

Choice

Health & Wellbeing

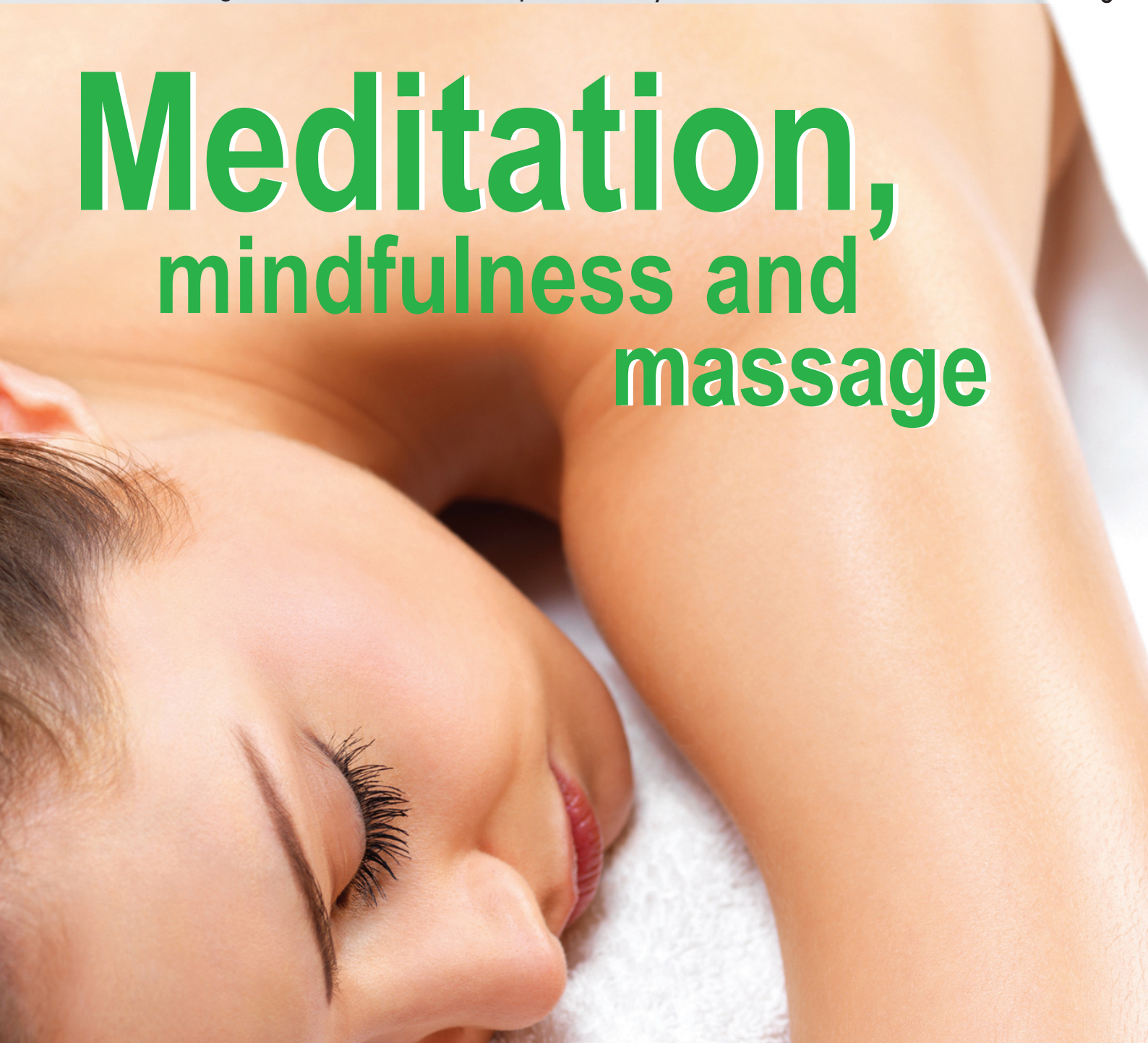
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Meditation, mindfulness and massage



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Your Health and Wellbeing Success Starts Here!

Are you a health-conscious consumer, looking to come into the industry or looking for a suitable treatment? Find out what the experts say and read.

The Kitchen Doctor

Herbs, spices and foods for everyday health and healing.



