Men’s Health in Ayurveda
Karta Purkh Singh Khalsa, D.N.-C., R.H.

Ayurveda is probably the oldest continuing healing system on the planet. With a tradition going back thousands of years, Ayurveda offers a framework for understanding the body and how to best support its quest for balance. In the Ayurveda tradition of health care, mind, body and spirit are inextricably entwined.

Each of us is unique. But, as Yogi Berra (well, he was a yogi) might say, some of us are more unique than others. Men have simpler plumbing, and they don’t go to the doctor as much, but they still need care and attention.

Speaking of yogis, I saw Yogi Bhajan apply Ayurveda for more than thirty years. And during those years I have seen Ayurvedic remedies transform men’s lives, time and again.

Sex and Rejuvenation with Ayurveda

According to Indian philosophy, Kama (romantic and sexual love and all its associated pleasures of the senses) is one of the areas to master to experience lead a meaningful and joyous life in this world and to move on to spiritual freedom. Everyone has heard about The Kama Sutra, which is an extensive treatise on the subject. (Incidentally, this tome was written by a celibate monk.)

Ayurveda identifies three key areas that are, taken together, considered to be the base foundation of Ayurvedic lifestyle and therapeutics—balanced diet, balanced sleep and balanced sexual life. We should indulge in sex such away so as not to have any adverse effect on health. Ayurveda advises moderate sexual activity, according to personal constitution and other traits, during midlife. Being alert to avoid excess or deficiency in food, sleep or sex goes a long way toward keep the doshas in balance.

The companion sciences of rejuvenation (“rasayana”); and aphrodisiacs, or virilization, (“vajikarana”) are well researched, practical areas of health maintenance that anyone can use to stay well and sexy throughout a long life.

Literally translated as “the path of juice,” the rasayana branch of Ayurveda aims to nourish, restore and balance the body functions which have been taxed by the wear and tear of daily life. Signs of aging are all marks of lack of “juice,” from arthritis with lack of joint fluids, to fatigue with lack of endocrine hormones, to menopause difficulties with vaginal dryness.

Rasayana medicines include a large array of herbs and foods. Sweet taste, contained in carbohydrates and good quality fats, is the most rejuvenating, so sweet food, including milk, ghee, and especially honey, is recommended to rebuild body tissues and restore sexual juices.¹

Virilization, including the use of aphrodisiacs and sexual rebuilding tonics, aims to support sexual pleasure, fertility, and performance. Sexual fluids, including semen, are the most important concentrated essence of all the body’s tissues. Ayurveda recommends retaining some of it to use in the rest of the body for renewing body and mind.² Producing more and better quality semen regenerates the mind and the immune system. The influence of the mind is the origin of momentum for sexual desire, so virilization must consider mental health. Vajikarana therapies can be utilized for treating disorders of the mind, including depression.

Ayurveda says that sex can be a transformative and healing experience if managed correctly. The actual sex act is important in maintaining sexual pleasure and potency. The atmosphere should include sweet music, sweet fragrance and flowers. Wait a while after eating. Ideally, partners should be physically, emotionally and spiritually involved with the other. Afterwards, urinate to balance the energy in the pelvis, and relax, perhaps with a warm bath. Finish with a special drink of hot milk or almond milk with ghee and honey or dates and saffron.

The evening, especially after two hours of dinner, is the ideal time for intimacy, as it is kapha time. The frequency of sex depends on constitution. Kapha types may engage in sex more frequently than vata & pitta types thanks to their innate extra stamina. Vata types may seek satisfaction in changing partners. Pitta types are usually on a quest for more sexual intensity.
Ojas

Central to the Ayurvedic idea of sexual rejuvenation is the concept of ojas, which is the most concentrated essence of nutritional substances in the body, roughly comparable to semen and/or cerebrospinal fluid. It is strongly correlated with vitality and our immunity. Ayurveda maintains that food, once consumed, is progressively concentrated into ever more distilled categories of tissue building nutrients. It is said that one hundred bites of food will produce one drop of blood, and that one hundred drops of blood will produce one drop of ojas.

Most ojas is made at night during restorative sleep. The production of ojas comes after the production of sexual fluids (shukra). Ojas is used for immunity and procreation, so it is easily depleted by either use. With a thorough and disciplined program, it takes thirty days to replenish the ojas reserves in the body. Sexual abstinence during this time will help ojas accumulate.

