




vaidyagrāma
। सर्वे भवेन्तु सुखिनः।

What is the Vision of vaidyagrama?

At vaidyagrama we believe in “Authentic Ayurveda for Universal Well-Being”. We care for your well-being; we care for the permanence of your well-being. We would like to help you be free of stress not just in our healing village but also later back at home or in office; not just today but tomorrow and the day after.

Ayurveda can play a very important role here, for long term solutions are its forte. Hence we attempt to help you understand the state of your health and help you decide the right combination of treatments/oils/herbs that you need – Ayurveda believes that every individual is truly unique and hence you deserve to get what you really need.

What is Ayurveda?

Ayurveda is made up of two words “*Ayus*” and “*veda*.” *Ayus* means life and *veda* means knowledge. So it means that Ayurveda is the knowledge of life and longevity. It is a way of life which deals with not only the body and the mind but also the human spirit and consciousness.

It is science, philosophy, and spirituality all put together. It contains knowledge on the healing process. It talks about the characteristics of long and happy life and also about short and unhappy life. The goal of Ayurveda is to keep the healthy person in a healthy state and to cure the person when he gets disease.

You say your Ayurveda is authentic – Why is that?

We attempt to be true to the classical Ayurveda texts – right from the design, the colours used in the treatment rooms,

the positioning of the treatment table, the treatment table itself, the herbs and oils used, the food that is given, the way the treatments are given – we have consciously made an effort to explore the original Ayurveda texts and bring out what lay hidden between the lines. We do not say this is unique or original; we have only made an honest attempt to stick to the original texts and not compromise the principles of Ayurveda.

We attempted to be as authentic as possible, not merely in the use of herbs and treatments but also in the creation of an optimum healing environment which facilitates the whole healing process. We have not tampered with the core principles of Ayurveda; we have not diluted the oils by adding perfumes; we have not sugar-coated the internal medicines – they all remain the same, for we do not want to compromise.

All we have done is improve the delivery system – to improve the ambience in which you receive your treatments; make you feel more at home; encouraged our physicians and therapists wherein their very presence and mere touch is highly therapeutic; we have made a sincere effort to ensure that your experience is truly unique, and stays with you even after you go back home.

Can Ayurveda be practised without absolutely any compromise on its principles or in its true form? If not then to what extent does such compromise take place?

Ayurveda can certainly be practised without compromise; in fact, it has to be practised without compromise if the patient is to get the full benefit of the treatment. It is important to



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note that very often people tend to think that the Ayurveda practitioners are rigid and unnecessarily stick to age old practices that are not very scientific, and which need to be modified keeping in mind present day realities. We must emphasize here that the beneficiary is the community. Most Ayurveda physicians insist on adhering to their instructions only in the interest of the patient – it is not to protect Ayurveda or to prevent Ayurveda from being compromised.

The Indian knowledge systems are very clear that they need not be protected at the cost of benefit to the user or receiver.

Even as there is a procedure described for any laboratory experiment or even a minor surgical operation which needs to be strictly adhered to, to not only ensure success but also prevent side effects, similarly there are clear procedures laid down in the Ayurveda texts on how to manage a patient. It is certainly very important that these procedures are strictly adhered to in the interest of the patient.

Facilities

The facilities at vaidyagrama include the following -

- Activity halls - We have 2 Activity halls namely *Mandapam & Brahmakamalam* where prayers are conducted in the morning and evening; yoga nidra in the afternoons; satsang in the evenings, cooking classes and group dinners once in a week
- Covered walkway - A covered walkway connects all the patient movement areas enabling easy & protected movement for the patients

Diet food

- Herbal drinking water - At vaidyagrama, we provide warm medicated herbal water for you to drink; we believe this is better for you than the bottled water.
- The herbs in the water make the water safer for drinking, and also aids in the digestive process
- Herbal tea - Twice a day, we provide an alternate herbal drink (containing ginger, jaggery, basil etc.) which is healthier and quite tasty. Many of our patients have chosen to go back home and use this herbal drink rather than the tea/coffee on which they were earlier dependent.
- Laundry (non- chemical, natural cleansers used)
- Library for essential reading
- Group lunch on Wednesdays
- Patient blocks - There are 12 patient blocks/ Illams in vaidyagrama; each Illam/block has 4 patient units and 2 treatment units
- Patient units - There are totally 48 patient units in vaidyagrama; each unit has a foyer, bedroom, bathroom and balcony
- Prayers or Chanting of mantras - morning and evening
- Satsang or evening discussion centered on Ayurveda and other Indian knowledge systems
- Treatment units - There are totally 12 treatment units in vaidyagrama; each unit has 2 treatment rooms with attached bathrooms; and also a medicine pantry
- Wi-Fi - Internet in and around Mandapam (at nominal cost) – Its better to keep the Wifi usage to minimum,

for better healing experience

Facilities at vaidyagrama do not include the following:

- **Air-conditioning** - At vaidyagrama, we have adopted an eco-friendly mode of construction; and hence the temperature inside the buildings is around 5 degrees less than the outside temperature. This ensures that it never gets too warm inside the rooms; and as the trees and shrubs around the buildings grow, it is even more pleasant. Thus we have avoided the need for providing air-conditioning in the rooms in vaidyagrama.
- **Bottled water** - However if you absolutely insist, bottled water is made available, with your vaidya's knowledge.
- **Tea / Coffee** - We believe that it is important to learn to live life without too many dependencies and hence do not serve tea/coffee at vaidyagrama.
- **Television sets**- We believe that the patients need maximum physical and mental rest; and hence we have deliberately not provided for television sets in vaidyagrama, as this certainly can affect the treatment adversely.
- **Tissue paper** - We do not provide tissue paper in keeping with our desire to be eco-friendly.
- **Toilet paper** - We would like to be eco-friendly and not waste paper; hence the patient bathrooms provide for a health faucet whereby you can use water to clean yourself. However if you definitely need toilet paper, we will arrange the same for you.

