

- Fire and water combine to form the energy of metabolism, which is *pitta*.
- Earth and water combine to form the energy of solidity and structure, or *kapha*.

The sages next concluded that no two people shared exactly the same combination of these three energies; just as people had unique voices and faces, they also had unique energy patterns. Understanding these unique patterns, then, was the key to unlocking an individual's specific health problems.

So how did they classify these energy types? They called these three energies — vata, pitta, and kapha — the three doshas. The word *dosha* means “fault.” So, in Ayurvedic terms, when any one or all of these three doshas are either impaired or aggravated, you have a dosha imbalance. In other words, there is a “fault” or “error” that needs correcting.

To find out which doshas in an individual needed correction, the sages had to first know what the individual's natural dosha combination was. This they did by assigning “dosha types” to people. Simply put, a person with more vata energy was called a “vata dosha type,” while someone with more pitta attributes was a “pitta dosha type” of person, and so on.

Today, you'll find that books on Ayurveda refer to this basic individual constitution by various names: “dosha type,” “body type,” “personality type.” Whatever its name, the purpose is to indicate what your dominant body-mind energy is.

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## the elementary you

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By now, it is clear that the journey toward Ayurvedic healing and wholeness begins with the knowledge of your unique dosha type. Although it is best to see a *vaidya* for this, you can guess your own basic dosha type. The way to do this is to think about which of the five elements seem to be strongest in your personality. Start by answering this question: are you more fire, air, earth, ether, or water? Give me an instinctive answer.

- If you said “fire,” it's likely that you perceive yourself as a strong, bold, hot-tempered person.
- If you said “earth,” you probably think of yourself as stable, practical, and calm.
- If your answer was “air,” you're likely to see yourself as active, indecisive, and restless.

This is exactly how the ancient sages reasoned.

Now study the following lists, giving yourself one point for each quality you think applies to you. The dosha with the most points is your dominant dosha.

### Vata

1. I am light and thin of build.
2. I think and act quickly.
3. My skin is dry and feels cool to the touch.
4. I cannot stand cold, dry weather.
5. My hunger and digestion are irregular.

6. I'm quick to grasp new information, but also quick to forget.
7. I tend to worry.
8. I have a tendency toward constipation.
9. I get light, interrupted sleep at night.
10. Warm, cooked foods and hot beverages comfort me.

### Pitta

1. I am of moderate build.
2. My appetite and digestion are both strong.
3. My favorite foods are cold, and I love iced beverages.
4. I absolutely cannot skip meals; it gives me acidity.
5. My complexion is reddish, and I tend to have moles and freckles.
6. I cannot stand hot weather.
7. I sometimes wake up in the wee hours of the morning and find it hard to go back to sleep.
8. My memory is steady.
9. I can be irritable and quick-tempered.
10. I am sharp and hardworking, but I tend to be a perfectionist.

### Kapha

1. I am solid and heavy of build.
2. I have great strength and endurance.
3. I am slow and methodical in everything I do.
4. My skin is oily and smooth.
5. I have a calm, steady personality.

6. Though I am slow to grasp new information, I don't easily forget.
7. It takes a lot for me to lose my temper or get excited.
8. I am a heavy sleeper, and can sleep for hours at a time.
9. My digestion is slow, but then my appetite is also mild.
10. I have lush, thick, dark hair.

Does your final score show two dominant doshas rather than one? If so, don't worry; you belong to the vast majority of people who have two strong doshas in their personality, with the third one being less active. Very few people are pure vata, pitta, or kapha, and even rarer are those with a tridoshic personality — that is, when all three doshas are almost equally strong.

Let me give you a sample score. Let's say you had eight vata points, seven pitta points, and nine kapha points; your dominant doshas would obviously be kapha and vata, in that order. Therefore, a vaidya would call you a kapha-vata. Using this example, it should now be easy for you to tell which of these ten doshic types you are:

1. vata
2. pitta
3. kapha
4. vata-pitta
5. pitta-vata
6. vata-kapha
7. kapha-vata

8. pitta-kapha
9. kapha-pitta
10. vata-pitta-kapha

In each case, the dosha mentioned first is your dominant dosha. Thus, vata-pitta and pitta-vata might sound similar, but they are not; one has a higher air quotient and the other a higher fire quotient.

What if you discover that you are a rare tridoshic, or vata-pitta-kapha type? Vaidyas say this is both good and bad news. The good news is that you were born with all five elements nearly balanced in your personality. The bad news is that tridoshic people can find it more difficult to maintain balance. Also, imbalances are more difficult to pinpoint and treat in people with no clearly dominant dosha.

Remember: whatever your dominant dosha, each of us has all three doshas in us. Existence is not possible without any one dosha. It is just that, in most people, one dosha seems to be less active than the other two.

I know what you are asking at this point: how does knowing my dosha type really help? It helps tremendously. Let's say you have just discovered you are a pitta-vata type of person. This tells you that the heating qualities of fire are dominant in your personality, followed by the dry qualities of air. In order to maintain good health, your primary goal should be to make sure that your pitta does not get aggravated. That is, you should eat cooling foods, avoid hot weather, and stay in the company of relaxed people who offset your intense

personality. In addition, you should drink plenty of water, which not only cools pitta but also counters the dryness of vata dosha. This is, of course, just one example. Each dosha combination requires a different balancing strategy.

