sesame oil](#), and olive oil).
- Drink at least 60-80 ounces of fluid each day. Water and herbal teas that are either warm or hot will be best.
- Eat more fruit (at least one hour before or after other foods).
- Up other sources of fiber in your diet: oatmeal, wheat bran, oat bran, whole grains, and cooked vegetables.<sup>3</sup>
- Stoke the digestive fire about thirty minutes before lunch and dinner by chewing a slice of fresh ginger (about the size of a nickel) with a pinch of sea salt, a few drops of lime juice, and about ¼ teaspoon honey. If this feels overwhelming, you could take one or two [Vata Digest tablets](#) about thirty minutes before lunch and dinner, instead.

### Lifestyle

- Focus on establishing a [vata-pacifying daily routine](#); consistency in the structure of the day is especially pacifying to vata.
- Get plenty of vata-pacifying exercise:
  - Make sure that your exercise routine is not overly stimulating, but gentle and grounding instead. Favor activities like walking, hiking, light jogging, swimming, or gentle cycling.
  - Practice [vata-pacifying yoga](#) or a handful of slow and purposeful [sun salutations](#) each morning.
- Practice 5-15 minutes of [Alternate Nostril Breathing](#) every day on an empty stomach.

### Herbs

- Support your digestion and elimination with [Vata Digest tablets](#) or [Hingvastak](#) (the powdered form of the Vata Digest formula that can be taken alone or sprinkled on your food like pepper).
- Consider taking [Haritaki](#) instead of Triphala to more specifically balance vata (if vata is truly the primary concern).
- Balance vata systemically with [Healthy Vata tablets](#).



## Additional Resources

Of course, an *Ayurvedic* practitioner can offer a more personalized perspective on the appropriate therapies for your unique situation. That said, if you are still hungry for more of the Ayurvedic perspective on digestion and elimination, you may find some of these resources helpful:

- [The Importance of Healthy Digestion](#)  
Symptoms in the channels of elimination are often the result of broader imbalances with agni (the metabolic fire). As an introduction to the critically important Ayurvedic concept of *agni*, this resource explores agni's role in maintaining health and vitality throughout the body, and offers practical tools for kindling the sacred fire within.
- [The Importance of Agni](#)  
This article explores the specific functions of agni, as well as the signs and symptoms of both healthy and impaired agni.
- [The Four Varieties of Agni](#)  
This resource compares balanced agni to the different types of imbalances that can disrupt it, and offers appropriate therapies for each type of imbalance.
- [Ama: the Antithesis of Agni](#)  
This piece introduces the toxic, undigested material called *ama*, whose qualities directly oppose those of agni. Ama in the body can either be the cause or the result of impaired agni—and in either case, threatens our health.
- [Ayurvedic Guide to Healthy Elimination](#)  
This is a more comprehensive look at healthy elimination through the lens of *Ayurveda*; it highlights the importance of healthy elimination and offers some general tips for supporting proper elimination.



## References

<sup>1</sup> Lad, Vasant. *Textbook of Ayurveda Volume I: Fundamental Principles of Ayurveda*. Albuquerque: The Ayurvedic Press, 2002. Print. 91-92.

<sup>2</sup> Lad, Vasant. *Textbook of Ayurveda, Volume II: A Complete Guide to Clinical Assessment*. Albuquerque: The Ayurvedic Press, 2006. Print. 278.

<sup>3</sup> Lad, Vasant. *The Complete Book of Ayurvedic Home Remedies*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1998. Print. 155-157.