- **Wi-fi/ Internet Connectivity in Rooms** - We believe that it is important to take maximum rest, and use of the laptop / internet / email for extended periods of time does not help either the treatment or you. Hence we have provided for internet connectivity only near the activity centre and usually not in any of the rooms.

Advice during Treatments at Vaidyagrama...

Why does Ayurveda place so much emphasis on factors like diet and lifestyle in treatment?

- The individual, rather than the patient, is an integral factor in the healing process and his/her full cooperation is essential to ensure the success of the treatment. Many diseases occur when one goes against "nature" – to put it better, when one acts to the detriment of the needs of one's body and mind on a regular basis.
- Thus even as a much abused car will eventually break down, a much abused body will also eventually succumb to the wear and tear of extreme tension. Even as a car requires daily and periodic maintenance, so does the body need to be looked after on a daily, monthly, seasonal and yearly basis. Even if the car cannot run on water or other liquids save what is specifically prescribed for the particular car model, so will the individual not sustain an excessive and indiscriminate use of junk food as a diet.



- Even as a car gets overheated when used continuously without any rest, so does the body get overheated and exhausted if not given periodic intervals of rest. Thus regulated diet and lifestyle are very important if one is to attain and maintain balance or harmony within and without.

Why is “*pathya*” (regulated diet) given so much importance in Ayurveda? – Is it not very difficult to stick to an Ayurveda diet?

- The importance of pathya has been explained in the previous answer. The concept of an “Ayurveda diet” is quite misleading. For, Ayurveda says that “there is nothing in this world that is not medicine (or food)”. Further Ayurveda says “there is nothing in this world that is absolutely good or absolutely bad”.
- Thus the important thing is to become fully aware of one’s own needs in the background of variables like place of residence, climate, food items natural to the particular place, one’s digestive potential etc., and to act accordingly. Thus what may be good for one person may not be good for another person in the context of all the involved variables. Another important point in this context is the rule that “one must exercise moderation in everything one eats or does” – otherwise even nectar can turn poisonous and thus belay its very purpose.
- However for the purpose of easy understanding, and based on some general rules, certain food items are normally classified as difficult to digest, and since

most people do not have a very good digestive system, these food items are normally avoided. But it must be emphasized, that if an individual has a very good digestive system and if such a food can be beneficial to him/her, then it will certainly be advised. Thus there is no such thing as “Ayurveda diet” and very often most of the food we eat in a normal day is quite alright, and only small changes need to be made where necessary. For a patient, till the treatment is over or the disease is cured, the “pathya” will be applied more strictly, for here, the importance is given to the “treatment / medicines” rather than the food.

- The patient gets the greater part of his/her nutritional requirements from the treatment/medicines and hence it is important that the digestive system keeps its focus on the medicines and is not distracted by unnecessary food (which is mostly difficult to digest).

But will I get the necessary nutrition from the food you prescribe? To me, it seems rather insufficient in terms of proteins and vitamins.

- As mentioned above, you will certainly get all the desired nutrition from the prescribed food, and more importantly from the prescribed medicines.
- The food may seem insufficient by itself but in combination with the treatment and medicines, your body is definitely being well cared for.

Does Ayurveda say NO to non-vegetarian food and alcohol?

- Ayurveda does not say NO to non-vegetarian food and alcohol. The nutritional and therapeutic qualities of these substances are described in great detail in the Ayurveda texts, and in certain ailments, they are prescribed as medicine. Thus it is quite apparent that Ayurveda is not against non-vegetarian food and alcohol. However as described earlier, these substances generally fall in the category of “difficult to digest” food and hence they are not normally recommended, especially during treatment.
- Further, at the mental level, Ayurveda describes 3 states of mind namely
 1. *sattva* or the pure state,
 2. *rajas* or the pro-active state and
 3. *tamas* or the indolent state.
- Ayurveda also says that the most subtle essence of the ingested food after digestion, goes on to form the mind. Generally, most non-vegetarian food and alcohol fall into the category of rajas and tamas and hence regular/excessive intake of these substances can lead to the affection of/reduction in the *sattva* or pure state of mind which will consequently lead to derangement of the thinking process, difficulty in comprehension, increased tension, emotional outbursts, restlessness, excessive sleep etc. based on the level to which one is affected.

- Since according to Ayurveda, the mind and body are closely related and all diseases fall into the category of psycho-somatic, the body will also consequently be affected.
- Hence as a general rule, Ayurveda advocates vegetarianism and abstinence from alcohol. If at all one would like to indulge one’s taste buds, these substances can be consumed “in moderation” on rare occasions, again keeping in mind one’s digestive capacity.
- During treatment at vaidyagrama and for the recommended period thereafter (as advised by your physicians), non vegetarian food and alcohol should definitely not be consumed.