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### dosha imbalances

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What happens when there is an imbalance? How will you know which of your doshas is out of balance? What can you do to correct it? For answers to these and similar questions, read the lists below:

#### Vata

##### When Vata Is In Balance:

- You are creative and full of enthusiasm;
- You make lots of friends, feel happy, and spread cheer;
- Your mind is clear and alert;
- Your bowels work well, and your urinary tract is healthy;
- Your bodily tissues function as they should;
- You sleep soundly and wake up refreshed;
- Your resistance to disease is good, and you feel energetic.

##### When Vata Is Out of Balance:

- You worry and fret;
- You're restless and easily tired;

- You tend to be oversensitive and indecisive;
- You cannot sleep;
- Your skin feels rough and dry;
- You start to lose weight and look gaunt;
- You suffer from constipation.

#### Typical Vata Complaints:

- Pain
- Cramps
- Chills
- Spasms

#### Your Vata Goes Out of Balance When:

- You exercise too much;
- You don't maintain a regular sleep pattern;
- You suffer a fall or fracture;
- You suppress natural urges, such as hunger, thirst, sleep, and sex;
- You are exposed to cold weather;
- You are grieving or afraid;
- You are angry or agitated;
- You observe a fast;
- You eat pungent, astringent, and bitter foods.

#### Vata Calmers:

- Get more warm, oily, heavy, sweet, sour, and salty foods in your diet;
- Reduce your intake of light, dry, cold, pungent, bitter, and astringent foods;
- Avoid stimulants like coffee and alcohol;

- Eat warm cooked foods;
- Be in warm environments;
- Give yourself a daily massage with a good-quality sesame oil;
- Go to bed early and follow a regular routine.

#### Pitta

##### When Pitta Is In Balance:

- You are focused and energetic;
- You are courageous and chivalrous;
- You are creative, organized, and often an excellent public speaker;
- Your heat and thirst mechanisms function well;
- Your complexion is lustrous;
- Your digestion is perfect;
- Your skin and body feel soft.

##### When Pitta Is Out of Balance:

- You tend to be sarcastic, impatient, and irritable;
- You can be bossy and tend to be a perfectionist;
- You don't get adequate sleep;
- Your complexion is yellowish;
- Your digestion is upset;
- Your body feels excessively hot;
- You suffer from inflammatory skin conditions.

#### Typical Pitta Complaints:

- Heartburn
- Soreness
- Fever

- Hot flashes
- Ulcers

#### Your Pitta Goes Out of Balance When:

- You are angry;
- The sun is too strong;
- You are fasting;
- You eat or use sesame or linseed products;
- Your diet is rich in sour foods, such as yogurt, wine, and vinegar;
- You're working too hard and straining to meet deadlines.

#### Pitta Pleasers:

- Use cooling spices such as fennel, coriander, and cardamom in your cooking;
- Take cool baths;
- Avoid hot temperatures and hot food;
- Drink plenty of water;
- Find time to relax and do things you like;
- Don't overwork;
- Eat your meals — especially lunch — on time.

### Kapha

#### When Kapha Is In Balance:

- You feel stable in mind;
- You act with courage and dignity;
- You feel affectionate and forgiving toward others;
- You feel strong;
- You are filled with energy;

- Your joints are well lubricated and supple;
- Your body is well proportioned.

#### When Kapha Is Out of Balance:

- You feel lethargic and lack motivation;
- You tend to oversleep;
- Your joints feel loose;
- You gain excessive weight;
- You suffer from respiratory problems;
- Your sinuses trouble you;
- Your complexion is pale;
- You feel cold.

#### Typical Kapha Complaints:

- Congestion
- Fluid retention
- Lethargy
- Joint pain

#### Your Kapha Goes Out of Balance When:

- You sleep during the day;
- You are depressed;
- You eat heavy, rich food;
- Your diet is heavy in sweet, sour, or salty foods;
- You consume a lot of dairy products.

#### Kapha Controllers:

- Follow a kapha-regulating diet prescribed by a vaidya;

- Apply wet-heat fomentation, such as a warm sesame oil massage;
- Get more exercise;
- Get fewer hours of sleep, with no daytime naps.

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### the four dos of dosha-watching

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1. Do consult a vaidya. Although charts and questionnaires make the job of identifying your dosha type quick and easy, it is always best to have your pulse read by a qualified Ayurvedic physician whose trained eye will give you the most accurate assessment of your dosha type and who will suggest ways to balance those that are depleted or in excess.
2. Do try to deduce your own doshas, too. Though I just said that a vaidya is best qualified to assess your doshas, there's every reason you should also take a self-assessment quiz from time to time. This helps you get in touch with your changing preferences, emotions, and habits — which, in turn, affect the balance of your doshas. Further, answering such questions can point your attention to small problems you might have been ignoring.
3. Do observe people around you and try to figure out their dosha types. This will help you develop a better understanding of how the doshas work and make them seem more real to you. Look

around; your plump, placid, matronly neighbor who is always baking you cookies is likely to be a kapha type. Your boss, with the perpetually protruding vein on her forehead, is probably a pitta personality. Your stick-thin friend who flits from topic to topic within minutes and can never seem to decide on anything is Madame vata.

