

Glossary of Terms

- Acute disease** Any disease with a sudden onset, intense symptoms and brief duration.
- Agni** The digestive fire with the function of regulating digestion, absorption and assimilation.
- Allopathic** The system of medicine that uses treatments that oppose the pathology ie anti-inflammatories to treat inflammation. Also refers to modern scientific medicine.
- Alterative** A herb that alters the chemical state of the blood; blood cleanser.
- Ama** Undigested food, herbs or experiences that create disease forming toxins.
- Amenorrhoea** Absence of menstruation.
- Anabolic** The building phase of metabolism.
- Analgesic** Pain reliever.
- Anthelmintic** Parasite and worm killer.
- Antibiotic** Opposes life and kills pathogenic bacteria.
- Antipruritic** Stops itching
- Antipyretic** Reduces fever
- Antispasmodic** Relieves muscular spasms and contraction.
- Aperient** Mild laxative.
- Aphrodisiac** Tonifies the reproductive system.
- Aromatic** A fragrant, essential oil containing herb that tonifies digestion and reduces flatulence.
- Astringent** A tannin rich herb that dries discharges and reduces leakage.
- Ayurveda** The traditional medical system of India meaning the ‘science of life’.
- Borborygmus** Rumbling sounds from the intestines.
- Carminative** A herb that relieves gas, spasms and helps digestion.
- Cathartic** A strong laxative that causes a complete flushing of the bowel.
- Catabolic** The destructive phase of metabolism.
- Chronic disease** A disease with gradual onset, long-term symptoms and gradual changes.
- Demulcent** A soft and muciligenous herb that protects the mucus membranes.
- Dhatu** One of the seven tissues that gives structure and support to the whole body.
- Dhatu-agni** (also written correctly as dhatvagni) The digestive fire that exists in the tissue membranes and is responsible for digesting the unstable portion of the dhatu into the stable portion. It also separates the waste products, secondary tissue and unstable portion of the next tissue from the stable portion.
- Diaphoretic** A herb that causes sweating.
- Diuretic** A herb that facilitates and increases urination.
- Dosha** One of the three humours called *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*. When balanced they are responsible for good health, but when imbalanced they act as ‘faults’ and can cause illness.
- Dysmenorrhoea** Painful menses.
- Emetic** A herb that induces vomiting.
- Emmenagogue** Encourages menstruation and circulation of blood.
- Expectorant** Encourages coughing and clearing phlegm from the lungs.
- Febrifuge** A herb that reduces fever.
- Haemostatic** Stops bleeding.
- Horripilate** When the body hairs stand on end.
- Hypolipidemic** Reduces blood lipids.
- Kapha** One of the three *doshas* with qualities of earth and water. It is heavy, wet and cold, lives in the stomach and is responsible for nourishing the mucus membranes, bones, joints, heart and memory. It lubricates the organs and joints and binds the whole body together. When healthy it creates love and compassion, when destabilised it creates phlegm, excess weight, lung problems, greed and attachment.

Laxative A herb that causes a mild bowel motion.

Materia medica The materials of medicine. The study of the drugs or substances that are used to treat disease. Commonly used to refer to books that are collections of herbal materials.

Menorrhagia Excessive menstrual bleeding.

Nervine A herb that has an affinity for nourishing and calming the nervous system.

Ojas The essence of all digestion that maintains the inherent immunity and strength of the body. The ultimate result of perfectly digesting *kapha* foods and experiences.

Organoleptic Using the senses to perceive the qualities of matter.

Peristalsis Wave like motions through the channels of the body, notably the colon.

Pitta dosha The humour comprised of water and fire. It is hot, wet and light and its main site is the small intestines. It is responsible for the metabolic processes of the body. When healthy it adds zest, clarity and energy to life but when aggravated it creates burning, inflammation and anger.

Prabhava The unique action of a plant above and beyond its energetic qualities.

Prajnaparadha A crime against wisdom that is a formative factor in disease. Acting against your inner knowledge.

Prakriti The manifest aspect of reality that is expressed in matter, nature and creation. Also used to describe the individual constitution and inherent nature of every person.

Prana The subtle essence of the life force. It travels on the breath and is absorbed from the air, food and nature. It is responsible for vitality and cellular communication. It is the link between the body and the mind. The ultimate result of perfectly digesting *vata* foods and experiences.

Rasa The taste of a substance. The six tastes of sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter and astringent are used in Ayurveda to classify the quality of foods and herbs. It also means the essence of something.

Rasayana A substance that tonifies and nourishes the whole system.

Rejuvenative A substance that tonifies and nourishes the whole system.

Sattva The quality of nature reflected in compassion, light and intelligence.

Sedative A substance that tranquilizes the function of the nervous system.

Shakti Meaning 'energy' and represents the dynamic feminine vitality throughout the universe. The natural and balancing opposite to Shiva.

Stimulant Increases metabolism, circulation and the function of an organ.

Suppuration The formation of pus or fluid leaking from a wound.

Swastha Health

Vasodilator A herb that encourages the relaxation of blood vessels.

Vata The humour made from space and air elements. It is light, dry and cold and resides in the large intestine. It is responsible for all movement in the nervous system, muscles, heart and mind. When out of balance it creates bloating, erratic digestion, constipation and anxiety, when in balance it creates inspirational creativity and flexibility.

Vikruti The current state of someone's health or the present state of imbalance, as opposed to the *prakriti* that is the life-long constitution.

Vipaka The post-digestive energetic effect of the tastes.

Virya The energetics of a herb: hot or cold.

Vulnerary Helps the healing of wounds.