What is the relevance of restrictions like total abstinence from exercise, talking, walking, cohabitation, exposure to sun, wind etc. – how important is this during the treatment process?

- Dietary & lifestyle regimen play a key role in the entire treatment process. Ayurveda very clearly states that “all patients and all those who undergo treatment” should strictly follow prescribed regimen in order to get maximum benefit. Several reasons can be attributed to the need for lifestyle regimen. The primary among them is the need to get total physical & mental rest which is what we do not give ourselves.
- Even when we go on vacations, we actually try to do all the activities that we are unable to do on a normal

working day, & are ultimately more exhausted than ever before. Thus we never give our body and mind a break and this is why rest is so important in the process of regaining the natural harmony.

- We must also remember that the treatments we undergo are very intensive and can be compared to a major surgery and hence it is absolutely essential to ensure that the treatment is completed within the prescribed period without a break which may be caused by any untoward happening.
- Hence it is always better to be absolutely secluded during the treatment to minimise the risk of infection or any other problem.

Will not the sudden shift from the active to the passive mode create agitation and emotional turmoil which would then lead to the side effects of mental turmoil as described above?

- It is true that some patients can experience intense bouts of restlessness leading to different types of emotional outbursts due to being subjected to prolonged spells of inactivity for probably the first time in their lives. This is why it is important to have a physician at close call during the period of the treatment so that he/she can continually monitor the patient and spend the necessary time required to help the patient to slowly come to terms with the inactivity, and at the same time ensuring that there is no blockage of any emotional release.

- It is extremely important here to have total faith in your physician and his/her healing abilities at both the physical and emotional levels as this will ease the pain and turmoil considerably.

Please specify each of the restrictions and the side effects that can occur by violation of the restrictions.

The Ayurveda texts clearly describe the probable side effects that can occur by violating the prescribed regimen. Please do remember that it is not absolutely compulsory that all these side effects occur in everyone who violates the regimen. It is only that there is a greater probability for occurrence of these problems in all those who violate the dietary and lifestyle regimen and that is why these restrictions need to be strictly implemented to ensure that the patient gets the best treatment and consequently maximises the benefit. Briefly put, they are as follows:

- Excessive talking gives rise to insomnia, headache, piercing pain in the temples and ear, obstruction in ear, dryness in the mouth, palate and throat, defects of vision, thirst, fever, feeling of darkness, lockjaw, stiffness in the carotid regions, need to spit often, pain in the chest and sides, hoarseness of voice, hiccups and breathlessness.
- Too much of sleep and travelling in vehicles will lead to laxity in big and small joints, pain particularly piercing one in the jaw, nose, ear and head, irritation in abdomen, gurgling sound in the abdomen, obstruction in the heart and senses, pain in the buttocks, sides, groins, scrotum, waist and back;

weakness in joints, shoulder and neck, distress in the body, swelling in the feet, numbness, tingling sensation etc.

- Walking can cause pain in the feet, shanks, thighs, knees, groins, buttocks and back; weakness in legs, piercing pain, cramps in the calf muscles, body-ache, distress in the shoulder, dilatation of veins and arteries, breathlessness, cough etc.
- Excessive sitting will lead to the same problems as those while travelling in a vehicle and in addition, giddiness, nausea and immobility may develop.
- Intake of food during indigestion and before the previous meal has been digested will lead to dryness of mouth, flatulence, colic, piercing pain, thirst, lassitude, vomiting, diarrhoea, fainting, fever, tenesmus and food poisoning.
- Indulging in an irregular and unwholesome diet will lead to loss of desire for food, debility, abnormal complexion, itching, eczema, lassitude and disorders caused by vitiated Vata such as dysentery, piles etc.
- Intake of uncooked food will cause the production of toxins, vomiting, fever etc.
- Day sleep can lead to aggravation of Kapha and its complications like enlargement of the spleen, anemia, edema etc, loss of appetite, indigestion, loss of digestive fire, feeling of wetness; paleness, itching, eczema, burning sensation, vomiting, body-ache, heart-block, dullness, drowsiness, excessive sleep, appearance of nodules, debility, smearing in eyes,

palate etc. There can also be complications of jaundice etc. by day sleep.

- Indulgence in copulation can lead to instant loss of strength, lassitude in the thighs; pain in the head, pelvis, anus, genitals, groins, thighs, knees, shanks and feet, palpitation in the heart, pain in the eyes, laxity in body parts, genital bleeding, cough, breathlessness, feebleness of voice, weakness in the waist, scrotal swelling, retention of flatus, faeces and urine, dullness, trembling, deafness and depression. There can also occur life threatening diseases like convulsions and hemiplegia, a feeling as though consciousness is fleeing or pain as if the rectum is being torn or a feeling as though hot smoke is coming out of the genitals or as if the mind is going into darkness.
- By suppressing the natural urges like need to pass flatus, urine, faeces etc. the Vata moves in the upward direction causing trouble to the entire body.
- Mental turmoil like a fit of anger agitates Pitta and produces Pitta originated problems like thirst, burning sensation etc.; grief causes a distracted state of mind.
- The use of cold water and other cold things tends to aggravate the Vata and brings on an aching pain in the limbs, feeling of fullness of stomach, distension of abdomen and shivering.
- Undue exposure to the sun and wind produces fever and skin discolouration.

It is actually said that these restrictions are applicable for not just the duration of the treatment, but for double the period after the treatment or till the disease is completely cured, whichever is later.

