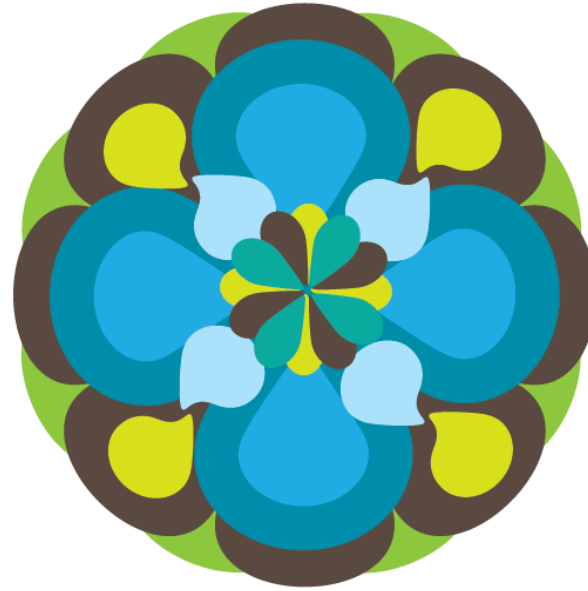




# **Chapter 3: Ayurveda For Holistic Wellbeing**

# Kapha Dosa/ Sleshma: For stability and lubrication



kapha

the energy of lubrication & structure

# Kapha Dosa/ Sleshma: For stability and lubrication

- Kapha is derived from Sanskrit.
- 'Kena jalena phalati nipadhyate iti Kapha' : means that which originates from water while
- "slesma": 'slihyati iti slesma' means that which joins together and brings about cohesion.
- Often Kapha is translated as mucus or phlegm, which is an important part of Kapha, particularly in disease, but Kapha is much more than that. It represents potential energy in the body

# Characteristics of Kapha

- Kapha dosa provides nourishment to all parts of the body and regulates the other two dosas, Pitta and Vâta.
- Kapha provides moistness, oiliness and smoothness to the body organs.
- It lubricates and connects joints and bones, increases libido, strength, enthusiasm, heals wounds, improves immunity, provides energy for mental and physical activities.

# Characteristics of Kapha

- It is responsible for behavioral and psychological changes.
- Kapha is also the primary cause for sleep, lethargy and inertia (tamas).
- When there is an increase in heat due to Pitta or dryness due to Vāta, then Kapha increases the secretion of oily and smooth fluids and protects the tissues from damage.

- There is a corresponding increase in opposing dosas, Pitta and Vāta, if Kapha decreases. This results in damage to the dhātus (tissues) by the heat of Pitta, and accumulation of Vāta causes dryness and lightness in the dhātus, joints, heart and other parts of the body.
- However, in normal conditions when Kapha is in balance, it nourishes and strengthens all the cells, tissues and organs and does not provide space for the flow of Vāta.

## Five types of Kapha according to their locations and functions:

1. Kledaka - that which moistens the food in the stomach to break it up.
2. Avalambaka - that which maintains body fluids and physical stamina; protects and fortifies the heart.
3. Bodhaka - that which controls the taste and sharpens taste perception.
4. Tarpaka - that which ensures the stability of sense organs.
5. Slesaka - that which connects and lubricates the joints and improves their mobility.

## Natural attributes of Kapha

- Kapha is heavy, cold, soft, oily, sweet, firm and viscous in its natural attributes.
- Besides, it is dull, stable, moist and white in appearance.
- People with dominant Kapha dosa have a Kapha-type body makeup.
- People with Kapha constitution usually have an abundance of strength, material wealth, knowledge, power and peace. They usually have a long life-span.



- However, weight of an individual also plays a significant role in this regard. Obesity can neutralize all the good qualities of Kapha dosa and makes one more susceptible to various diseases.