Your kitchen may just be the ticket to put you back on your feet without having to visit the pharmacy. Lurking away in your cupboards are myriad herbs and spices which have great medicinal value. You just don't realise it.

Everything in your kitchen has some healing properties: cloves, cinnamon, honey, coriander, black pepper, cumin seeds, fennel, ginger, garlic, onions, asafoetida, basil leaves, mint, turmeric, sandalwood, camphor – this list could go on and on. Let's focus on a few of my favourite common kitchen ingredients.

Turmeric (*curcuma longa*)

This herb is considered to be a symbol of prosperity. It is a common cooking spice with a bitter taste and has numerous therapeutic benefits. Turmeric has strong antioxidant properties and, therefore, protects against damage by free radicals. As an anti-inflammatory, this yellow spice is great for reducing histamine levels (in conditions such as eczema, psoriasis, asthma, arthritis, osteoarthritis and colitis).

With powerful antiseptic and antibacterial properties, turmeric is perfect for application to external cuts, grazes and wounds, particularly when mixed with honey.

Turmeric is very useful for treating colds and flu. You can add it to a decoction of ginger and

lemon with a squirt of honey. This multi-use spice is also useful for detoxifying and maintaining liver and gallbladder functions.

As it helps to purify the blood, it helps to maintain healthy skin if taken internally and is also a useful ingredient in beauty creams and lotions, giving a glowing complexion.

Ginger (*Zingiber Officinale*)

Another truly wonderful herb that has numerous healing properties is ginger, a thick tuber root. It has been used both in its fresh and dried forms for over 2,500 years. It is effective in balancing all three doshas in Ayurveda.

Ginger acts as a digestive tonic and calms stomach upsets, cramps and flatulence when taken with lime juice. It stimulates digestion when taken with rock salt, keeps intestinal muscles toned, and increase bile flow. With its warming properties on the upper respiratory tract, ginger can be used to treat colds, flu and asthmatic conditions.

Ginger has anti-inflammatory properties and therefore is useful for external pain, swelling and arthritis. It can be applied locally as a paste or oil.



Ginger is probably best known for its anti-nausea and anti-emetic action and is especially useful in pregnancy. It is widely available in fresh and dried forms and is found in a variety of ginger products, such as teas, jams, crystals, etc, making it a very versatile spice.

Cinnamon

Cinnamon is a heating spice with a sweet, pungent aroma and a bitter taste. It is a very versatile spice and can be used as a home remedy for many ailments. It is one of the oldest known spices and Ceylon cinnamon has positive healing effects on digestion, respiratory conditions such as asthma and coughs, insect bites, urinary tract infections and it helps to pacify Vata Dosha. It is also believed that it helps in the digestion of fruit and dairy products. Cinnamon is most commonly combined with honey.

Insect bites

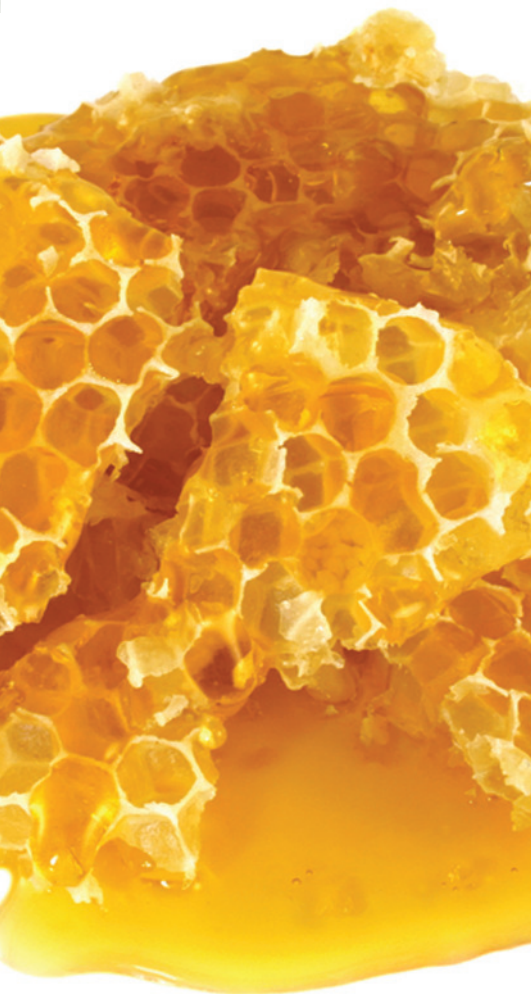
Mix one part honey to two parts of water and add one tsp. of cinnamon. Apply to itching skin.