Men, Rejuvenate with Diet

The diet that promotes ojas and sexual rejuvenation is a highly nutritive program, emphasizing whole grains like wheat and rice, seeds, nuts, milk products, and natural sugars, such as honey. Cooked, moist foods (soups) will help. The diet should be balanced to contain a broad range of tastes - sweet, sour, salty, spicy, bitter and astringent. Generally, use food that is sweet, oily, cold, light and easily digestible. Use less dry or raw food, and include a good quality raw vegetable oil (almond, sesame) and ghee. Onion, garlic, ginger, eggplant, figs, asparagus, broccoli, milk, mango and dates promote reproductive tissues and fluids in the body.

Rice is a very basic, yet very effective rejuvenating food. Honey is innately rejuvenating, with its sweet taste, and is considered predigested, allowing it to nourish all parts of the body with ease. Ajwain seed, cumin (thought to purify the male genitourinary tract), turmeric and black cumin (kala jeera) are also beneficial. Onion and garlic increase sexual energy, libido, and sexual secretions. They are good aphrodisiacs, but, since they promote sexual desire, they may lead to excessive sexual activity, which may offset the gains of the rejuvenation.

Ghee

According to Ayurveda, ghee (clarified butter) is the best of all oily foodstuffs, and is used to cure disturbances in the doshas pitta and vata. Ghee is thought to have the healing benefits of butter, with the impurities (saturated fat, milk solids) removed. Where ghee is light, butter is said to be heavy. The Susruta Samhita, an Ayurvedic classic, claims ghee is good for all parts of the body.

Specifically, ghee is said to promote memory, intelligence, quantity and quality of semen, and to promoting digestion, enhancing ojas and liver health. Ghee is an important rasayana for the brain and intellect, bone marrow, and reproductive tissue. We do know from modern science that ghee is rich in phenolic antioxidants. Ghee is used for sexual vitality and for building nerve and brain tissue.

Impotence and Erectile Dysfunction

If you are getting along in years, as so many of us baby boomers are, would you like to have sex, say, weekly, and not, uh, weakly? One in four men over the age of 50, or some 20 million American men, experience some form of impotence. It strikes up to half of all men between the ages of 40 and 70.

With proper diagnosis and therapy, ED can almost always be treated successfully or improved substantially. Sadly, fewer than 10% of impotent men pursue treatment. Traditional Ayurvedic practitioners have used powerful, effective natural medicines to benefit ED. Several of these remedies are now being confirmed by modern science.

Home remedies that Ayurveda promotes for ED include garlic, onion, asparagus spears, okra, ginger and raisin.
**Garlic bulb (VK- P+)**

I would have to rank garlic as the number one aphrodisiac herb. I use it consistently, and it produces consistently. It has all the qualities you would want in a sexual enhancer. It increases circulation and promotes erectile force, as well as increasing desire.

Garlic is hot, so it can aggravate pitta and the sex organs. For Americans, deodorized garlic might be a better choice. Use a large dose- 10 grams per day. Expect to see sexy results in about a month, and then- watch out.

**Ashwaganda root (Bitter, astringent, sweet, VK- P+)**

Ashwaganda root (*Withania somnifera*), often called “Indian ginseng”, is used in Ayurveda as a tonic and sedative. Studies show ashwaganda to be superior to ginseng as an antistress adaptogen. The name ashwaganda technically means, “smells like a horse,” reflecting that its odor is supposedly reminiscent of horse urine. But the name also connotes its use as a premier sexual tonic.

An animal study from 2001 showed that extracts of ashwaganda increased production of sex hormones and sperm, presumably by exerting a testosterone-like effect. In another double blind clinical trial, *Withania* (3 g/day for 1 year) was tested on the process of aging in 101 healthy male adults (50-59 years of age). Significant improvements in several aging markers were noted and 71.4% of those who received the herb reported improvement in sexual performance.

A typical dose of ashwaganda is about a gram per day, taken over long periods, up to many years, as a rejuvenator, but, since ashwaganda is very safe, larger quantities are often used in Ayurveda short term. In India, *Withania* is given with pungent, heating herbs (ginger, pepper, etc.) to increase its tonic effects. For impotence, it is often given in warm milk.