**Table 5: Attributes of *Kapha* and their Effect on Physiology**

	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Physiological Manifestations</b>
1.	<i>Gurutā</i> (Heaviness)	Firm and steady gait; heavy digestion.
2.	<i>Śitalatā</i> (Coolness)	Low appetite and reduced thirst, low perspiration and reduced feeling of heat.
3.	<i>Mṛdutā</i> (Softness)	Pleasing appearance, soft skin and hair, soft manners, soft look in the eyes; cheerful, beautiful; tenderness and clarity of complexion.
4.	<i>Snigdhatā</i> (Smoothness)	Smoothness in body organs and tissues.
5.	<i>Madhuratā</i> (Sweetness)	Increase in quantity of semen.
6.	<i>Sthiratā</i> (Stability or Steadiness)	Slow initiation of actions, slow manifestation of serious illnesses.
7.	<i>Picchilatā</i> (Viscousness or Stickiness)	Firmness, stability and lubrication in tissues and joints; well-built and beautiful.
8.	<i>Dṛḍhatā</i> (Firmness)	Compactness, strength and firmness in the body.
9.	<i>Ghanatā</i> (Denseness)	Plumpness and tendency towards obesity; well-built body and sturdy muscles.
10.	<i>Mandatā</i> (Dullness or Slowness)	Slow in action, lack of physical activities; deliberate thinking.
11.	<i>Ślakṣṇatā</i> (Oiliness)	Oiliness in body organs and tissues.

## Reasons for Kapha aggravation

Kapha is the slowest and steadiest of all the dosas. In Kapha imbalance, following are the major reasons for its aggravation.

1. Dietetics: Excess consumption of sweet, sour (acidic), heavy, oily and fatty foods. Over intake of mutton, fish, salt, sesame, milk and watery substances such as carbonated drinks (soft drinks) and cold refrigerated water. Eating while the previous meal is yet to be digested and overeating also lead to Kapha aggravation.<sup>11</sup>

2. Habits: Noon siesta, lethargy and laziness, lack of exercise and physical activity increase Kapha dosa in the body.
3. Season: Siesta, lethargic attitude and lack of physical activity increase Kapha dosa in the body.
4. Natural tendency: Kapha aggravates naturally in the morning, during first part of the night, after meals and during childhood.
5. Heredity: If diabetes, obesity or allergies run in your family you are more prone to aggravated Kapha dosa.

## Symptoms of aggravated Kapha

1. Physical indications: Laxity in the body organs, sweet taste in the mouth, pale skin, coolness, smoothness, itching, heaviness, stickiness in the malas (body wastes - fecal matter, urine, sweat), a feeling of being wrapped in a wet cloth, to feel as if the affected part is being plastered with some substances, swelling, congestion, sinus, cold, increased mucus secretion from the nose and eyes, slow sensory responses, bronchial asthma, sore throat, cough, diabetes and fluid retention in the tissues.

## Remedies for balancing Kapha

The following remedies can be used to restore Kapha to its normal state.

1. Using pungent, astringent and hot herbal preparations to induce vomiting and increase laxity in the stool.
2. Intake of Kapha pacifying foods those are bitter, pungent, astringent, dry and hot because they can balance the characteristics of Kapha dosa.
3. Intake of food that have Kapha reducing potency, postdigestive effect and prabhāva (action).

4. Intake of old honey and old fermented substances like Ayurvedic herbal āsava and arista.
5. Smoking of medicinal anti-kapha herbs and fasting to reduce weight.
6. Staying warm (dry heat is best), different kinds of fomentation therapies and sudation so as to induce sweating, sun bath, powder (dry) massage and ubatana (smearing herbal pastes on the body).
7. Rigorous exercise, brisk walking, running, sit-ups, high and long jumps, wrestling, swimming and so on.