Learning about people and their doshas yields a nice little benefit: it can help you understand why people behave the way they do. And to understand, said a wise man, is to forgive. Therefore, the next time you feel exasperated with your indecisive friend, you can say to yourself, "It's not her, it's her vata in action!" Then, with the help of chapter 13, "Living Ayurveda, Giving Ayurveda," you can think up ways to appease your friend's restless dosha.

4. Do remember that the doshas are complex. The lists and questions are really surface guides to help you understand the ABCs of the doshas.

In the next chapter, we will study the doshas and their behavior more closely. Only after reading that material should you start delving more deeply into your own doshic personality.

surprise. It was a corroboration of a truth that our wise ancestors discovered over centuries of observation.

That truth is simple: your current health problem or “disorder” is a result of your body’s innate intelligence being compromised. In Ayurveda, there is an interesting term for this: *pragya aparadh* (*pragya* means “intellect,” and *aparadh* means “mistake” — thus, “a mistake of the intellect”). When the intellect commits a mistake, the taste buds that should naturally want sweet foods, for example, start craving pungent ones.

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### the six tastes

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To understand this concept fully, let us begin with the basics of Ayurvedic nutrition by talking about the six tastes. According to Ayurveda, every grain, fruit, vegetable, or beverage on earth — whether natural or manufactured — has one or more of six basic tastes. The Sanskrit term for taste is *rasa*, and these six rasas are:

1. madhura: sweet
2. lavana: salty
3. amla: sour
4. katu: bitter
5. tikta: pungent
6. kashaya: astringent

Further, each taste represents the qualities of one or more elements of nature, and hence has the power to increase or decrease the presence of the corresponding dosha in your system. In the beginning, this can seem

confusing. But let me remind you that every single Ayurvedic theory is based on direct observation of life — and that is far easier to understand than some of today’s complex scientific findings!

So think about it for a moment, and the picture will start to clear. Let’s take the sweet taste. In Ayurveda, the sweet taste is believed to build those tissues that are composed of the earth and water elements. Therefore, sweet foods increase the kapha dosha. Now, if you have an irrepressible sweet tooth the kapha dosha can be aggravated, causing toxic buildup. When that happens, you would be advised to increase your intake of bitter, pungent, and astringent foods — all of which decrease kapha. Foods that contain carbohydrates, sugars, fats, and amino acids belong to the “sweet” category.

Similarly, salty, sour (acidic), and pungent foods are seen to have the “heating” qualities of fire. Therefore, they speed up the metabolic process, thus increasing pitta. Take the pungent taste, for instance. Peppers are pungent — and fiery. Therefore, peppers are likely to increase pitta. And we already know that pitta-dominated people need fewer heat-producing and more cooling elements in their life. Aggravated pitta is countered by eating more sweet foods with cooling properties.

Finally, pungent, bitter, and astringent foods send the vata dosha spiraling upward. Besides foods like bitter greens and certain gourds, the bitter taste is also found in certain herbs, such as aloe vera and goldenseal. A cooling taste, it is particularly healing to those who are dominated by the pitta dosha. In moderate amounts, bitter foods are said to detoxify and cleanse the body and mind.

All hot and spicy foods belong to the “pungent” category. Ayurvedic healers believe such foods stimulate the digestion, improve appetite, and help flush out toxins. Astringent foods have a drying and firming quality. Their dry nature counteracts the phlegmatic quality of kapha, therefore, such foods are said to have a decongesting, diuretic, and analgesic effect. Volatile oils, alkaloids, and tannins in foods such as lemon oil, tomatoes, peppers, and tea belong to these categories. They penetrate the body’s tiniest channels with ease, increasing movement of waste and nutrients across your system. While this can be a good thing, too much activity in the body also creates imbalance. A disturbed vata, therefore, benefits by eating warm, salty, sweet, and sour foods.

When the doshas are perfectly balanced in your physiology, you naturally lean toward the taste groups that are beneficial to you. For example, a kapha-dominated person with doshas in balance will prefer spicy curry to rich chocolate pastry. But if that person’s kapha dosha is aggravated, the intellect will commit a mistake, causing a craving for pastry and further aggravating the kapha dosha. The result is lethargy — and obesity. In the case of the fifteen-year-old boy, the vaidya prescribed a diet that led his system to ask for pitta-reducing flavors.

Whatever your dosha type, if you consider yourself to be in fairly good health, all you need to do is try to get all six tastes on your plate every time you eat. “What?” I can hear you protest, “six tastes? When I barely manage to get one taste in each meal?! And when I have no clue what ‘astringent’ really means?”

Relax. Here are three facts about the six tastes that are sure to make you happy:

1. There is a wide variety of foods and drinks in each category. If the vaidya has told to you get more “sweet” flavors in your food, for example, you need not tear your hair out trying to think of daily dessert ideas. In Ayurveda, foods like milk, wheat, rice, bread, and potatoes are also included in the “sweet” category. Similarly, astringent foods are not exotic wild berries. They are easily found on your supermarket shelves; beans, legumes, and leafy vegetables all have the astringent taste.