Can you briefly describe to me the concept of treatment according to Ayurveda?

Ayurveda primarily describes treatments to be of two types namely *samana* or pacificatory treatment and *sodhana* or purificatory treatment. The former type looks at gently pacifying the aggravated doshas (and disease) by the intake of relevant medicines and mild external treatments including oil application. Here the increased doshas are either subsided or naturally expelled through the excretory channels.

In *sodhana* treatment, the aggravated or vitiated doshas are deliberately brought into the alimentary canal and then forcibly expelled by either emesis (vomiting), purgation or enema based on the nature of the dosha that is aggravated. The preferred method of treatment according to the Ayurveda texts is “*sodhana*”, for the complete expulsion of the accumulated toxins would mean that the root cause is being treated and would ensure that the problem does not recur provided the patient takes sufficient care.

Both these treatments are very elaborate and need to be done with utmost care – this is especially true of the purificatory treatments. It is partly due to the intensity of the purificatory treatments that the pacificatory treatment is greatly preferred today where the risks are far less and the

restrictions are more relaxed as compared to the purificatory treatments.

Can the effect of these treatments be measured by modern scientific methods?

It is not easy to explain the effects of these treatments in scientific parlance. This is mainly because the indigenous thought process and the western scientific thought process look at the same individual from two entirely different standpoints. As yet, the two systems stand on two opposite sides of a river and are yet to find a common meeting point wherein the foundational principles, categories, classifications etc. of both systems are given due and equal respect. However there have been efforts by some scientists to study the effect of some of these treatments on the human body.

How long will the treatment normally take to show full effect?

This is entirely dependent on the individual patient – the nature of the problem, the chronicity of the problem, the nature of the associated problems, the intensity with which the patient follows all the advice of the physician during and after the treatment for the requisite period, and also the astrological time cycle which is affecting the patient.

Generally it is seen that most patients respond positively within 3 months after completion of the treatment. The extent of cure is dependent on all the above mentioned factors. It takes 3 months or 3 lunar cycles to see the benefit primarily because the body needs time to get

accustomed to the intensive cleansing that it has undergone and to get back into its normal rhythm.

Since the treatment is aimed at total rejuvenation of the entire body, mind and soul, it would be interesting to study the effect of the treatment on a whole range of factors covering all the systems of the body.

Thus it is extremely important to continue the internal medicines, external oil application (where advised), and diet and lifestyle restrictions as advised by the physician for the suggested duration to get the maximum benefit.

In some patients, the benefit may not be seen even after three months either due to greater damage having occurred or due to improper diet and movement and not following the physician's advice. Please do remember that it is your health that is most important and hence please adhere to the instructions given, and wherever and whenever not possible, please take the permission of your physician before violating any instructions.

Why is the course of treatment of such a long duration – cannot the duration be cut down considerably? This will also make it more accessible to more number of people.

Let us explain this by an example – if your house has not been cleaned for several years (or even months), it will be fully covered with dust and grime; the paint may have begun peeling off the walls; there will be cobwebs all over the place; there are chances of clogging in the plumbing lines especially if the water used has a high salt content; in

all probability, your house would have become a home to several insects.

If, on one day, you suddenly decide to take on the task of repairing and cleaning your house, most probably you will find that you need several days to get the entire place cleaned and dressed up; most certainly one or two sessions of cleaning will have absolutely no effect and can even be disastrous for as we always find out, any repair work will invariably result in hitherto unknown problems being uncovered and hence unless the work is undertaken and completed in one stretch, half-hearted efforts can have the opposite effect.

If the above picture is clear, we can apply the same to the human body. A course of treatment is looking at uncovering and cleaning the toxins accumulated over an extended period of neglect, and hence one or two or even eight to ten sessions may not have the desired results.

Hence it is very important to approach the task systematically – thus, first the body has to be prepared for the cleansing process, then the actual cleansing has to be done based on need, and then time needs to be given for the effect of the cleansing to be felt – this is a very important phase. Any neglect shown during this period can undo the entire effect of the treatment.

It is important that one listens and faithfully follows the advice given by one's physician regarding the course of treatment and the restrictions to be observed during this period.



I have heard of treatments like dhara and panchakarma – why am I not able to get those in a duration of time like 7 or 14 days or 1 day?

The concept of the Panchakarmas and intensive oil therapies in Ayurveda is based on the bio-rhythms or natural time cycles that each of us go through. Simply put, the treatments are normally done in multiples of 7 days and the optimum duration is 35 days – again this is based on the physician's understanding of the need of each patient.

All these treatments work at a very deep level within the human body and psyche and thus, to experience the actual benefit of these treatments, it is important that one go through it for the prescribed period. Even as a major surgery in the western medicine hospital demands a preparatory stage initially and is followed by a recuperative phase post-surgery, similarly these intensive treatments also have three phases namely a preparatory phase, the main treatment phase and the post-treatment or recuperative phase.

Unless these are strictly adhered to, one cannot be assured of any real benefit and in fact, one cannot be sure whether there may be any side effects too.

Hence to reiterate, the time cycles are clearly prescribed along with the mode of giving the treatment and the dietary and lifestyle restrictions to be followed during and after the treatment, and it is best to follow this as it is without any compromise to ensure that one gets the maximum benefit.

Why are you not doing a hard massage?