8. Wearing warm clothes and staying awake till late in the night.

9. Nasya (inhalation of medicines administered nasally).

10. Staying active and keeping away from lethargy and laziness.

11. Anxiety, worry and grief reduce Kapha, but they lead to several other ailments and psychological disorders



- Therapeutic vomiting (vamana) is the best remedy to balance increased Kapha because it clears the vitiated Kapha from the stomach and the chest regions, the primary Kapha sites in the body. However, the medicines used for this process (vamana) must be prepared from pungent and hot substances.

## Symptoms of low level of Kapha and its treatment

- When the level of Kapha is low, the body displays the contrary symptoms of dryness, a persistent burning sensation, a feeling of lacuna (emptiness) in the Kapha locations (lungs, heart, joints and especially head), looseness and laxity in joints, excessive thirst, weakness and lack of sleep. Low Kapha affects the normal functioning of Kapha dosa leading to a reduction in its actions and properties.

## Sâma and Nirâma Kapha

When Kapha gets corrupted with âma (Sâma Kapha), it becomes turbid, dense, thick, sticky and unpleasant to smell. This prevents belching and reduces hunger. In contrast, Nirâma Kapha (without âma) is foamy, condensed, light, odorless and settled. It does not stick in the throat and keeps the mouth clean and fresh

# Kapha and its divisions

**Table 6: Types of *Kapha* - Locations and Functions**

<b>S. No.</b>	<b>Types</b>	<b>Locations</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>Ailments due to vitiation</b>
1.	<i>Kledaka</i>	Stomach	Moistens food and helps in digestion.	Weak and impaired digestion, feeling of heaviness, common cold, nauseous feeling.
2.	<i>Avalambaka</i>	Chest	Energizes limbs, lungs and heart.	Lethargy
3.	<i>Bodhaka</i>	Tongue and throat	Perception of taste.	Impaired taste buds and salivary glands.
4.	<i>Tarpaka</i>	Head	Protects and nourishes the sense organs.	Loss of memory and retardation of sensory activities, general dullness of senses.
5.	<i>Śleṣaka</i>	Bones and joints	Connect bones to joints and lubricate joints to protect, nourish and smoothen their movements.	Pain in the joints and slowing down of their functions.

## Location of Dosas in the body and their positive psychological trait

- Normally all three dosas pervade the entire body, but they keep changing according to seasons, diet, digestive fire in the body and the strength of the alimentary canal, but any one of them is prominent in certain organs and parts of the body and this is known as the specific location (shelter) of that dosa.

<b><i>Doṣa</i></b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Positive Psychological Traits</b>
<i>Vāta</i>	Below the navel region; in the urinary bladder, small and large intestine, pelvic region, thighs, legs and bones.	Imaginative, sensitive, spontaneous, resilient, exhilarated.
<i>Pitta</i>	Between the navel and chest; in the abdomen, digestive organs and excretory organs; in sweat, lymph and blood.	Intellectual, confident, enterprising, joyous.
<i>Kapha</i>	Throat; parts above the throat, head and neck, chest, in the joints, upper portion of abdomen and fat of the body.	Calm, sympathetic, courageous, forgiving, loving.



# KAPHA

## WATER + EARTH

Pitta dosha is governs the digestion of food and ideas.

### PHYSICAL FEATURES

Individuals of a Kapha nature have a predominance of the water element, which is reflected in their full, soft features, and thick, cool, moist skin. Tend to have a stocky build, a large frame, well-lubricated joints, and a well-developed chest. Have a tendency to be overweight. Thick, soft, oily hair that is often wavy and plentiful. The eyes are usually large and attractive, blue or light brown in color, with long, thick lashes. They tend to have large, round faces with full lips and big white teeth.

### SENSITIVITY

Intolerant of cold, damp environments.

### BODY FUNCTION

Tendency towards, colds, congestion, and allergies. Steady appetite with slow but regular bowel movements and minimal urination. Kapha women tend to have regular cycles with little pain and a minimum of premenstrual depression.

### SLEEP CYLES

Kapha types are heavy sleepers, but sometimes they like to sleep too much.

