

Your Health in Your Hands

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Your Health in Your Hands

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Diet, Health and the Stages of Life

My Story

Ayurveda is in my blood. My grandfather, my great— grandfather, in fact going back four generations on my father's side, were all Ayurvedic doctors. For that reason, from my earliest childhood, my father gave me Ayurvedic herbs for my health rather than using chemical—based medicine.

I clearly remember one incident, a striking example from when I was 10 years old, which demonstrated to me the effectiveness of using Ayurveda. I had severe colic, which was very, very intense. I was rolling round on the floor in pain, screaming; I thought I was going to die.

My father took me to see a physician, who said it might well be appendicitis and they may have to operate. We'll wait for a day, even half a day, he said, and if it doesn't go away, we'll operate. This was around 1972, when there was no sophisticated diagnostic machinery as there is now. People didn't think clearly; they just thought—this is appendicitis, so we'll operate if there's pain and that will end the problem. That was it.

We went back home and my father called on my uncle, who was a very famous Ayurvedic doctor in our village in Gujarat. My uncle the doctor, when he heard the diagnosis and solution, said, 'No, no, there's no need for surgery; we'll just give her an enema. 'So he gave us a formula we could make from what we had in the house; a mixture of cumin, dried ginger powder, ajwain, asafoetida, coriander and other things, which we boiled and added to castor oil in specific quantities. My father then gave me an enema of this mixture. Within five minutes I cleared my bowels completely, released lots of gas, and with this the pain disappeared. This was my foundation experience of the effectiveness of Ayurveda.

Then, when I was just fifteen years old I met Dr Pankaj Naram, at a spiritual organisation which taught the principles of The Bhagavad Gita. Pankaj inspired me to study Ayurveda, which he was already deeply into. So I started studying Ayurveda, and completed my formal studies by 1981.

I then thought it would be good to study pharmacy, in order that we could then make our own high quality products. So I did a full-time three year pharmacy course, and also did part-time business management and admin. By 1986 I had started full-time Ayurvedic practice.

So that's how my journey started. While I was still studying, and Pankaj was teaching me pulse-reading in the evenings; I would study in the day and every evening I would go to the clinic where he was practicing. I learned pulse-reading for about three years, constantly learning, up until 1985.

All of my training was directly under Pankaj, but actually he never formally trained anybody. He always said that you must observe, observe, observe and observe the pulse. He gave some basic guidelines and then I was observing constantly. By that process I became very refined in my ability.

Finally, after five years of practice, I became extremely good at pulse reading, and practised it side by side with my pharmacy experience, adding further training with another teacher Vaidhya Bhava to gain knowledge on Panchkarma, Ayurvedic detoxification.

When I first began feeling the pulse, all I could detect was that this person was alive, the heart was beating. Then, gradually, after seeing 80 to 100 people every day, new insights began to arise, and I began to know where toxins were located, for example in the upper or lower part of the body, or the digestive tract, as well as the nature of the toxin, whether it was hot or cold, or mixed with air. From this I began to be able to understand what was going on within a patient more deeply. I could see, for example, that people who had hot toxins in the head would normally suffer from headaches and anger, with skin problems on the scalp.

If through the pulse I found mucousy cold toxins in the head region, along with low immunity levels, people would definitely suffer from allergies, sinusitis, coughs and colds. Using the pulse in this way I could recognise a whole range of issues, such as fibroids, polycystic ovary syndrome, male infertility, tube blockages, arthritis, auto immune problems, the location of pain and the reasons for either inflammation or degeneration, allergies, migraines, blood pressure, diabetes; a whole range of health issues. This helped to define the process behind the symptoms; the hidden factors behind what we can see, then precisely focusing on these hidden influences and remove them, so that symptoms vanish naturally.

I also spent a lot of time developing herbal formulas, because I saw that the classical Ayurvedic formulas had many shortcomings in our modern age. When these formulas were created, two or three thousand years ago, the culture was more Kapha than now.

This means that people were more tranquil, quieter, life was easy, it wasn't so fast-paced. The way of living was slow. If you had to travel it took a long time. If you travel in a fast vehicle as we now do, it increases Vata, but that was not a problem in those days. A long time ago people travelled in Kaphic vehicles—such as ox carts—which did not increase Vata. Stress levels were not high; the diseases of that time were more Kapha-related. So when we looked at their formulas we found they used lots of herbs for increasing heat in the body, which is contrary to the needs of our time.

We'd been working in the clinic for several years by then, and we already had around 80 patients coming every day. This was a good number, and gave us great experience, from which confirmed that the traditional formulas had many shortcomings. What we found is the following.

Firstly, the classical remedies are not so fit for modern times which are more Pitta-Vata. We live a life which is too aggressive, too fast, too full of stress and anxiety, which causes many illnesses connected with low Agni, low digestion, low immune systems. The classical formulas don't take care of these issues. In the time of more Kapha diseases these formulas were Pitta-Vata enhancing and not so suitable for our age and needs.

Secondly, classical formulas contain a lot of heavy metals, which I didn't agree with. I believe that we are organic and must take only organic natural substances, made from plants. So I decided to modify all the formulas to make them suitable for modern times, according to our experience working in the clinic.

Thirdly, most of the classical formulas are based on powders, so if you want to give the correct herbal dose to people, a combination of perhaps 10 herbs, two to three grams a day, then it becomes too much to handle. And if you give those same powders in the form of 300 mg tablets, then it's just one-tenth of a dose, which doesn't have any impact, it's not effective.

Being a pharmacist, I realised that we needed to extract the essence of the herbs, and if done in the right way we can then give the right dosage in just one 300 mg tablet, which is what is required to bring about the required transformation.

So this is what I did, following those principles. I started working on the formulas, creating new ones, and tried them out for two or three years to a group of people without charging them, observing the whole clinical impact on them and finalising what was effective.

Following this process, by 1992 I had created 80 different formulas, which were first based firstly on making sure that Pitta and Vata were not increased, and secondly that each and every formula, even if it is for skin disease or anything else, should improve health in general.

Nowadays people often don't move their bodies that much; we are immobile, sitting in offices all day. We are stressed, have no time for exercise, so our both our digestion and metabolism are very slow. Most people, when they are working, just run from one thing to another, and they grab whatever food is available on the run. This combination of the wrong food, no exercise and lots of stress completely depletes our digestive and metabolic enzymes; it dries out the enzyme secretion in the body, causing illness and poor health.

Thirdly, what we do has to have a real effect, using powerful extracts of herbs which really work to resolve the problem that we are addressing; if the problem is a cough, then it has to resolve that issue; if it is a skin problem, then it has to resolve that.

Fourthly, we must work to remove blockages in our systems; we are constantly blocked up by toxins in our bodies. We gradually pile up these toxins, little by little, drop by drop, over a period of years. We are often not aware of this until it emerges in the form of the sudden symptom of a major illness.

Often we wonder what we did wrong just yesterday to bring about this illness, what we did two months ago to merit a heart attack. But it's not like that. In truth our heart attack has been building up over the last ten years, not the last two or three months. What we need to do is to remove the blockages and toxins which have built up in the minute tissues within the channels within the body.

I followed these principles and created formulas that were truly effective. In fact we found them to be remarkably good, and the results were so striking that patients started referring people to us in large numbers. People started talking about us by word of mouth and our practice grew from 80 patients to three or four hundred a day in our Ayushakti clinics.

Ayushakti was formed as a company in 1988. By 1992 I had worked for six years on creating different herbal formulas. My work began to increase. Besides the formula work I was handling the whole of the business, I was handling the whole leadership of the organisation, alongside my own practice twice a week, and also had developed a complete Panchkarma detox model based on pulse readings.

Additional to the three focuses of pulse reading, Panchkarma and herbal formulas comes the fourth: diet. By following a specific diet for the improvement of the quality of your life, around half of all illnesses disappear.

These are the four areas that I focused on, and which became my areas of true expertise.

By 1998, Dr Pankaj and I had started travelling to Europe. The first country we came to was Italy. We met lots of doctors there, and gave lectures to them, sharing what we can do with them, and four of these doctors came to study with us in India. This is how we began working in the West.

Taking my time, working with the authorities, we started exporting herbal products to Europe in 1990, first to Italy and then to Germany and other places. From this beginning I have now travelled

around the world doing pulse reading; in Europe, America, Australia and New Zealand and Russia—and of course, India.

I have seen so far, around 300,000 new clients on a one-on-one basis. Most of them suffer from chronic pain, arthritis, spondylosis, frozen shoulders, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, severe obesity, IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), chronic digestive disorders, asthma, allergies, coughs and colds. I have helped a lot of people who have been suffering from cancer to prevent its recurrence for at least 15 years.

Other health issues include; ulcerative colitis, psoriasis, hair loss and baldness, alopecia, eczema, children's eczema, and other children's problems such as low concentration, hyperactivity, autism, limited growth in children, and many, many other health conditions where Ayurveda can help.

The key is pulse reading, which is a diagnostic technique that gives an understanding of what's happening behind the scenes, and how long this has been invisibly cooking away. For example, somebody has a sudden health problem, say a heart attack. Why did this happen? What had been going on behind the scenes over the years to cause it? And if you want to prevent it in the future, you have to deal with the cause of the problem in the past, or it will recur.

Pulse reading tells you exactly what went wrong in the hidden past, as well as what is happening now. It tells us what is happening right now in the body, the mind and the emotions, which indicates what should be prevented today to avoid problems in the future. Pulse reading is both an art and a science of observation and insight

I have seen, by training more than 60 doctors in pulse reading, that the more a doctor practices, the more insight they gain. Today, in every Ayushakti clinic in India, we have around 80 to 100 patients coming every day, which means that when people come to study they have lots of practical pulse reading, practical hands—on experience, and they become sharper, sharper, sharper with practice.

From all this experience I want to share with you the principles of Ayurveda in a down to earth, practical way. I will do this by telling you of the experiences people just like you and me have had, how their health was greatly improved, and how you too can make a difference to your own life and health

This book is divided into three sections:

1. Ayurveda in Action. This section demonstrates by the use of real people's stories how the principles of Ayurveda have made a great difference to their health. This section will give you an understanding of the essence of Ayurveda, including the special terms we use.

2. Treating Common Ailments. The core of the book. Here we look at eleven of the most common ailments we see in Ayushakti Clinics, with practical, proven solutions we have to make a real difference ourselves, as well as working directly with Ayushakti clinicians.

3. Diet, Health and the Stages of Life. Insights from my observations and experience into the profound effect our diet has on the state of our health, with reference to the changes we need to be conscious of in the different stages of our lives, from young to old.

Ayurveda in Action

Reading what has actually happened to real people who have used Ayurveda to eliminate disease

is the best way of gaining understanding and confidence in the power we all have to assist the process of returning to health. Before you read these stories, or start using the guidance in the main section, you need to understand some principles we use in Ayurveda that have no equivalent in English, so we use the traditional words. You will find them throughout this book because there is no other way to express some ideas precisely. Becoming familiar with these special terms also opens us to understanding our bodies and health in another way. *

Your Health in Your Hands is a clear guide to using Ayurveda to restore and maintain good health, written by

Dr Smita Naram, a leading Ayurvedic doctor with a wealth of experience to share with all of us.

She begins by telling the stories of patients who have used Ayurveda to restore balanced health to themselves, to give us a clear understanding of how this effective and profound, ancient Indian system of medicine and life works to restore health and well-being. This understanding leads to the core of Your Health in Your Hands, a manual of practical and proven ways in which we ourselves can make a real difference to our health.

It focuses on 11 groups of common health issues which are often seen in Ayushakti clinics; Joint Pain; Skin Disorders and Skin Care; Stress and Depression; Sleep Disorders; Reducing Weight; Diabetes; Reducing High Cholesterol; Balancing High Blood Pressure; Coughs and Colds; Hair Loss and Hair Care; and Common Digestive Disorders. This is followed by Dr Smita Naram's valuable insights into Diet, Health and the Stages of Life, so we can be clear about how our diets need to change according to the stage of life we are living, and shows us how our health is truly in our own hands.

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