Almost all the different Ayurveda oil therapies are primarily revolving around the specially prescribed medicated oil rather than the “actual act of massage”. The focus is on rubbing the oil in gently and allowing the oil and the herbs in the oil to do the work rather than the actual act of massage. Please do remember that normally a “hard massage” gives pleasure at the sensual level which is mostly temporary - while the effect that the “Ayurveda treatment” is looking to give you is deeper and long lasting. Having said this, there are occasions where our physicians advise the therapists to give deeper treatments based on the necessity of the situation.

There is a type of treatment in Ayurveda that looks at manipulating the marmas or vital points on the body.

There are 108 vital points on the body which are virtual power centers controlling a whole range of functions and activities depending on their location and importance. Treatments where the emphasis is on the manipulation of the marma points can involve hard massage over shorter time periods – but here the treatment is done by a knowledgeable physician rather than a therapist for this treatment can be extremely dangerous if not done by an experienced person.

Why are you not allocating more therapists to work on me for a single session of treatment rather than just one therapist?

The number of therapists for a treatment session is decided by the physicians. Normally, for a course of abhyanga or

simple oil application, one therapist works on the patient. Please do remember that in the session of abhyanga, the emphasis is on the application of oil rather than the act of massage. In abhyanga, it is the oil (and the herbs in the oil) that is actually working rather than the massage and hence it is not really necessary to have more than one person working on you.

In a treatment like pizhichil, 3-5 therapists will work on you simultaneously. Each therapist will be working on one side of your body and will focus on squeezing the warm medicated oil specifically onto the selected part. Here again, the emphasis is on the act of squeezing rather than the act of massage.

In sirodhara, 2 therapists will work simultaneously. One will be engaged in the act of moving the pot of oil slowly and evenly over the forehead allowing the oil to drip down while the other will collect the oil and pour it back into the pot. If the sirodhara is done alone, sometimes a third therapist is engaged in application of oil all over the body of the patient. Many a time, sirodhara is done in conjunction with pizhichil and on some such occasions, there can even be unto seven therapists working together on the patient in a single session.

Thus, as may be seen, different treatments have different requirements. Please do remember that your physician is conscious of your individual requirement and will make the necessary arrangements accordingly. Where necessary, he/she may even depute two therapists for the simple abhyanga.

Can I not be given two treatments every day and thus reduce the prescribed time period by half? In this way, I will also be able to get over my boredom to some extent. Further will I not get additional benefit by going through two treatment sessions every day?

This question is akin to asking whether intake of excess nutritional food (more than one can consume) at every meal time will contribute more to one's health – in all probability, the effect will be just the opposite. Or eating food before the previous meal has been digested. Even as your vehicle cannot accelerate beyond a certain point, your body cannot work overtime beyond a certain limit.

Hence there is no use trying to rush the treatment by taking additional sessions every day. You need to give your body time to absorb the therapeutic effects of the treatment – two sessions a day will not necessarily give this benefit except in certain conditions. As mentioned earlier, the entire effort of the treatment is to keep pace with your natural body cycle and to bring your body back to its natural state of harmony.

Why are you telling me that my immunity power decreases during the course of the treatment?

Like any major surgical procedure, the Ayurveda treatments too are very intensive and need to be done very carefully to ensure that the patient is not subject to any side effects during/after the treatment. The Ayurveda texts say – The patient should be taken care of with all efforts just like a young (just laid) egg or a vessel filled with oil (to its brim) protecting him/her from all hazards and risks.

During any service procedure, the machine is temporarily not working during the cleaning process, and even after the cleaning, it is normally advised to take it easy and let the machine slowly build up its capacity. Even the computer systems and servers are “temporarily down” during the process of housekeeping.

Similarly too, during the treatment, the different systems of the body are functioning at their minimal level to prevent complete shut-off and to enable greater and more effective cleansing. If at this time, the body is lightly abused or the mind briefly traumatised, this would directly and immediately affect the treatment, and can create complications – hence it is important to ensure that one gets total physical and mental rest during the treatment and for a certain duration after the treatment.

After the treatment is over, one should slowly build up one’s strength and functioning capacity through a very strict diet and lifestyle, and thus return to full functioning over a period of three months or as advised by the physician.

Why does Ayurveda speak about the importance of spirituality and the strength of faith in the healing process? What is the effect it has on me at a spiritual level?

Ayurveda is a holistic system which believes that one has to give not only treatment for the body and mind but also food for the soul which is when the healing process becomes complete and more effective. It does not matter what spiritual path one has adopted – what matters is to be attuned to the spirit. Becoming spiritual is also a means to

calm the agitated or indolent mind and to bring mental peace which greatly contributes to physical health.

Faith is extremely important for any medical system to succeed. Ayurveda, while describing the qualities of the good patient, clearly states that such a one who follows all the instructions of the physician without demur for the prescribed period is the ideal patient or “Bhishakvashya”.

This is the reason the concept of a family physician is so important. One needs to develop confidence in that one physician with whom one feels most comfortable and then have total faith in his/her healing capacity. In such a person, the treatment works better and faster.