Diarrhoea

Mix one tsp. each of cinnamon, ginger and cumin powder with honey to make a paste. Take one tsp. three times a day.

Insomnia

Add ½ tsp. of cinnamon powder and one tsp. of honey to one cup of warm milk. Drink before going to bed.



Urinary tract infections

Two tbsp. of cinnamon taken with one tsp. of honey taken with a glass of lukewarm water can destroy bacteria in the bladder.

Ghee

Ghee is produced when butter is clarified and all the milk solids are removed. Ghee is very useful for cooking instead of butter and oil as it does not easily burn. Ghee is extremely versatile and acts as a digestive by assisting absorption and assimilation. It can even be used for body massage and is a common base for herbal ointments. Ghee is known to delay ageing as it has rejuvenating properties.

Ghee has a catalytic action and is able to carry the medicinal properties of other herbs to all the tissues of the body without producing any effects of its own. In small quantities, it helps to pacify all three doshas and congestion of blood and plasma. Ghee helps to keep the body supple and lubricates the connective and nerve tissues and protects the bone marrow. It aids in the promotion of immunity, fertility, intelligence, improved vision, liver, kidney and brain function, and enzyme function in the intestines. Ghee, of course, should be used with caution in cases of obesity and high cholesterol.

Almonds

Almonds are one of the Ayurvedic sattvic foods and are part of the peach and apricot family and are one of the most nutritious nuts of all. They contain a high level of monounsaturated fats which are known to reduce cholesterol levels and are also a rich source of protein, fibre, vitamin E omega-3, omega-6, magnesium, calcium, iron, potassium and zinc.

The sweet taste of almonds pacifies the Vata Dosha and almonds are the least acid-forming of all nuts. They are supportive of all body tissues, right down to semen. However, almonds can be quite difficult to digest; the skin of almonds can be enzyme-inhibiting and can aggravate pitta in the blood so it is best to eat them blanched and soaked overnight.

Almonds act as a protein that helps to stabilise blood sugar. They are also known to improve memory and nourish the nervous system.

Garlic

Pungent, heating and identified by its characteristic aroma, garlic is widely used all over the world and has many wonderful benefits. It helps to prevent infections, such as colds and coughs, through its anti-fungal and anti-viral properties.

Raw garlic acts as a natural aphrodisiac, supports brain function, strengthens bones, reduces intestinal complaints and is useful in heart diseases as it reduces cholesterol.

Honey

Natural honey has been widely used for thousands of years and the daily consumption of honey is advocated in Ayurvedic texts to promote good health. Honey has a positive effect on the digestive system, complexion, eyes, and heart. It is effective in the healing of wounds due to its



anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-microbial properties. It is also a natural detox agent, cleanses the bodily channels and pacifies the three doshas.

As a sweetener, honey is an ideal substitute for sugar and a great source of energy. Though it contains slightly more calories than sugar, honey in warm water helps to break down fats and cholesterol stored in the body as it contains many essential vitamins and minerals not present in other refined sugars. Honey can be used as a weight control measure when combined with cinnamon or lemon.

Other common Ayurvedic uses of honey include

Fat reduction/Blood purification

Cleanse the bowels and reduce fat by taking one tsp. lemon juice with one to two tsp. honey in a glass of warm water in the morning, before food.

Asthma/Cough

For a persistent mucous-based cough, take a pinch of black pepper with a teaspoon of honey and lick the mixture with a spoon after meals. For relief of the colds, coughs, sore throats, runny noses or chest congestion, mix two tsp. of honey with an equal quantity of fresh ginger juice to help expel mucus.

Colds

For a severe cold, take one tablespoon of honey with 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon powder daily for three days. This will help clear the sinuses, strengthen the immune system and the body will be protected from bacterial/viral attacks. **CHW**

© As a member of the APA, Geeta Vara is a fully qualified Ayurvedic practitioner working in Central London and Kent providing consultations, treatments and corporate and small group workshops. For more information about Ayurvedic home remedies or other health concerns, please visit: www.geetavara.co.uk.