**Bala rot (VPK=)**

Next to ashwaganda, bala (*Sida cordifolia*) (the name means “strength”) is probably the most widely used tonic in Ayurveda. It is a sweet, cold, heavy herb. Bala contains a mild ephedrine-like compound, so it is a little energizing when administered. Since it a mallow, it is soothing and mucilaginous, so it is tonic to vata. It is particularly used for nerve disorders, and it is combined with other tonics for specific organs, such as with arjuna for the heart. Externally, it sees wide use as a medicated oil for joint complaints, muscle cramps and nerve pain. Internally, use 1 gram or more as tolerated, per day, as powder, decoction or milk decoction.

**Gokshura fruit**

This well known Ayurvedic herb (*Caltrops, Tribulus terrestris*) is a highly esteemed Ayurvedic vajikarana and rasayana medicine with a particular affinity for the urogenital tract.

It is sweet and cold, so it is appropriate for pitta conditions. As a tonic, it balances vata. For spermatorrhea and impotence, use equal parts powdered gokshura, sesame seed, kapi kachu (*Mucana pruriens*) and ashwaganda. Take 6 grams of this mixture with honey, ghee or milk.

Gokshura promotes urine flow and soothes the membranes. It pacifies vata and will not promote secondary excess dryness, as other diuretics do. Gokshura is renowned for prostate support. The plant and seeds are used in the treatment of spermatorrhea, impotence, dysuria and gonorrhea. This herb is sometimes combined with guggul, triphala and trikatu in a traditional Ayurvedic tridoshic compound formula called gokshuradi guggul, used to support the proper function of the genitourinary tract. Gokshura promotes mental clarity, and in fact, I use it for depression with exceptional clinical effect. This herb contains harmine alkaloids, which may explain its sedative properties. It may be taken with ashwaganda as a tonic nervine in vata disorders.

**Amla fruit**

The famous Indian gooseberry, or amla fruit (*Embllica officinalis*) is considered to be one of the strongest rejuvenatives. Amla is the basis for “Chyavanprash,” the most famous Ayurvedic rejuvenating jelly,
a food supplement designed to enhance sexual functions and fertility. Into a base of fresh amla fruit, over two
dozen other herbal ingredients are added for their synergistic effects, including ghee, sugar cane juice, honey,
clove, and cinnamon. As a mild all around health tonic, chyavanprash can be used by people of all ages for
almost any weakness or as a general energy supplement, but is especially appropriate for men.
Modern research says that chyavanprash protects the liver from damage\textsuperscript{13} and reduces blood sugar and
cholesterol significantly.\textsuperscript{14} For sexual rejuvenation, stir chyavanprash into warm milk or spread on toast, and
consume 1-2 Tbs. every day.

External Preparations
To keep the body young, massage daily with a combination of the infused oils of ashwaganda,
shatavari and bala. Leave on to absorb for 2 hours before bathing. This program is antiaging (vayasthapan), as
it treats excess vata. A simple oil of ashwaganda infused in sesame is a basic penis massage oil.
Sri Gopal Oil is an external proprietary preparation in which herbs are infused into sesame oil. It is
used for genital massage as a general treatment for impotence. Ingredients include ashwanganda, shatavari,
karanj (Pongamia glabra), saffron (kesar) and sandalwood.\textsuperscript{15} Many other similar formulas are used.

Other Sex Remedies
Shilajit is a tarry black or brown substance that exudes from rock cliffs, primarily in the Himalayas.
The tar is purified, dried, and encapsulated or stirred into an appropriate liquid, such as milk. Many
combination products include shilajit. One such is Shilajit Vati, which is a mixture of shilajit paste and
triptiha powder, processed in the juices of the fresh triphala fruits. My mentor recommends taking shilajit
daily with equal parts black pepper, boiled in milk.\textsuperscript{16} \textbf{Shilajit is a general detoxifier and rejuvenator, widely
employed for impotence.}

Safed (white) musali tuber (\textit{Asparagus adscendens}) is a potent aphrodisiac plant. It contains various
stigmasterol derivatives. It is nutritive and demulcent, so suits urinary disorders. It is also been shown
significant effect in increasing semen volume and total sperm count. Clinical trails also showed it to enhance
working capacity.\textsuperscript{17} Safed Musali in traditionally used for male lack of libido and impotence. It is also widely
used as a general health promoting, anti-aging tonic, with an affinity for the pelvis and rectum. With its sweet
taste, hot temperature and heavy quality, it pacifies vata and pitta. For general sexual debility and impotence,
it is cooked in milk. It is often used in combination with other similar herbs, in a dose of 1-2 grams per day.\textsuperscript{18}
For acute sexual problem, use 10 or more grams per day.

Pipali peppercorn (Long pepper, \textit{Piper longum}) is a powerful, rejuvenating, warming alterative
rasayana remedy, which moistens the tissues and offsets the drying action of the other herbs. It is often
combined with black pepper to offset the opposite moisture characteristics.

Clove is mildly aphrodisiac and stimulating. Saffron (kesar), a very powerful and expensive herb, is
an acclaimed vajikarana.\textsuperscript{19} Not a tonic in itself, it synergizes with other tonic herbs. It is often used in milk
preparations. I learned a remedy from my mentor, Yogi Bhajan, which combined saffron with camphor.

Proprietary and classical impotence formulas often center on a combination of ashwaganda, shatavari
and kapi kachu. Kapi kachu seed (Cowhage, \textit{Mucuna pruriens}) is considered to be one of the best male
reproductive tonics. For impotence, powder 2 seeds and take with warm milk daily at bedtime. It increases
libido and erectile function. A traditional aphrodisiac (Vanari Vatika) is made by boiling the seeds in milk.
Then the seeds are pounded, fried in ghee and mixed with raw sugar. This mass is soaked in honey and rolled
into a bolus.

Premature Ejaculation (PE)
Nutmeg gets my vote for the best remedy for this condition.\textsuperscript{20} This calming pungent herb reduces vata
in the large intestine. Nutmeg is sedating, but the relaxing effects don’t manifest until about 4 hours after
ingestion. Small chronic doses for PE should not be problem in this regard. Use about 1 gram per day, and
titrate the dose to tolerance of the sedating effects. Expect PE benefits in about 2-4 weeks. Continue a small daily dose as necessary.

Safed musali is well known for PE, while amla is also used.\textsuperscript{21} The speed of effect can be hastened somewhat by using doses in the 5 gram range.

\textbf{Shilajit is used for long term treatment of PE. The dose is 1-2 grams per day, usually with milk. Kapi Kachu has general benefit for PE.}\textsuperscript{22}

Various Ayurvedic combination formulas are used for PE. One such proprietary combination includes shatavari, gokshura, trikatu, ashwaganda, and musali, along with an assortment of minor ingredients.

\section*{Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH)}

Any given case of BPH can involve any of the doshas in any proportion. The boggy, wet, swollen prostate is a kapha excess. The inflamed tissue is a manifestation of pitta. The blockages and reversed energy flow comes from vata. The diet appropriate to the offending dosha is indicated.

Prostate problems, which occur with aging, happen during the time of life when vata is dominant. It’s not surprising that the aging prostate is connected to disordered vata. Constipation, caused by vata, can reduce sexual performance and prostate health, mainly by disrupting apana. Having clogged pipes can inhibit erectile capacity, ejaculation functions and semen production. I have successfully used a formula taught by Yogi Bhajan for male urogenital health, containing fennel seed, turmeric root, senna leaf, ajwain seed and asafoetida gum. Fennel and ajwain are carminative and balance hormones, as they contain phytosterols. Turmeric tightens membrane tissue. Senna is laxative and asafoetida promotes libido and increases agni.

BPH is an disorder involving the reverse direction of vata. Apana in the large intestine and genitals rises upwards, leaving prostate energy diminished. For such conditions, medicated enemas promote bowel function. Barley and oil in the diet nourish and balance disordered vata. Herbs that generally balance this condition include haritaki, asafoetida and calamus.\textsuperscript{23}

Punarnava (\textit{Boerhavia diffusa}) herb is an effective diuretic, anti-spasmodic and anti-inflammatory agent, with analgesic qualities, in urinary tract infections and prostate problems. Unlike most diuretics, which are catabolic by definition, punarnava is a rasayana. Use 4 grams per day with hot water.

Banyan tree sap is a folk remedy for the prostate. Banyan trees, huge behemoths that dot north India, have spongy wood filled with milky sap. The sap is easily extracted. It is a sweet sticky liquid somewhat like honey. It is a general tonic remedy for the prostate. Use about a teaspoon per day, especially combined with yogurt. This is a favorite of Yogi Bhajan.

\section*{Keeping Men Healthy}

Men’s health is actually a particularly challenging area. Men just don’t present to alternative practitioners (or to any other practitioners, for that matter). But men’s needs are just as serious. They die earlier. And while they are still alive, they are just as miserable, or perhaps more miserable, if they don’t seek help.

Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to crisis care for men, and a scheme for managing health and welfare over a lifetime. After being involved with this system for over 30 years, I will testify to its effectiveness, and to the scope of its comprehensive approach. Now, if we could just entice some men into the clinic…

\begin{itemize}
\item[1] Sharma, Ram, and Dash, Bhagwan, \textit{Caraka Samhita}, Chowkhamba, Varanasi, 1992
\item[2] Anselmo, Peter, with Brooks, James, \textit{Ayurvedic Secrets to Longevity and Total Health}, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1996
\item[3] Lad, Vasant, \textit{Ayurveda Today}, Spring, 1995, p.3
\end{itemize}


Department of Veterinary Medicine, King Saud University, P.O. Box 1482, Buraidah, Saudi Arabia

The effect of lyophilized aqueous extract of Cuminum cocineum and Withania somnifera on testicular development and on serum levels of testosterone, ICSH and FSH was studied in immature male Wistar rats. There was a notable increase in testicular weight of animals treated with both extracts. Histological examination revealed an apparent increase in the diameter of seminiferous tubules and the number of seminiferous tubular cell layers in the testes of treated rats as compared with control ones. Extracts of both plants elicited notable spermatogenesisis in immature rats but C. cocineum was more effective than W. somnifera in that respect. Serum testosterone and FSH levels were lower in animals treated with plants extracts than controls, whereas ICSH levels was higher in treated animals, specially in those treated with C. cocineum. It was concluded that extracts of both plants have a direct spermatogenic influence on the seminiferous tubules of immature rats presumably by exerting a testosterone-like effect.


Amala Cancer Research Centre, Amala Nagar PO, Thrissur 680 553, Kerala, India.

Hepatoprotective activity of Emblica officinalis (EO) and Chyavanaprash (CHY) extracts were studied using carbon tetrachloride (CCI(4)) induced liver injury model in rats. EO and CHY extracts were found to inhibit the hepatotoxicity produced by acute and chronic CCI(4) administration as seen from the decreased levels of serum and liver lipid peroxides (LPO), glutamate-pyruvate transaminase (GPT), and alkaline phosphatase (ALP). Chronic CCI(4) administration was also found to produce liver fibrosis as seen from the increased levels of collagen-hydroxyproline and pathological analysis. EO and CHY extracts were found to reduce these elevated levels significantly, indicating that the extract could inhibit the induction of fibrosis in rats.


Department of Physiology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi-110 029.

Chyavanprash is an ancient Indian dietary supplement containing vitamin C (34 mg/100 g) derived from amla (Emblica officinalis). In addition, Chyavanprash also contains several other herbal products. The present study was designed to compare the effects of vitamin C with those of Chyavanprash. Ten normal healthy adult male volunteers (age 20-32 years) participated in the 16-week study. They were placed randomly in either the Chyavanprash group (n = 5) or vitamin C group (n = 5). Those in the former received 15 g/d of Chyavanprash while those in the latter received 500 mg/d vitamin C during the first 8 weeks of the study. For the next 8 weeks, no supplement was given. For each individual, an oral glucose tolerance test was performed, and lipoprotein profile in peripheral serum samples was determined at 0 weeks, 4 weeks, 8 weeks, 12 weeks and 16 weeks. In the Chyavanprash group, the 8 weeks Vs 0 weeks values (mean +/- S.D.) respectively for various indices which were significantly different were fasting plasma glucose (100.2 +/- 5.58 mg/dl vs 116.2 +/- 11.6 mg/dl), area under 2-h plasma glucose curve (245.9 +/- 15.13 mg.dl-1.h vs 280.8 +/- 37.09 mg.dl-1.h), HDL cholesterol (53.2 +/- 4.56 mg/dl vs 42.7 +/- 7.17 mg/dl), LDL cholesterol (82.4 +/- 8.80 mg/dl vs 98.26 +/- 12.07 mg/dl), LDL/HDL ratio (1.56 +/- 0.28 vs 2.38 +/- 0.63). In the Vitamin C group, only the LDL/HDL ratio was significantly lower at 8 weeks than at 0 weeks (1.99 +/- 0.44 vs 2.29 +/- 0.43). All the variables that changed significantly were no longer...
significantly different from the 0 weeks value at 16 weeks. Chyawanprash reduces postprandial glycemia in the oral glucose tolerance test and reduces blood cholesterol level to a significantly greater extent than vitamin C.


17 Nandan Musli, [http://www.nandanmusli.com/safeaphrodisiac.htm](http://www.nandanmusli.com/safeaphrodisiac.htm)