Here is a more complete list of basic foods for each category:

- Sweet: rice, milk, wheat, butter, barley, pasta, potatoes, and sweet potatoes; most legumes, such as beans, lentils, and peas; sweet fruits such as dates, figs, pears, and mangoes; sugar in any form — except honey, which is also astringent.
- Salty: any foods that contain salt, especially salt-heavy foods like pickles and chips.
- Sour: citrus fruits such as oranges, limes, and lemons; also cheese, yogurt, tomatoes, sour cream, whey, vinegar, soy sauce, sour cabbage, and wine.
- Bitter: turmeric, eggplant, zucchini, fenugreek, and leafy greens.
- Pungent: spices such as black pepper, mustard,



cumin, garlic, ginger, cayenne, and other chilies; radishes.

- Astringent: beans, lentils, walnuts, hazelnuts, honey, sprouts, lettuce, rhubarb, most raw vegetables, pomegranates, apples, berries, persimmons, cashews, and unripe fruits.
2. Often, a single dish will supply you with more than one taste. Easy-to-make condiments like chutneys can sometimes give you all six. For some simple multi-flavored ideas, see the recipes in chapter 9.
  3. Getting all six tastes does not mean having to make sure you get equal amounts of each flavor. Just a hint of the less common tastes (astringent or bitter) should suffice at any given meal. The quantities, of course, will also depend on what doshas you are trying to balance — and the *vaidya* is your best guide on these proportions.

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### the ayurvedic “no” list

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Getting the six rasas on your plate is only a small part of the Ayurvedic recommendations. The ancient texts list a wide range of foods to avoid — whatever your dosha type and whatever your state of health. Here are some basic no-nos:

- Fermented, canned, and frozen foods. These are devoid of natural life force, or prana.
- Microwaved foods. Cooking in the microwave

oven does not involve conventional heat — and food cooked without *agni* is, to the Ayurvedic way of thinking, lacking in prana. Microwave cooking is also believed to confuse the chemistry of foods, changing their innate qualities. If you cannot do without the microwave, remember that the longer you cook food in there the more goodness it is going to lose.

- Leftovers. These are heavy, hard to digest, and *ama*-causing. Leftover food gradually changes in chemistry, losing its prana, or life force.
- Processed foods. This category includes yeast-based foods, like most yeast-based breads and pizza dough, that are not natural and hence cause *ama* buildup. If you cannot give up yeast-fermented bread, the next best thing is to also eat plenty of freshly kneaded and cooked bread.
- Mushrooms. These are not really a vegetable but a fungus, and Ayurvedic teaching advises against eating fungus of any kind.
- Genetically engineered foods. Interference with the basic structure of foods saps them of their natural intelligence, rendering them undesirable — even unsafe.

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### choosing foods the ayurvedic way

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Another interesting aspect of Ayurvedic nutrition is that it weighs the benefits of food from several angles. You might not generally think about these things, but there

yogurt, peaches, honey, almonds — let these be your cosmetics. Play with face packs. Try making your own; they're safe, inexpensive, and fun to make. They will purify your skin and make it radiant as a dewy rose.

To help you figure out the best ingredients for your type of skin, I asked my vaidya, Ramakant Mishra of Maharishi Ayurveda, a company that manufactures and distributes premium Ayurvedic formulations, to provide some easy skin-cleansing face packs you can make at home. Here are the recipes he created:

### Cleansing Masks

#### for dry skin

- 2 teaspoons quick-cooking oats
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon almond powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon grated orange peel
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon lavender-flower powder (available in good natural health stores)
- 2 tablespoons yogurt

Stir all the ingredients together and apply the mixture gently to your face with your fingertips. Let the mask set on your skin. Then, using light pressure, flake the mask off into the sink. If the mask feels too sticky, use warm water to rinse. Dab your face with a soft towel and apply a good moisturizer.

Instant oatmeal is an excellent skin exfoliant; oats counteract daily sun damage and replenish the skin with vitamins B and E. Orange peel balances the pH level of the skin and softens it. Almond powder is a protein-packed exfoliant. Yogurt contains friendly lactobacilli

that pacify an aggravated pitta. And the healing aroma of lavender powder makes this a soothing, pleasant mask.

#### for oily skin

- 1 tablespoon yogurt
- 1 teaspoon toasted wheat bran
- $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon almond powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon grated orange peel
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Mix and apply the mask in the same manner as for the Dry Skin Mask.

Wheat bran is a very efficient cleanser, coaxing out grime with ease. Combined with cooling yogurt, it makes a gentle exfoliant. The vitamin C in lemon juice promotes cleansing activity.

#### for sensitive skin

Make the same mask as for dry skin, but substitute whole raw (uncooked) milk for yogurt, and use rose-petal powder instead of grated orange peel. In Ayurveda, the rose is held in high regard; it is soothing, healing, and extremely nourishing.

### Caring for the Rest of You

This safe, natural beauty care, should, of course, not be limited to skin cleansers and moisturizers. Whatever other body-care products you use — shampoos, hair conditioners, makeup — be sure they are gentle and nourishing, not enemies in disguise.

But wait — there is much more to roopam than just

space. And I have certainly grown more intuitive about my own body/mind needs.

Yet being a devotee of Ayurveda hasn't meant that I never see an allopathic doctor. In fact, Ayurveda works wonderfully with Western medicine as a complementary — or, more accurately — an integrative system of healing. If a vaidya thinks that your blood pressure is dangerously high or that you have a suspicious lump, you will probably be encouraged to see an allopathic doctor. And if a Western physician combines knowledge of modern medicine with the timeless wisdom of Ayurveda, the result can be an ideal healer. Happily, several Western physicians are doing this today.

That said, one thing is for sure: if you live Ayurveda in your daily life, you might not need to see a doctor — any doctor — at all, or at least not often.

I said in the beginning of this book that, to me, Ayurveda is an ocean — not just because it is so deep and vast, but also because it gives so many different things to different people. Ships sail across its bosom. Divers plunge in to look for treasures. Tourists stroll its beaches and heal themselves with its mist, its brilliant sunsets, its stillness.

Take from the Ayurvedic ocean what you can. Even its tiniest pearls will make you richer.

Let me leave you with a blessing that was meant quite literally in ancient India, because Ayurvedic sages believed that we humans were programmed to live at least a century:

*Shatayu bhavah!* (May you live a hundred years!)

## APPENDIX

### dosha-wise food guide

*These are basic guidelines only and are not intended to cover all possible food choices.*

#### vata

#### General Guidelines

- You are slim and light in build, so you can afford to eat in good quantities. Just make sure you don't eat more than you can digest with ease.
- If you are trying to appease your vata, very few dairy products are off limits for you. So include butter, cheese, and milk in your diet.

- Unlike Kapha, which should avoid sweeteners, wiry vatas do well to get some sweeteners in their diet. But remember, moderation is the key.
- If your vata is strong, you already have plenty of dryness in your system. You need moist, sweet, luscious fruits, so eat dried fruits very sparingly. Avoid too much sun.
- Sweet, moist vegetables are excellent for balancing vata. In their raw form, they won't do you much good, so eat them cooked. Avoid gas-causing beans and vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower in large quantities, for bloating and gas are associated with the "air" quality of vata.
- Most spices and nuts will do you good. For those you need to avoid, consult the list below.
- Balance the dryness of vata by using good-quality oils, both externally and in your cooking. Almost every oil works for this dosha.

fruits	
Friendliest	Avoid
Apples (cooked)	Apples (raw)
Applesauce	Cranberries
Apricots	Dates (dried)
Avocados	Figs (dried)
Bananas	Olives (green)
Berries	Pears
Cherries	Pomegranates
Coconut	Prunes (dried)
Dates (fresh)	Raisins (dried)
Figs (fresh)	Watermelon
Grapefruit	
Grapes	
Kiwi	
Lemons	
Limes	
Mangoes	
Melons	
Olives (black)	
Oranges	
Papaya	
Peaches	
Pineapple	
Plums	
Prunes (soaked)	
Raisins (soaked)	
Rhubarb	
Strawberries	
Tamarind	

vegetables			
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Okay if Eaten Rarely	Avoid
Asparagus	Cauliflower	Beet greens	Artichoke
Beets	(cooked)	Corn	Bitter melon
Cabbage	Daikon	Horseradish	Broccoli
(cooked)	radish	Tomatoes	Brussels sprouts
Carrots	(cooked)	(cooked)	Cabbage (raw)
Cilantro	Jerusalem		Cauliflower
Cucumber	artichoke		(raw)
Fennel	Leafy greens		Celery
Garlic	Lettuce		Eggplant
Green beans	Mustard		Kale
Okra	greens		Kohlrabi
Parsnips	Onions		Onions (raw)
Peas	(cooked)		Peppers (sweet and hot)
(cooked)	Parsley		Potatoes
Pumpkin	Spinach		(white)
Rutabaga			Prickly pear
Sweet			(fruit and leaves)
potatoes			Radishes (raw)
			Turnips
			Wheat-grass sprouts

legumes		
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Avoid
Mung beans	Lentils (red)	Adzuki beans
(whole bean)	Soy milk	Black beans
Mung dal (split mung bean)	Soy sauce	Black-eyed peas
Tur dal (split yellow lentils)	Tofu	Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
Urad dal (split black lentils)		Kidney beans
		Lentils (brown)
		Lima beans
		Navy beans
		Peas (dried)
		Pinto beans
		Soybeans
		Soy flour
		Soy powder
		Split peas
		Tempeh
		White beans

dairy products		
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Avoid
Butter	Cheese (hard)	Cow's milk
Buttermilk	Ice cream	(powdered)
Cheese (soft)	Sour cream	Goat's milk
Cottage cheese	Yogurt (diluted	(powdered)
Cow's milk	and spiced)	Yogurt (plain,
Ghee		frozen, or with
Goat cheese		fruit)
Goat's milk		

grains			
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Okay if Eaten Rarely	Avoid
Durum	Amaranth	Pasta	Barley
wheat flour		Polenta	Bread (with
Oats		Rice cakes	yeast)
(cooked)			Buckwheat
Pancakes			Cereal (cold,
Quinoa			dry, or puffed)
Rice (all			Corn
kinds)			Couscous
Wheat			Crackers
			Granola
			Millet
			Muesli
			Oat bran
			Oats (dry)
			Rye
			Sago
			Spelt
			Tapioca
			Wheat bran