### PERSONALITY & MENTAL ACTIVITY

Easygoing, fun loving, and patient. They speak and move slowly and have a grounded disposition that is not easily shaken. Their calm and reliable nature makes them ideal managers and caretakers.

**ELEMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF KAPHA:  
COOL, WET, OILY, HEAVY, DENSE, STATIC, STABLE**

# Prakariti: Know Your Constitution



- The constitution of any body type is called prakariti in Sanskrit, a term meaning nature.'
- Each individual is born with a unique body type determined by the dominance of one or more of the three dosas.
- This is referred to as Prakariti or the body constitution of an individual.
- According to Ayurveda, prakariti plays a very important role in a person's health, well-being and to diagnose diseases in an individual.

- It helps to determine the most beneficial diet and lifestyle that an individual should follow.
- Diagnosis of disease and the type of treatment to be followed are also dictated by prakariti.
- An individual's constitution is determined on the basis of body structure, nature, character, attributes and a wide variety of factors

- Accordingly, there are thus seven possible types of prakætis(8):

1. Våta

2. Pitta

3. Kapha

4. Våta-Pitta

5. Pitta-Kapha

6. Våta-Kapha

7. Såma (Equal effect of all the three dosas)

Table 7: Characteristics of Different *Prakṛtis*\*

S.N.	Characteristics	<i>Vāta</i>	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Kapha</i>
1.	Body frame	Short height; light and thin build; stiffness or shivering in the body; physically weak.	Medium frame, medium build with moderate strength and endurance; softness of muscles and bones.	Tall frame; symmetrical, beautiful and strong body; solid, powerful build or tendency to gain weight easily.
2.	Skin and external appearance	Dryness in the body, roughness on face, nails, teeth, sole of feet and palms; skin color brown or black.	Softness in the body; red hot face; fair or ruddy skin, often freckled with moles, warts and wrinkles.	Cool, smooth, thick, oily, pale white, glowing skin.
3.	Hair	Dry, split-ends, easily breakable hair; less dry and rough hair on body and beard.	Blood, light brown or reddish tone; normal to less hair, prematurely gray or bald.	Thick, curly, long, black and beautiful hair.
4.	Other body parts	Prominent veins; a crackling sound produced during walking, stretching of joints or limbs; cracked soles and palms.	Blackness (pigmentation) in body parts, nails, eyes, tongue, soles and palms.	Prominent (raised) forehead, chest and arms; due to obesity, unsymmetrical and fatty abdomen, thighs or buttocks.
5.	Eyes	Dry, dull or sleepy eyes.	Small or reddish eyes, less eye lashes.	Big and attractive eyes, reddish at outer corners; thick eye lashes.
6.	Sleep and dreams	Light, scanty, interrupted sleep; fearful and insecure; fearful dreams.	Moderate sleep, little but sound; fiery, angry, violent dreams.	Heavy, prolonged, sound sleep; tranquil nature; pleasant, nature loving dreams.
7.	Food and digestive power	Variable and scanty appetite, irregular hunger and digestion, easily skips meals; aversion to cold weather and cold food.	Good, excessive and unbearable appetite, takes large amounts of food, strong digestive fire, sharp hunger and thirst, cannot skip meals, feels ravenously hungry; aversion to hot food and hot weather.	Slow but steady appetite, slowly takes food many times in a day in small quantity, slow digestion, mild hunger, scanty thirst; interested in oily, fatty foods, heavy meals and fast foods.