Fee structure at vaidyagrama

- The cost of single accommodation plus simple diet vegetarian food is US\$ 35 per person per day
- The cost of shared accommodation (two per room) plus simple diet vegetarian food is US\$ 25 per person per day
- The cost of accommodation, treatment, medicines during treatment, consultations and simple diet vegetarian food together varies between US\$ 90 and US\$ 145 per person per day
- The above cost also includes access to the following activities at vaidyagrama - morning and evening prayers, satsang or discussions, yoga nidra sessions, cooking sessions, weekly community lunches and any other such programs that may be organized from time to time

- The above cost does not include the cost of incidentals like laundry, telephone, internet, airport transfers, take-home medicines and other miscellaneous expenditure that will be billed at actuals

Can you explain what is the difference in the Treatment at vaidyagrama if the rate is between 90\$ and 145\$, if everybody has only one treatment per day?

- The treatments and medicines/oils used for each patient is dependent on the physician's assessment of the patient's need. As you are aware, we use more than 400 different herbs as well as more than 100 different medicated oils - the true benefit to the patient is derived only when the appropriate combination of herbs/oils are used; and this depends on the physician's assessment of the patient's condition
- Many a time, while we believe that all is well with us, the same is not true; when the treatment commences, then some of these "hidden" problems come out (many a time the patient is not even aware of these hidden problems) - this is true for most patients who come to us and then those problems need to be addressed
- It is not about whether treatments are given once or twice a day - it is completely depending on the patient's medical need that the treatments are determined; there are occasions when patients are given 2 treatments a day

- The variation in cost is dependent on primarily the type of treatment that is selected to be given; and the type of herbs and oils that are going to be used for the duration you are here

If I do not take treatment on particular days, will I still be charged?

- vaidyagrama is a hospital; NOT a hotel. Hence if a patient does not take treatment against the advice of the physicians, then he/she will still be charged
- If a patient decides to leave the hospital for a few hours and does not come back in time to take the treatment at the prescribed time, vaidyagrama or the physicians will not be held responsible and the full charge will be applicable
- However, due to medical reasons, if the physicians decide not to give treatment on certain days to a patient, then the appropriate amount will be reduced for those days

What is the check-in and check-out time in vaidyagrama?

- if a patient takes treatment whether on the day of admission or discharge, both are treated as a full days
- if a patient checks in after 6pm on day of admission and checks out before 6am on day of discharge, neither days are not billed
- if a patient checks in after 8pm on day of admission and checks out after 10am on day of discharge, it is



How am I expected to follow the lifestyle, diet and other routines that you tell me are useful for maintaining my health in today's world where I am a working person and have very little time to spare?

Where there is a will there's a way. Ayurveda talks about self-empowerment leading to self-transformation. This means that the individual has a very important role to play in the healing process. The physician and the medicines help to a certain extent. But if the problem is to be completely rooted out, the patient has to play the dominant role.

In pursuit of material gains, we often forget the need to look after our health. We must not forget that without health, the material comforts cannot be truly enjoyed. Hence it is imperative that we be ready to do anything that will help to create and maintain health.

How do I deal with factors like pollution and stress which contribute to my ill-health and over which I have absolutely no control?

External factors have a limited role to play in the health or ill-health of the individual. During heavy rains, if you are properly protected, you will continue to remain dry. Similarly, if you take necessary steps to bolster your immune system and look after your health on a day-to-day basis, then a protective shield is built around you, which is impenetrable to all the pollution that surrounds you.

This is why you see that though everyone is exposed to the pollution, only some are actually affected – others

have a stronger system which is able to sidetrack the effects of the external pollution.

As for stress, this is self-created. Unless one is able to realise one's priorities and work in accordance with them, stress will continually build up, and will always be a source of concern. We all feel that we can do absolutely nothing about stress since it is the effect of the modern world rather than our own wrongdoings. This is absolutely not true.

The world outside has very little to do with the stress that we create inside. We are solely responsible for our stress and hence it is imperative that we take active measures to reduce the stress and tension in our lives. Practices like Yoga, meditation etc. are very effective in releasing stress.

Daily Routine

545	intake of herbal decoction (as decided by physicians)
615	chanting of mantras, Agnihotra fire ceremony, meditation, OM chanting
800	breakfast
730	consultation with physicians / treatments as scheduled / rest
1100	soup / herbal tea

1230	lunch followed by herbs (where applicable)
1400	yoga nidra or deep relaxation
1430 1445	consultation with physicians / treatments as scheduled / rest satsang with vaidyas
1545	herbal tea / coconut water
1730	intake of herbal decoction (as decided by physicians)
1730	satsang or group discussion
1815	chanting of mantras, Agnihotra fire ceremony, meditation, OM chanting
1900	dinner followed by herbs
2100	bedtime

This is the tentative daily routine; however it is subject to change based on individual recommendation, season etc. As the physicians keep repeating, the primary daily routine is only consultations, treatments, medicines, food, sleep and REST; everything else is secondary.

Apart from the above daily routine, the following additional activities are conducted on certain days of the week (subject to change) -

Monday 1630	Rudra Abhisheka Pooja
Tuesday 1630	Cooking demonstration
Wednesday 1230	Group lunch
Thursday 1700	Garden walk
Friday 1600	Go/Cow Pooja
Saturday 1630	Kashayam preparation demonstration

Medicines at Vaidyagrama

Ayurveda believes that "there is nothing in this world that is not medicine". Thus Ayurveda draws from the plant, animal and mineral kingdom to create a combination of qualities which is most appropriate for the healing of the particular individual.

Thus every combination can contain anywhere between 1 to 50 herbs or more depending on need. It is this synergistic effect of the entire combination that ensures that the particular combination has minimal/no side effects.