beverages			
Friendliest	Drink in Moderation	Okay if Drunk Rarely	Avoid
Almond milk	Soy milk (hot and well-spiced)	Basil tea	Apple juice
Aloe vera juice		Cinnamon tea	Black tea
Apple cider		Jasmine tea	Caffeinated beverages
Apricot juice		Lemon balm tea	Carbonated drinks
Berry juice (except for cranberry)		Prune juice	Chocolate milk
Carrot juice		Tomato juice	Coffee
Chai (hot spiced milk)			Cold dairy drinks
Chamomile tea			Cranberry juice
Cherry juice			Ginseng tea
Clove tea			Hibiscus tea
Grain "coffee"			Iced tea
Grape juice			Icy cold drinks
Grapefruit juice			Mixed vegetable juice
Lemonade			Pear juice
Mango juice			Pomegranate juice
Orange juice			Soy milk (cold)
Papaya juice			Vegetable bouillon
Peach nectar			
Pineapple juice			
Rice milk			
Sour juices			

nuts	
Friendliest, but Best in Moderation	Avoid
Almonds	None
Black walnuts	
Brazil nuts	
Cashews	
Hazelnuts	
Macadamia nuts	
Pecans	
Pine nuts	
Pistachios	
Walnuts	

seeds	
Friendliest	Avoid
Flax	Popcorn
Pumpkin	
Sesame	
Sunflower	

spices, herbs, and condiments			
Friendliest		Okay in Moderation	Avoid
Ajwain	Mango pickle	Black pepper	Caraway
Allspice	Marjoram	Cayenne	Chocolate
Almond	Mint	Chili peppers	Horseradish
extract	Mustard	(dried)	
Anise	Mustard	Cilantro	
Asafetida	seeds	Fenugreek	
Basil	Nutmeg		
Bay leaf	Orange peel		
Black pepper	Oregano		
Cardamom	Paprika		
Chutney,	Parsley		
mango	Peppermint		
(sweet or	Poppy seeds		
spicy)	Rosemary		
Cinnamon	Saffron		
Cloves	Salt		
Coriander	Savory		
Cumin	Scallions		
Curry leaves	Seaweed		
Dill	Soy sauce		
Fennel	Spearmint		
Ginger	Star anise		
Ketchup	Tarragon		
Lemon	Thyme		
Lime	Turmeric		
Lime pickle	Vanilla		
Mace	Wintergreen		

oils		
Friendliest	External Use Only	Avoid
Ghee	Coconut	Flaxseed
Olive	Avocado	
Sesame		
Most other oils		

sweeteners		
Friendliest	Okay if Used Rarely	Avoid
Barley malt	Maple syrup	White sugar
Fructose		
Fruit-juice concentrate		
Honey (raw and not processed)		
Jaggery		
Molasses		
Rice syrup		
Turbinado		



## pitta

## General Guidelines

- Balance an aggravated pitta with sweet dairy products such as milk, butter, and ghee. Avoid such sour dairy products as yogurt, cheese, sour cream, and buttermilk.
- You are a fiery dosha, so sweeteners of almost all kinds are great for balancing you out. Go slow on honey and molasses, though.
- Counter the heat of pitta with sweet, ripe, juicy fruits. Stay away from sour fruits. Similarly, avoid vegetables that are hot (peppers, for instance), sour, or pungent. Favor those that are mild, sweet, and bitter.
- Certain spices can inflame an already strong pitta. You can imagine the effect chili peppers and cayenne would have on you, for instance. In general, Ayurveda recommends that this dosha use spices in moderation. Some spices with cooling properties — coriander, cardamom, and fennel, to name a few — are fine.

## fruits

Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Okay if Eaten Rarely	Avoid
Apples (sweet)	Limes Papaya	Kiwi	Apples (sour)
Applesauce			Apricots (sour)
Apricots (sweet)			Bananas
Avocados			Berries (sour)
Berries (sweet)			Cherries (sour)
Cherries (sweet)			Cranberries
Coconut			Grapefruit
Dates			Grapes (green)
Figs			Lemons
Grapes (red and purple)			Mangoes (green)
Mangoes (ripe)			Olives (green)
Melons			Oranges (sour)
Olives (black)			Peaches
Oranges (sweet)			Persimmons
Pears			Pineapple (sour)
Pineapple (sweet)			Plums (sour)
Pomegranates			Rhubarb
Prunes			Strawberries
Raisins			Tamarind
Watermelon			

vegetables			
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Okay if Eaten Rarely	Avoid
Artichoke	Carrots (raw)	Corn	Beet greens
Asparagus		Eggplant	Beets (raw)
Beets (cooked)		Kohlrabi	Daikon radish
Broccoli		Spinach	Garlic
Brussels sprouts		Spinach (cooked)	Green chilies
Cabbage			Horseradish
Carrots (cooked)			Mustard greens
Cauliflower			Onions (raw)
Celery			Peppers (hot)
Cilantro			Radishes
Cucumber			Spinach (raw)
Fennel			Tomatoes
Green beans			Turnip greens
Jerusalem artichoke			Turnips
Kale			
Leafy greens			
Lettuce			
Okra			
Parsley			
Parsnips			
Peas			
Peppers (sweet)			
Potatoes (white)			
Sweet potatoes			

legumes		
Friendliest	Okay Once in a While	Avoid
Adzuki beans	Soy flour Soy powder	Soy sauce
Black beans		Tur dal (split yellow lentils)
Black-eyed peas		Urad dal (split black lentils)
Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)		
Kidney beans		
Lentils (brown and red)		
Lima beans		
Mung beans (whole bean)		
Mung dal (split mung bean)		
Navy beans		
Peas (dried)		
Pinto beans		
Soybeans		
Soy cheese		
Soy milk		
Split peas		
Tofu		
White beans		

