

# Ayurveda Today

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## Did You Know...

Valentines is coming up fast – have you thought of a romantic gift for your special loved one? Why not treat someone you care for dearly to an Ayurvedic treatment or consultation with Geeta Vara at the Light Centre or Evolve Wellness this year.

You can buy direct on the website at [www.geetavara.co.uk](http://www.geetavara.co.uk)

## Tune in and tone up your brain

So you've started the new year already toning up your body, but how about toning up your memory recall, mental focus and sense of awareness? After all we are a 'whole' person and not just the sum of the segments of our being.

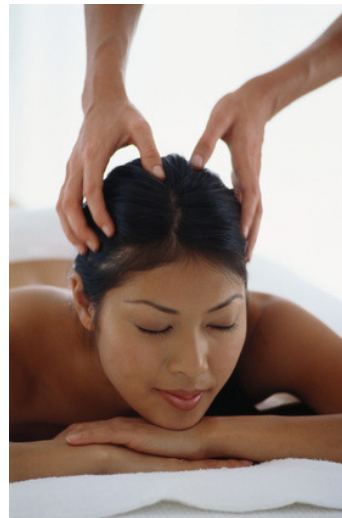
According to ayurveda there are three aspects to our mental faculties, *dhriti* meaning retention of knowledge, *smriti* meaning memory and *dhi* meaning learning and comprehension. In order for all these faculties to work optimally, there needs to be a balance of all the dosha, vata, pitta and kapha. When vata or kapha are imbalanced the mind can become dull, heavy or forgetful or so active that it is difficult to focus.

There are some simple and natural ways to encourage your brain to work optimally.

**Food for thought.** Almonds can help increase memory. Lecithin found in wheat germ plays a role in keeping the arterial walls from hardening which can often affect the channels of the brain. Other brain foods include organic vegetables such as broccoli, soybeans, spinach, brussels sprouts, okra, carrots, cabbage, sweet potatoes, oranges, black beans, seeds and berries, kidney and

beans. Limit the intake of refined sugars which will only allow for short injections of energy to the brain. Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and alcohol.

Stimulate the senses and digestion by including all 6 tastes in each meal (sweet, sour, salty, astringent, bitter and pungent). By keeping foods light, fresh and easy to digest will enhance perception and help strengthen memory.



**Restful Sleep.** As one of the five pillars of health in ayurveda, good sleep also will rejuvenate, repair and revive the mind and body.

**Practice Yoga.** Sun salutations can help to increase circulation to the entire body as well as inverted postures such as camel, shoulder and head stands.

**Brain workout.** By engaging in stimulating activities, the mind agile and engaged. Playful puzzles, creative activities, manual hand eye co-ordination tasks etc. can stimulate the brain like exercise does for our body.

**Breath more.** Increasing oxygen through pranayama can increase blood flow which improves the function of the brain. Clearing the mind and increasing prana (life force energy). Alternate nostril breathing can calm the sympathetic nervous activity and enhance the para-sympathetic activity.

**Start meditation.** Many studies have found meditation to relieve stress, and gives you a deep sense of peace that can create clarity of mind.

**Treat yourself.** Indian head and foot massage with warm oil infused with Brahmi would be very useful to relax the mind and stimulate the nerve endings. Shirodhara is a treatment specifically designed for relaxing the mind. Nasya treatment can bring clarity to the mind as well as support voice, vision and hearing.

**Ayurvedic herbs** such as Brahmi, Jatamansi, Ashwagandha, Gotu kola can all be powerful tonics for the mind as well as triphala for general detoxification and cleansing.

## One of life's wonder fruits

*Punica granatum*, or commonly known as pomegranate is not only a delicious juicy fruit, it has numerous health benefits too. Right from its rind and leaves down to its flowers and kernals. Each part of this fruit has a positive effect on our health. Traditionally in the ancient Asian culture, they were a sign of fertility, abundance and good luck.

As a powerful antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancerous, it is very effective in fighting heart disease, hypertension, high cholesterol, anaemia, nausea infertility as well as acting as an aphrodisiac.



Pomegranates are great for maintaining balance of the three dosha (vata, pitta, kapha) in the body. With an astringent dominant taste, as well as sweet, sour and bitter tastes coming through, pomegranates are highly effective on the digestion it does not aggravate the pitta dosha.

The juice of pomegranate is useful in digestive problems such as dyspepsia (indigestion), purifies blood and anti bacterial effects. The rind, due to the astringent taste and high tannin content offer protection against free radicals and therefore help boost the immune system, the fruit rind can be beneficial in cases of diarrhoea, dysentery, parasites and haemorrhages

A decoction of the flowers can be gargled to relieve oral and throat inflammation. The flowers have also been traditionally used in cases of diabetes.

Nutritionally pomegranates are high in vitamin C, potassium and a good source of fibre whilst being low in calorie content.



*"It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease than to know what sort of disease a person has."*

**Hippocrates  
(460-377 BC)**

## Recipe: Yellow mung kitchari

### Ingredients:

1tbsp ghee  
1 medium onion  
2 tsp cumin seeds  
2 tsp ginger  
½ tsp turmeric  
½ tsp green chilli (freshly chopped or paste)  
1 cup split yellow mung  
½ cup patna rice  
½ cup soya beans  
2 cups spring greens  
juice of ½ lemon  
1 tbsp chopped coriander  
1 tsp rock salt

### Method:

Toast the cumin seeds in the ghee until they golden add the onion, chilli, ginger, turmeric and sauté until the onions are soft.

Add the washed mixture of dahl and rice, then add to the pan.

And toast until the lentils and rice are coated. Add the soya beans and add water and salt.

Cover and cook on a medium heat, stirring and adding water as necessary, like a risotto. After 5-6 minutes of cooking add the spring greens. It should approximately take 25 minutes.

Cook until the rice and lentil look creamy. Then add lemon and fresh coriander before serving.



For an Ayurvedic consultation or treatments please make an appointment with Geeta Vara call on 07956 521 601



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