Ayurveda uses different dosage forms to ensure that the right combination reaches the right location in the right quantity and in the right form. This ensures maximum benefit from the particular combination of herbs / animal products.

DOSAGE FORMS

Arishtam / Asavam - herbal wine

Choornam - herbal powder

Ghritam - herbal ghee

Gulika - herbal pill

Kashayam - herbal decoction

Lehyam / Rasayanam - herbal jam

Thailam - herbal oil

There are more than 400 different compound formulations from among the above dosage forms that our physicians choose from especially for you based on your medical need

MEDICINE TIMING

1. **Early morning, on empty stomach** - kashayam with / without gulika OR lehyam
2. **After breakfast** - arishtam with / without gulika
3. **Mid-morning** - kashayam OR choornam
4. **Immediately before lunch** - choornam
5. **Immediately after lunch** - arishtam with / without gulika
6. **Between 5 and 6 pm on empty stomach** - kashayam with / without gulika
7. **Immediately after dinner** - arishtam with / without gulika
8. **At bedtime** - lehyam / rasayanam

The above are indicative timings and dosage forms; they can all change based on the need of the individual patient as determined by the physicians. Every patient does not get every dosage form at every time; it is all customized based on individual need as determined by the physicians if you have any questions about your herbs/medicines, please ask your physicians – they will explain to you in detail.

You may please continue any regular allopathy (modern) medicines that you are on; and please inform your physicians if you wish to discontinue/ change these medicines while here.

The herbal decoctions are prepared fresh in vaidyagrama on a daily basis and given to the patients. We also prepare some of our own oil, ghee and other combinations based on the need of the individual patient.

Yoga, Meditation

Can I practice my yoga while undergoing treatment at vaidyagrama?

We advise our patients "maximum physical and mental rest" during the treatment process; after the treatment is over and after one takes sufficient rest for a few days after treatment, we advise, and even recommend, that the patient commences Asana and Pranayama practice on a regular basis.

When I come back home, how do I merge and practice Yoga and meditation with my Ayurveda routines?

We say "where Ayurveda ends, Yoga begins"; Ayurveda takes care of the physical health after which we move to Yoga for mental health and then onto the Vedas / vedanta for spiritual well being. Thus while all these systems teach us about wellness at all levels whether physical or emotional or spiritual, it should be recognized that each one has their own time and place.



I would like to learn Yoga. Will there be teachers at vaidyagrama while I am there?

We do not encourage learning any new yoga practice or meditation during treatment at vaidyagrama. New learning can be stressful and that stress is not good for the healing process.

I practice simple meditation. Will my practice during the time I am in vaidyagrama increase or decrease the effect of my Ayurveda treatments?

A meditator or yoga practitioner can certainly do some light asana or meditation practice. However this is best replied by the physician who is treating you at vaidyagrama as the response will be based on your medical condition and treatment you are receiving.

Can you arrange for a meditation teacher to teach me meditation while I am at vaidyagrama?

Again, we do not encourage learning new techniques while undergoing treatment, but we have a morning and evening mantra chanting session at the end of which we also do some light pranayama and meditation.

Laundry

SOAPNUTS

A NATURAL, ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY, BIO DEGRADABLE, ECONOMICAL & EFFECTIVE DETERGENT

Soap nuts or Soapberry, also sometimes referred to as Washing Nuts or Ritha / Reetha (in Hindi), contain 'Saponins', which have the ability to clean and wash. When in contact with water, it creates mild suds, which is similar to soap.

Soap nuts can be used for cleaning basically anything, from washing clothes, as a liquid soap, cleaning and shining ornaments, household cleaner etc.

Soap nuts are highly-effective and gentle at the same time. It will leave your laundry fresh and clean and compared to other detergents, its mildness will keep colours bright, maintaining fabric structure of your clothes for longer periods. It can be used on all fabrics and at all temperatures.

Soap nuts are allergy-free and hence are good for your skin especially good for babies, eczema and sensitive skin. This chemical free product is excellent for washing children's clothing. Soap nuts are both Ecological and Economical when compared to other forms of detergents.

Benefits of using soap nuts include -

- Clearly cheaper than normal detergents.
- Environment friendly as soap nuts are 100% natural, and they do not pollute our environment.

- Soap nuts are considered renewable primary products.
- Soap nut trees absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen.
- Perfect for allergic persons, people with sensitive skin and people who suffer from neurodermatitis.
- Effective and gentle as Soap-nuts clean dirty laundry very effectively and at the same time preserve the colour of your laundry better than chemical detergents.

What is Panchakarma?

Panchakarma is a term used to refer to five specific intensive treatments which are mostly purificatory in nature.

The five treatments are:

- Vamana - emesis or induced vomiting
- Virecana - purgation or induced bowel movements
- Asthapana Vasti - medicated decoction enema
- Anuvasana Vasti - medicated oil enema
- Nasya - medicated oil instilled through the nose

However the treatment does not commence or end with these five treatments. Each of these intensive treatments has three phases -

- preparatory phase
- main treatment phase
- recuperative phase

The preparatory phase where the patient is got ready by the use of internal medicines and external oil and heat applications as decided by the physician these treatments can include abhyanga, snehapana, elakizhi podikizhi, udvartana, shirodhara and pizhichil. This phase can last for anywhere between 7 to 14 days or more.

