

Diabetes Care and Ayurveda: A Comprehensive Overview

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Abstract

Worldwide, people's health is greatly affected by the chronic metabolic disease known as diabetes mellitus, characterized by hyperglycemia. As the number of people diagnosed with diabetes is predicted to rise, the search for effective and comprehensive treatments will become more intense. a focus on the unique approach, herbal medicines, and lifestyle recommendations provided by Ayurveda, an old Indian medicinal tradition, in the treatment of diabetes. Ayurveda, an old medical system based on the principles of harmony and individuality, offers a multi-faceted approach to diabetes care. It recognizes that diabetes, called "Madhumeha" in Ayurveda, is a complex disease affected by multiple internal and environmental factors interacting with one another. the Ayurvedic view of diabetes, which highlights the significance of balancing the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) and the significance of their imbalances. Ayurvedic diagnosis and treatment plans are based on a thorough examination of the patient's constitution (Prakriti) and present imbalances (Vikriti).

keywords – Ayurveda, Diabetes management, Madhumeha, Doshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha), Prakriti, Vikriti

Introduction

Diabetes mellitus, characterized by persistently high blood glucose levels, poses a massive threat to the health of individuals across the globe. As the global prevalence of diabetes continues to climb, there is a newfound urgency in finding holistic and all-encompassing treatment solutions. the pivotal role that Ayurveda, a traditional Indian medicinal profession, plays in the management of diabetes and its complications. The immense human toll caused by diabetes, a chronic metabolic disorder, is universal; it affects people of all ages, backgrounds, and locations. High blood sugar levels are just one symptom of this illness, which is defined by a web of interconnected physiological processes throughout the body. Traditional approaches to diabetes management often focus on symptom control, with medication being the mainstay in this regard. Nevertheless, these approaches fail to deal with the fundamental inconsistencies that lead to diabetes. With its roots in Ayurveda, "the science of life," we find a fresh perspective on diabetic care that transcends the reductionist understanding of health. Ayurveda acknowledges diabetes, a complex condition influenced by multiple factors simultaneously (in Ayurvedic terminology, "Madhumeha"). It considers the human body to be an intricate ecosystem where the mind, the environment, and the body all interact in a dynamic way. Identifying diabetes thru Ayurvedic lens, with an emphasis on vata, pitta, and kapha qualities. When it comes to Ayurvedic perspectives on diabetes, the main focus is on disruptions in the body's basic energy systems, or doshas. According to Ayurveda, a person's susceptibility to diabetes and the creation of a personalized treatment plan are both influenced by their unique

constitution, or Prakriti, and any chronic imbalances, or Vikriti. There is a lot more to ayurvedic treatment of diabetes than just medication. Included are changes to one's diet and way of life, yoga, and the use of various herbal remedies and pharmaceutical mixtures. In the fight against diabetes, three Ayurvedic herbs—curcuma longa, bitter melon (*Momordica charantia*), and fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*)—have been acknowledged as potential allies throughout human history. Research done in the current era is lending more and more credence to these herbs. Ayurvedic treatment plans are based on intricate physiological processes. Among these methods are those that aim to improve insulin sensitivity, enhance pancreatic function, reduce inflammation, and control blood glucose levels. Ayurvedic treatment for diabetes takes a more all-encompassing approach, aiming to alleviate the disease by addressing its root causes. According to Ayurveda, a healthy lifestyle includes the following practices: eating mindfully, exercising regularly, managing stress, and getting enough restorative sleep. In addition to promoting general health, these actions aid in diabetes management. The Ayurvedic view, which is holistic and recognizes the mind-body connection, is consistent with these recommendations. As a holistic, individualized, and all-natural method of dealing with a complex disease, Ayurveda's role in diabetes care is becoming clear. The use of Ayurveda in conjunction with modern medical treatments is possible, but it offers a completely new perspective on diabetes care. There is hope in the search for modern, efficient, holistic, and individualized diabetic therapy in the ancient wisdom of Ayurveda, which is as applicable now as it was hundreds of years ago.

Diabetes and Ayurveda: A Comprehensive Overview

A metabolic disease characterized by persistently high blood glucose levels, diabetes mellitus has recently emerged as a major public health concern on a worldwide scale. The metabolic disease known as diabetes impacts about 300 million individuals globally. Research into holistic and non-traditional approaches to diabetes management is more crucial than ever before due to the precipitous increase in the number of persons diagnosed with the disease. One unique perspective on diabetes is offered by Ayurveda, a historic Indian medicinal discipline. Holistic concepts and personalized care are the bedrock of this perspective. Modern medical practice often examines diabetes thru the lenses of biochemical pathways, hereditary susceptibility, and pharmaceutical treatments. Although these methods have made great strides in diabetes care, Ayurveda offers a new way of thinking about the condition that gets to the source of the problem rather than just treating the symptoms. It holds that environmental, psychological, and physiological factors all combine to cause an individual to develop diabetes, which is a symptom of a more complex internal imbalance. Ayurvedic doctrine's distinctive view of diabetes, which the tradition calls "Madhumeha." An imbalance of the three doshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha—is called Madhumeha in Ayurvedic philosophy. While it does cover hyperglycemia, it does not restrict itself to only that ailment. The key to optimum health is keeping the equilibrium between these doshas, which are the basic energy found throughout the body. Each individual has a distinct Prakriti, or constitution, according to Ayurveda. The prevailing doshas in their body, as well as any imbalances (Vikriti) that may exist, shape their constitution. By looking at the doshas thru an Ayurvedic lens, we may better appreciate how Vata, Pitta, and Kapha imbalances play a role in the onset and course of diabetes. Ayurveda