dairy products		
Friendliest	Okay Once in a While	Avoid
Butter (unsalted)	Yogurt (freshly made and diluted)	Butter (salted)
Cheese (soft, not aged, unsalted)		Buttermilk
Cottage cheese		Cheese (hard)
Cow's milk		Sour cream
Ghee		Yogurt (plain, frozen, or with fruit)
Goat cheese (soft and unsalted)		
Goat's milk		
Ice cream		

grains		
Friendliest	Okay if Eaten Rarely	Avoid
Amaranth	Muesli	Bread (with yeast)
Barley	Polenta	Buckwheat
Cereal (dry)	Rice (brown)	Corn
Couscous		Millet
Crackers		Oats
Durum wheat flour		Quinoa
Granola		Rye
Oat bran		
Oats (cooked)		
Pancakes		
Pasta		
Rice (basmati, white, wild)		
Rice cakes		
Sago		
Spelt		
Tapioca		
Wheat		
Wheat bran		

beverages		
Friendliest	Drink in Moderation	Avoid
Almond milk	Chai (hot spiced milk) Cinnamon tea Orange juice	Apple cider
Aloe vera juice		Berry juice (sour)
Apple juice		Caffeinated beverages
Apricot juice		Carbonated drinks
Berry juice (sweet)		Carrot juice
Black tea		Cherry juice (sour)
Blackberry tea		Chocolate milk
Chamomile tea		Coffee
Cherry juice (sweet)		Cranberry juice
Cool dairy drinks		Ginger tea (dry)
Grain "coffee"		Ginseng tea
Grape juice		Grapefruit juice
Mango juice		Iced drinks
Mixed vegetable juice		Iced tea
Peach nectar		Lemonade
Pear juice		Papaya juice
Pomegranate juice		Sour juices
Prune juice		Tomato juice
Rice milk		
Soy milk		
Vegetable bouillon		

nuts	
Friendliest	Avoid
Almonds (soaked and peeled)	Almonds (with skin)
	Black walnuts
	Brazil nuts
	Cashews
	Hazelnuts
	Macadamia nuts
	Pecans
	Pine nuts
	Pistachios
	Walnuts

seeds		
Friendliest	Okay Once in a While	Avoid
Flax	Pumpkin	Sesame
Popcorn (no salt, buttered)		
Psyllium		
Sunflower		

spices, herbs, and condiments			
Friendliest	Okay in Moderation	Avoid	
Basil (fresh)	Black pepper	Ajwain	Oregano
Chutney,	Caraway	Allspice	Paprika
mango	Cardamom	Almond	Pickles
(sweet)	Cilantro	extract	Poppy seeds
Cinnamon	Neem leaves	Anise	Rosemary
Coriander	Orange peel	Asafetida	Sage
Cumin	Parsley	Basil (dried)	Salt (in
Curry leaves	Tarragon	Bay leaf	excess)
Dill	Vanilla	Cayenne	Soy sauce
Fennel		Chili peppers	Star anise
Ginger		(dried)	Thyme
(fresh)		Chocolate	Vinegar
Mint		Chutney,	
Peppermint		mango	
Saffron		(spicy)	
Spearmint		Cloves	
Turmeric		Fenugreek	
		Garlic	
		Ginger (dry)	
		Kelp	
		Ketchup	
		Lemon	
		Mace	
		Marjoram	
		Mayonnaise	
		Mustard	
		Mustard	
		seeds	
		Nutmeg	

oils		
Friendliest (for Internal and External Use)	External Use Only	Avoid
Canola	Avocado	Almond
Flaxseed	Coconut	Apricot
Ghee		Corn
Olive		Safflower
Primrose		Sesame
Soy		
Sunflower		
Walnut		

sweeteners		
Friendliest	Okay if Used Rarely	Avoid
Barley malt	Honey (raw and not processed)	Jaggery
Fructose	White sugar	Molasses
Fruit-juice concentrate		
Maple syrup		
Rice syrup		
Turbinado		

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 kapha
 

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**General Guidelines**

- Low-fat milk balances kapha. Make sure you consume it in the way it should be: boiled, then cooled to room temperature. Adding a pinch or two of turmeric before boiling reduces the kapha-generating qualities of even whole milk.
- Kapha is a heavy dosha. Balance it with such light fruits as apples and pears. Stay away from heavy, juicy, sour fruits. Most vegetables are good for you, except those that are seen as “sweet” — cucumber and tomatoes, for instance.
- Kapha is already rich in “sweetness,” so it does not need sugar-based products. Your sweetener of choice should be honey.
- Beans are generally good for kapha, but nuts can aggravate the heaviness of this dosha; eat them as sparingly as possible. Most grains will benefit you, but avoid eating too much wheat or rice, which can increase mucus production and make you feel heavier.
- Rejoice! There is almost no spice that you cannot consume in abundance. “Hot” spices such as cayenne and black pepper flush out mucus, thus balancing kapha. Even mild spices will help you digest and assimilate your food better.

## fruits

Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Okay if Eaten Rarely	Avoid
Apples	Figs (dried)	Mangoes	Avocados
Applesauce	Grapes		Bananas
Apricots	Lemons		Coconut
Berries	Limes		Dates
Cherries	Strawberries		Figs (fresh)
Cranberries			Grapefruit
Peaches			Kiwi
Pears			Melons
Persimmons			Olives (black or green)
Pomegranates			Oranges
Prunes			Papaya
Raisins			Pineapple
			Plums
			Rhubarb
			Tamarind
			Watermelon

vegetables	
Friendliest	Avoid
Artichoke	Cucumber
Asparagus	Squash (winter)
Beet greens	Sweet potatoes
Beets	Tomatoes (raw)
Broccoli	Zucchini
Brussels sprouts	
Cabbage	
Carrots	
Cauliflower	
Celery	
Cilantro	
Corn	
Daikon radish	
Eggplant	
Fennel	
Green beans	
Green chilies	
Horseradish	
Jerusalem artichoke	
Kale	
Kohlrabi	
Leafy greens	
Lettuce	
Mustard greens	
Okra	

legumes		
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Avoid
Adzuki beans	Mung beans	Kidney beans
Black beans	(whole beans)	Soybeans
Black-eyed peas	Mung dal (split mung bean)	Soy cheese
Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)	Tofu (hot)	Soy flour
Lentils (red and brown)		Soy powder
Lima beans		Soy sauce
Navy beans		Tofu (cold)
Peas (dried)		Urad dal (split black lentils)
Pinto beans		
Soy milk		
Split peas		
Tur dal (split yellow lentils)		
White beans		

dairy products			
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Okay if Eaten Rarely	Avoid
Cottage cheese (from skimmed goat's milk) Goat's milk (skimmed) Yogurt (skimmed and diluted)	Buttermilk Ghee Goat cheese (unsalted and not aged)	Butter (unsalted)	Butter (salted) Cheese (soft and hard) Cow's milk Ice cream Sour cream Yogurt (plain, frozen, or with fruit)

grains			
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Okay if Eaten Rarely	Avoid
Barley Buckwheat Cereal (cold, dry, or puffed) Corn Couscous Crackers Granola Millet Muesli Oat bran Oats (dry) Polenta Rye Tapioca Wheat bran	Amaranth Durum wheat flour Quinoa Rice (basmati, wild) Spelt	Pasta Rice cakes	Bread (with yeast) Oats (boiled) Pancakes Rice (brown, white) Wheat



beverages		
Friendliest	Drink in Moderation	Avoid
Aloe vera juice	Apple juice	Almond milk
Apple cider	Chai (hot spiced milk)	Carbonated drinks
Apricot juice	Pineapple juice	Cherry juice (sour)
Berry juice		Chocolate milk
Black tea (spiced)		Coffee
Blackberry tea		Cold dairy drinks
Carrot juice		Grapefruit juice
Chamomile tea		Iced tea
Cherry juice (sweet)		Icy cold drinks
Chicory		Lemonade
Cinnamon tea		Marshmallow tea
Cranberry juice		Orange juice
Grain "coffee"		Papaya juice
Grape juice		Rice milk
Mango juice		Sour juices
Peach nectar		Soy milk (cold)
Pear juice		Tomato juice
Pomegranate juice		
Prune juice		
Soy milk (hot and well-spiced)		

nuts		
Friendliest	Okay Once in a While	Avoid
Charoli	Almonds (soaked and peeled)	Black walnuts
		Brazil nuts
		Cashews
		Hazelnuts
		Macadamia nuts
		Pecans
		Pine nuts
		Pistachios
		Walnuts

seeds		
Friendliest	Eat in Moderation	Avoid
Chia	Flax	Sesame
Popcorn (no salt, no butter)	Pumpkin	
	Sunflower	



## spices, herbs, and condiments

Friendliest		Okay in Moderation	Avoid
Ajwain	Mustard	Fennel	Chocolate
Allspice	(without vinegar)	Ketchup	Chutney,
Almond extract	Mustard seeds	Lemon	mango (sweet)
Anise	Neem leaves	Seaweed	Kelp
Asafetida	Nutmeg	Vanilla	Lime
Basil	Orange peel		Mayonnaise
Bay leaf	Oregano		Pickles
Black pepper	Paprika		Salt (in excess)
Caraway	Parsley		Soy sauce
Cardamom	Peppermint		Vinegar
Cayenne	Poppy seeds		
Chili peppers (dried)	Rosemary		
Chutney, mango (spicy)	Saffron		
Cilantro	Sage		
Cinnamon	Spearmint		
Cloves	Star anise		
Coriander	Tarragon		
Cumin	Thyme		
Curry leaves	Turmeric		
Dill			
Fenugreek			
Ginger			
Mace			
Marjoram			
Mint			

## oils

Friendliest, but Use (Internally) in Small Amounts	External Use Only	Okay if Rarely Used	Avoid
Almond	Sesame	Flaxseed	Apricot
Canola			Avocado
Corn			Coconut
Ghee			Olive
Sunflower			Primrose
			Safflower
			Sesame (internal use)
			Soy
			Walnut

## sweeteners

Friendliest	Avoid
Fruit-juice concentrate	Barley malt
Honey (raw and not processed)	Fructose
	Jaggery
	Maple syrup
	Molasses
	Rice syrup
	Turbinado
	White sugar

