



VATA DOSHA TARA Ayurveda 101

A person with Vata predominant is blessed with a quick mind, flexibility and creativity. Vata provides the essential motion for all bodily processes and is extremely vital for health. One purpose of lifestyle considerations is to “ground” or stabilize this motion. On an annual basis, Vata is most prominent in the fall and at the change of seasons, and these are the most important times to be careful of diet and lifestyle. Routine is very useful in assisting the Vata individual to effectively ground all this moving energy.

Vata types have variable appetite and digestion. They are often attracted to astringent foods like salad and vegetables, but their constitution is balanced by sweet, sour and salty tastes. Vata people tend to produce little urine and their feces are hard, dry, and small in size and quantity. Mentally, Vata people usually grasp things quickly but then forget them quickly. They are alert, restless, and very active. They walk, talk and think fast, but are easily fatigued. They have less willpower and often feel unstable and ungrounded. They have less tolerance, confidence, and boldness.

When unbalanced, Vata types have a tendency to become fearful and nervous, and may experience high anxiety. In the external world, Vata types tend to earn money quickly and spend it quickly. They are not good planners and consequently may suffer economic hardship. Vata resides in the colon, as well as the brain, ears, bones, joints, skin and thighs. Vata people are more susceptible to diseases involving the air principles, such as emphysema, pneumonia and arthritis. Other common Vata disorders include flatulence, tics, twitches, aching joints, dry skin and hair, nerve disorders, constipation, and mental confusion. Vata tends to increase with age as is indicated by drying and wrinkling of the skin.

Since the attributes of Vata are dry, light, cold, rough, subtle, mobile, clear, and dispersing, any of these qualities in excess can cause imbalance. Frantic travel, especially by plane, loud noises, continual stimulation, drugs, sugar and alcohol all derange Vata, as do exposure to cold and cold foods. Like the wind, Vata types have a hard time becoming and staying grounded. Routine is difficult but essential if Vata is to be lowered and controlled. In general, people with excessive Vata

respond most rapidly to warm, moist, slightly oily, heavy foods. Steam baths, humidifiers, and moisture in general are helpful.

General food guidelines for decreasing Vata include warm, well-cooked, unctuous foods. One should have small meals three or four times a day and may snack as needed while maintaining a two-hour gap between each meal. Regularity in meal times is important for Vata. Those with Vata dominant constitutions do well with one-pot meals such as soups, stews and casseroles. They can use more oil in cooking their foods than the other two doshas and experience better digestion if they limit their intake of raw foods.

Well-cooked oats and rice are good for Vata because they are not too drying when cooked with plenty of water and butter or ghee. While cooked vegetables are best for Vata, the occasional salad with good oily or creamy dressing is all right. Nightshades – tomatoes, potatoes, eggplants and peppers – and spinach, should be avoided if the Vata person has stiff, aching joints or muscles. Sweet, ripe and juicy fruits are good for Vata. The astringent and drying fruits such as cranberries, pomegranates and raw apples, should be avoided. Fruit should always be eaten by itself on an empty stomach.

Many Vata people can satisfy their need for protein by judicious use of dairy products, but can also use eggs, chicken, turkey, fresh fish, and venison if they wish. Legumes are difficult to digest and should be consumed in limited quantity by those trying to pacify Vata. The legumes should be the split type and soaked before cooking. Cooking them with a little oil and adding spices such as turmeric, cumin, coriander, ginger, garlic and hing (asafoetida), will help prevent Vata from being disturbed.

All nuts and seeds are good for Vata, but are best used as butters or milks. Ten almonds, soaked in water overnight with skins removed the next morning, are a satisfying early morning food. Sesame oil is warming for Vata, but all oils are good. All dairy products are good for Vata with hard cheese being used sparingly. All spices are good, but should not be overused. Vata can have half a glass of wine, diluted with water, during or after a meal. Since Vata people tend to be prone to addiction, they should avoid sugar, caffeine and tobacco. Intensity itself can be intoxicating to Vata, so one should seek relaxation and meditation to reduce Vata.

MANIFESTATIONS OF VATA

Vata needs calming, grounding, warming, hydrating and nourishing

(continued on next page)

Vata In Balance

- Excellent vitality, exhilaration
- Light, effervescent
- Easy to change
- Enthusiastic
- Active, creative
- Clear, alert mind
- Connects easily with subtle spiritual energy

Vata Out Of Balance

- Dry skin, cold, constipated
- Weight loss, very thin
- Changeable, indecisive
- Ungrounded, restless, insomnia
- Unpredictable
- Nervous, fearful, anxious
- Hyper-active