8.	Gait, temperament and memory	Walks quickly; changeable; unpredictable, very active; changing mood and liking towards others; excitability, fickle-minded, short-tempered, vivacious; quick to grasp, also quick to forget, makes quick decisions without thought; runs away from difficult situations; very talkative.	Intense short-tempered, tendency to be angry, moderate activities; has a determined stride while walking; aggressive, lacks patience, irritable, adventurous, enterprising, likes challenges; good sharp memory and intellect.	Lethargic, slow to grasp but good long-term memory, slow decision making; careless, slow but sincere and graceful in action or works with steady energy; tolerant, patient; slow and steady walk; relaxed personality, slow to anger, calm, cool, tranquil, affectionate, forgiving, possessive.
9.	Mind and thoughts	Deformity in the mind and body, diseases occur quickly; poor mental state; mental and physical energy comes in bursts. Displays bursts of emotions that are short-lived and quickly forgotten; lack of knowledge, restless and impatient.	Excessive negativity in thoughts; moderate physical and mental state; diseases occur at normal pace but symptoms manifest quickly.	Calm mind, does not think much, but positive approach; even in severe diseases symptoms manifest slowly.
10.	Sex desire	Unstable sex desire (sometimes more or sometimes less).	Reduced sexual desire or low reproductive capability.	High sexual desire.
11.	General susceptibility to diseases	Bronchial asthma, cough, cold, sore throat; supraclavicular diseases (disease of eyes, ear, nose); loss of appetite, indigestion, chronic constipation; piles, prolapse of anus, rectum and urinary bladder diseases; mental disorders, loss of memory; tendon disorders (musculo-skeletal disorders), body edema and joints pain, muscle spasms or cramps.	Sour burps (acidity), bitter taste, indigestion, loss of appetite, peptic ulcers, anemia, jaundice; skin diseases (eczema, leucoderma, rashes, acne); eye diseases and poor eyesight; diseases due to heat stroke; mental imbalance (fear, anger, fascination, hostility and so on).	Loss of appetite, decreased digestive fire, nausea, tastelessness; heaviness, cough, cold, congested sinus, bronchial asthma, allergies; loss of memory; lethargy, unproportionate body and obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, depression, chronic sluggishness.

**Table 8: Method to Determine Your *Prakṛti* (Body-Type) Based on General Characteristics**

S. No.	Characteristics	<i>Vāta</i>	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Kapha</i>
1.	Body frame	Small frame or thin and weak body <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium frame <input type="checkbox"/>	Tall frame, powerful built (gain weight easily) <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Types of hair	Dry <input type="checkbox"/>	Normal or less hair growth (reddish or brownish hair) <input type="checkbox"/>	Thick, curly, oily hair <input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Eyes	Dry, sleepy eyes <input type="checkbox"/>	Small and reddish eyes <input type="checkbox"/>	Big and attractive eyes <input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Skin	Dry and rough <input type="checkbox"/>	Soft or reddish <input type="checkbox"/>	Oily and tender <input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Mental activity	Impatient, restless <input type="checkbox"/>	Sharp intellect, perfectionist and aggressive <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady, stable, full of patience <input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Memory	Quick to grasp, quick to forget <input type="checkbox"/>	Sharp memory <input type="checkbox"/>	Good long-term memory <input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Gait	Fast and quick <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate speed and determined walk <input type="checkbox"/>	Slow and steady gait <input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Reaction to stress	Anxious, worried and nervous <input type="checkbox"/>	Anger, easily irritated <input type="checkbox"/>	Not easily ruffled, stubborn <input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Sleep	Light-interrupted sleep <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate sleep, little but sound <input type="checkbox"/>	Heavy, prolonged, sound sleep <input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Effect of weather	Aversion to cold weather <input type="checkbox"/>	Aversion to hot weather <input type="checkbox"/>	Aversion to cool, damp weather <input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Temperament	Quickly changeable, fast speaking <input type="checkbox"/>	Slowly changeable <input type="checkbox"/>	Steady, stable and not changeable <input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Hunger	Irregular <input type="checkbox"/>	Sharp <input type="checkbox"/>	Slight, can easily skip meals <input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Body parts	Prominent veins, a crackling sound produced while walking <input type="checkbox"/>	Profusion of moles and black spots, freckles and wrinkles <input type="checkbox"/>	Fatty (obese), bulging abdomen, unproportionate body. <input type="checkbox"/>
TOTAL		w <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>