When the physician is convinced that the patient is ready for the main treatment, it is administered. For treatments like vamana and virechana, the main treatment is a single day treatment. For treatments like vasti and nasya, several main treatments are administered over a period of 3, 5, 7 days (or more) depending on individual need.

After the treatment is over, then there is the recuperative phase where again the patient is kept under very close observation to ensure that he/she gets the full benefit of the treatment. This phase can again vary between 7 to 14 days or more. During this period, abhyanga, dinacharya and other similar treatments are rendered along with the internal medication.

During this entire period, the physician advises maximum physical and mental rest to enable the patient to get the full benefit from the treatment. The physician gives the dietary and lifestyle advice which the patient should strictly follow.

These five treatments can be done in sequence one after the other or as is more often done, they are administered individually based on the particular patient's condition.

They are not normally done in sequence since the time period required for this is quite long (around 70 days at the minimum which is again followed by 70 days of rest). Hence, based on the individual's condition, the physician selects the appropriate treatment and administers it under strict supervision.

What is zirodhArA (sirodhara)?

zirodhArA is a very intensive Ayurveda treatment where a medicated fluid (oil, buttermilk etc) is poured over the forehead of a patient for a duration of between 45-60 minutes every day for a period ranging from 7 to 21 days. It is effective in a wide range of conditions including but not limited to full body paralysis, facial paralysis, migraine, insomnia, depression, diabetes and cervical spondylosis.

What is pizhicil (pizhichil)?

pizhicil is a very intensive Ayurveda treatment where medicated fluid, mostly oils, is poured all over the body of an individual for a duration of around 60 minutes every day for a period ranging from 7 to 21 days. It is effective in a wide range of conditions including but not limited to rheumatoid arthritis, slipped disc, cervical spondylitis, osteo arthritis, partial paralysis, total paralysis and sciatica. In this treatment, 2-5 therapists work on an individual simultaneously pouring around 2.5 litres of warm medicated fluid over the entire body of the individual.

All Ayurveda treatments are truly effective when they are prescribed by an experienced Ayurveda physician for

the individual patient with the full knowledge of the state of the individual as also the variables affecting the individual.

Further, like in panchakarma, most treatments require a preparatory period of 7-10 days and a post-treatment recuperative period of 7 days to 6 weeks depending on the actual condition of the individual.

All treatments are naturally accompanied by [dietary and lifestyle restrictions](#) without which the treatment may not be as beneficial, and can sometimes even lead to complications.

Hence it is best to take a course of treatment under the guidance of a qualified and experienced Ayurveda physician – a proper course of treatment can take around 3-5 weeks tentatively and demands total (near total) physical and mental rest from the individual.

Things to bring to Vaidyagrama

Things to bring with you when you come for treatment to vaidyagrama -

- all your relevant medical reports
- any medication (including allopathic) that you are currently using and cannot be immediately discontinued (please bring sufficient stock to last you through the period you are here)
- simple, comfortable and modest cotton clothing (based on the season that you are here); it might be best to bring some old clothing which can be discarded if necessary after the treatment (the smell of the oils is strong and hence you may choose not to carry the clothes back home)

- comfortable non-slippery footwear; and 2-3 pairs of socks for use in areas where footwear is not permitted
- your music system and some easy-on-the-ear music, mantras, instrumental music, motivational talks, spiritual discourses etc.
- 1 light sweater or shawl to keep you warm (do check the section on [Weather](#) to know whether you need to bring more shawls)
- 2-3 scarves to cover your head and neck (to protect from exposure to sun, wind rain etc.) when you move out of the room
- essential reading material (please note that our physicians do not advise you to read during the treatment process)
- herbal mosquito repellent in case you are very sensitive to mosquitoes (all our doors and windows as also the beds have nets)
- 1 torch
- 1-2 sheets to cover the yoga mat in the satsang hall when you do yoga nidra

An important point

- Since the treatments are primarily oil based, there is a possibility for mild oil stains or odour remaining on the bedsheets and pillow covers even after going through the laundry
- In the laundry, the sheets and pillow covers are first put in boiling water and then washed using a non-chemical detergent

- In case you are not comfortable using these common sheets and pillow covers, please feel free to carry with you three sets of sheets and pillow covers which will be used exclusively for you

An international patient should also bring -

- 3 copies of the passport page with the photo
- 3 copies of the passport page with the visa stamp
- bank notification / copy of the endorsement on the passport for travellers' cheques (if that is the preferred mode of payment)

Things NOT to bring with you:

- Anything to eat including snacks, nuts, dry fruits, chocolates, sweets etc.
- excessive reading material
- video DVDs
- Make-up kit, hair dye, nail polish, other cosmetics etc.
- Additives like cigarettes, alcohol etc.

Some Advice

- The traditional culture in and around vaidyagrama is for women to use clothing that covers their legs completely, and upper clothing with sleeves. To fit in easily into this culture, you may prefer to use similar clothing.
- Further the treatment also requires that you be completely covered through the entire day to prevent you from catching any fever, cold, cough etc. during the treatment.

vaidyagrama.com

- If you choose to use minimal clothing within your room, please do ensure that you keep the door locked; this will avoid embarrassment for there will be many people who come into your room for several different reasons like giving food, giving medicines, housekeeping etc.
- Generally the culture in vaidyagrama is that the staff knock on the room door once and then enter unless specifically instructed otherwise by the patient.




vaidyagrama
। सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः।