

The situation surrounding COVID-19, which causes an acute respiratory disease, is developing quickly around the globe and across our nation. I would like to share with you few Ayurvedic tips that can help you manage this stressful time and when applied, can prevent spread of this infectious disease.

One of the most important first steps in balancing stress is to slow down. Choosing to prioritize things like adequate rest and other nourishing practices can help us stay centered. In truth, there are countless ways to nurture and care for ourselves. Those that impart a sense of grounding, relaxation, warmth, unctuousness, and stability will be best for balancing excess stress, but it is important that you follow your intuition; you know yourself best. When going through your day please follow daily routine. There are some very simple first steps to establishing a daily routine—things like waking, eating meals, going to bed at about the same times each day, and if possible, maintaining a consistent work or activity schedule. These steps alone can have a profound effect on the nervous system. Wake up early in the morning, brush your teeth, scrape your tongue and rinse your mouth. Practice oil pulling. Swishing and gargling with warm, untoasted sesame oil or coconut oil helps to remove tension from the jaw, improves the sense of taste, and removes natural toxins from the mouth, teeth, and gums. Nurture your skin with Ayurvedic oil massage (*Abhyanga*). Each morning, before a shower or bath, massage about ¼–½ cup warm organic oil into the skin. *Abhyanga* is a profound practice of rejuvenation and loving self-care that benefits you on the physical level and subtle realms of consciousness. In addition, the oil itself forms a protective sheath around the body that can help to buffer the nervous system against stress. Taking a bath relaxes the nervous system, releases tension, and helps to quiet the mind. For your bath you can add 1/3 cup ginger powder and 1/3 cup baking soda to the water. If your pitta is high, be mindful that the ginger and baking soda can increase internal heat and you may not want to stay in the bath as long. An Epsom salt bath can also be very relaxing and cleansing. Use hot water for kapha and vata, warm water for pitta. Massaging your feet with lavender oil is perfect for your body, mind and soul to rest in harmony.

It is very important, especially in this time to drink warm water in the morning. Also sip warm (as hot as you can) water throughout the day. You can add a little cut ginger into the water making hot ginger tea. Covid 19 virus 1st incubates in sinuses and then drips down your airway to the lungs. Virus gets killed in hot temperatures. Just by drinking hot water you can kill the virus, stop it and/or slow it down from infecting the lungs. You are also giving your body time to fight the virus on its own by developing antibodies against it if the virus got into your nose/mouth/sinuses. Do not drink iced water and iced cold beverages. Same concept applies to your diet – what to eat and what to avoid. Do not eat yogurt, cheese, ice cream and dairy products in general as they lower your body temperature. You can replace your regular milk with plenty dairy free products - milkadamia, oat milk, coconut milk, etc. The cold food suppresses your agni (digestive fire/capacity) and exposure to cold diminishes your natural immune resistance. It is recommended then to eat hot food. Enjoy basmati rice and mung dal kitchari cooked with vegetables, soups. Cooked lentils and chickpeas with cooked vegetables are excellent choice as they are tridoshic and easily digestible. Avoid hard to digest foods. This time is a great opportunity to prepare homemade meals.

It is also recommended to practice daily pranayama, yoga and meditation to break stress cycle, rest the nervous system to cultivate a healthier physiological response to stress and infections.

Pranayama is a breathing control exercise. *Prana*, the vital breath, the subtle essence of the life force, infuses every cell and tissue throughout our bodies and is carried on and stimulated by the breath.

Imbibing prana helps to restore fluidity and vitality to the subtle energy channels of the body while digesting and eliminating stagnation and ama (toxins). The package of eight beneficial pranayama exercises which can strengthen our immune system including our pranavaha srotas (respiratory system). It can also cleanse our rasa vaha srotas (lymphatic system) and boost our energy. It maintains the balance of ojas (immunity, strength), tejas (digestion), and prāna (vital life force). The eight beneficial pranayama exercises are: Bhastrika, Kapala Bhati, Anuloma Viloma, Brahmari, Utjayi, Utgeet, and finally Sheetalī and Sheetkari.

Practising yoga strengthens respiratory organs. Recommended poses are especially open chest poses (boat, bridge, camel, cobra) as well as cow, locus, lotus and lion pose.

Imagine if we could consistently witness the stressors in our lives with detachment and clarity, focusing on purposefully responding to them rather than blindly reacting to them. Meditation helps us to develop this capacity through the cultivation of passive awareness, and can inform a far healthier response to stressful situations. Over time, a daily meditation practice can truly re-pattern the brain, helping to rewire our response to challenging circumstances. If you do not have an established practice, Empty Bowl Meditation is a wonderful place to start. Please also diffuse essential oils (lavender, lemon grass) daily using essential oil diffuser at your home.

Remember to take your vitamin supplements in the morning with warm water. Especially essential in the fight of Covid 19 is vitamin D (and stay on the sun if possible with keeping in mind social distancing guidelines), vitamin A, Iodine (walks on the beach if you can respect social distancing guidelines) and vitamin C. Always helpful to strengthen your body is vitamin B complex and B12.

At the end I wanted to share with you my favorite, and perfect for this time, Ayurvedic drink recipes – ashwagangha matcha latte and lemon moringa latte. For ashwagangha matcha latte please dissolve 1 teaspoon of match powder and 1 teaspoon of ashwagandha powder in 2 ounces of heated water, add 1 cup of dairy free milk, maple syrup to taste and pinch of cinnamon powder. Lemon moringa latte an energizing alternative to caffeinated lattes, such as those using espresso or green or black tea. You dissolve 1 teaspoon moringa powder, 2 teaspoons lemon juice in 4 ounces hot water, add 4 ounces of dairy free warm milk, agava syrup to taste, ½ teaspoon vanilla and pinch of bee pollen on top.

Instead of handshake greet your friends and neighbors with Namaste gesture. This beautiful gesture will show them much respect and send them lots of unconditional love vibrations.

Light and peace,

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