

## AYURVEDA:

Ayurveda is considered by many scholars to be the oldest healing science. In Sanskrit, Ayurveda means “The Science of Life.” Ayurvedic knowledge originated in India more than 5,000 years ago and is often called the “Mother of All Healing.” It stems from the ancient Vedic culture and was taught for many thousands of years in an oral tradition from accomplished masters to their disciples. Some of this knowledge was set to print a few thousand years ago, but much of it is inaccessible. The principles of many of the natural healing systems now familiar in the West have their roots in Ayurveda, including Homeopathy and Polarity Therapy.

### The Strategy

Ayurveda places great emphasis on prevention and encourages the maintenance of health through close attention to balance in one’s life, right thinking, diet, lifestyle and the use of herbs. Knowledge of Ayurveda enables one to understand how to create this balance of body, mind and consciousness according to one’s own individual constitution and how to make lifestyle changes to bring about and maintain this balance

### Balancing the Three Principle Energies of the Body

Ayurveda identifies three basic types of energy or functional principles that are present in everyone and everything: **vata**- the energy of movement, **pitta**- the energy of digestion or metabolism and **kapha**- the energy of lubrication and structure. These principles can be related to the basic biology of the body. Energy is required to create movement so that fluids and nutrients get to the cells, enabling the body to function. Energy is also required to metabolize the nutrients in the cells, and is called for to lubricate and maintain the structure of the cell. The cause of disease in Ayurveda is viewed as a lack of proper cellular function due to an excess or deficiency of vata, pitta or kapha. Disease can also be caused by the presence of toxins.

According to Ayurvedic philosophy the entire cosmos is an interplay of the energies of the five great elements—**Space, Air, Fire, Water and Earth**. **Vata, pitta** and **kapha** are combinations and permutations of these five elements that manifest as patterns present in all creation.

## **Yoga and Ayurveda**

Yoga and Ayurveda are two interrelated branches of the same great tree of Vedic knowledge that encompasses all of human life and the entire universe

Yoga and Ayurveda are not merely two separate but related healing disciplines of India. Each has its unique place and function, but each overlaps into the other on various levels.

In this classical Vedic scheme, Ayurveda is the Vedic system developed specifically for healing purposes. There is no other Vedic system of healing apart from Ayurveda. Yoga is the Vedic system of spiritual practice or sadhana. All Vedic sadhana or spiritual practice involves some form of Yoga practice.

Yoga is an inner spiritual practice, what is called Sadhana in Sanskrit. This does not mean that we cannot use aspects of Yoga medically, but that this is not its primary intent or orientation. To do so would require applying Yoga in a different manner than what it was originally meant to be.

If our aim is to turn Yoga into a medical system, in the Vedic scheme this requires turning Yoga in the direction of Ayurveda. Yoga for healing should be applied according to Ayurvedic guidelines of diagnosis, treatment, and health maintenance if we want to keep yogic healing within the scope of Vedic knowledge. In fact, there was never any yogic system of medicine in India apart from Ayurveda historically, not only among the followers of the Vedic tradition but also among the followers of non-Vedic traditions. Even Buddhist medicine in India and Tibet has been primarily Ayurveda.