provides a comprehensive solution to the management of diabetes thru its holistic approach, which encompasses lifestyle, nutrition, herbs, and mind-body practises. By delving into Ayurveda, we may better understand an age-old method of healing that provides valuable context for contemporary methods and sheds light on the interconnectedness of the human being, their thoughts and emotions, and their physical and mental surroundings. Because Ayurveda originated in India more than five thousand years ago, this is the case. The next paragraphs will illuminate the path toward holistic diabetes treatment by guiding you thru the complex web of Ayurvedic ideas and interventions.

Doshas: A Personal Energy Map

To fully grasp the connection between well-being and disease, Ayurvedic practitioners rely on the idea of doshas. Many aspects of the body, both mental and physiological, are controlled by the doshas. The three components of the body known as doshas are vata, pitta, and kapha. The ways in which diabetes develops and worsens due to imbalances in these energies can be better understood with knowledge of the doshas.

- **Vata Dosha:** Vata is a dosha in Ayurveda that consists of the elements air and ether, and it is distinguished by the attributes of movement, dryness, and lightness. In the context of diabetes, an aggravated Vata dosha might present itself as fluctuating blood sugar levels and insulin resistance. Both of these symptoms can be caused by the body's resistance to insulin. It's possible that those who have a Vata constitution (Prakriti) or who are experiencing Vata imbalances (Vikriti) are more prone to being affected by these changes. It is the goal of Ayurvedic treatments to pacify Vata through the use of practises that are nourishing and grounded. These activities include particular dietary choices and lifestyle alterations.
- **Pitta Dosha:** Pitta is a dosha that encompasses the attributes of intensity, transformation, and heat. It is associated with the elements of fire and water. An excess of Pitta can cause inflammation and overheating, both of which might potentially contribute to the difficulties that are associated with diabetes. People who naturally have a Pitta constitution or who have a Pitta that has been worsened are more likely to have elevated blood sugar levels. In Ayurveda, the pitta dosha is sought to be brought into harmony by incorporating pacifying and calming practises into one's lifestyle as well as one's nutrition. Bitter herbs, like bitter melon, are commonly recommended for pacifying Pitta and managing diabetes because of their characteristically bitter taste.
- **Kapha Dosha:** The attributes of steadiness, heaviness, and nutrition are all embodied by the Kapha dosha, which is created by combining the earth and water elements. An excess of Kapha might result in a sluggish metabolism, increased insulin resistance, and weight gain. Diabetes mellitus is more likely to occur in people who have a Kapha constitution or Kapha imbalances. Modifications to one's food as well as actions that stimulate the body and mind are central to Ayurvedic approaches to rebalancing the Kapha dosha. Herbs like fenugreek, which are known for their pungent and bitter properties, are effective at balancing blood sugar levels and reducing the weightiness associated with Kapha.

In Ayurveda, the personalized approach is based on the idea that a person's doshas affect their susceptibility to diabetes and the progression of the disease. Practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine assess both Prakriti and Vikriti to tailor therapies to particular doshic imbalances and restore harmony to the body. An imbalance in any of the three doshas, according to Ayurveda, might lead to an imbalance in the others. Uncontrolled diabetes, which is often associated with imbalances in Pitta and Kapha, can impact the Vata dosha and cause neuropathy and other complications if not managed properly. In order to restore overall doshic balance, Ayurvedic remedies aim to soothe the affected dosha as well.

Individualized Approach: Prakriti and Vikriti

- **Prakriti (Constitution):** According to Ayurveda, every individual is born with their own distinct constitution, which is referred to as Prakriti. Prakriti is a mixture of the doshas, which are Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. The individual's innate physical and mental characteristics, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, are all determined by their Prakriti. Gaining an understanding of one's Prakriti is essential to the management of diabetes since it provides information regarding the propensity to the condition as well as the particular imbalances that may develop. For instance, a person whose major Prakriti is Kapha may be more likely to struggle with insulin resistance and weight gain, whereas a person whose predominant Prakriti is Pitta may be more likely to face difficulties associated to inflammation. Ayurveda is able to adapt interventions to address the intrinsic doshic makeup of the individual by recognising Prakriti.
- **Vikriti (Imbalance):** Vikriti is the term used to refer to the current imbalances in the doshas, whereas Prakriti is the term used to refer to the intrinsic constitution. Vikriti is an important component in the management of diabetes as it represents how far one has deviated from their normal state of health. Vikriti is a condition that can be caused by a variety of circumstances, including diet, lifestyle, stress, and the affects of the environment. Vikriti is evaluated by practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine in order to gain an understanding of the doshic imbalances that are associated with diabetes. For instance, a person whose major Prakriti is vata may be predisposed to develop vikriti, which is characterised by abnormally low or high levels of blood sugar, as a result of stress and unwise dietary decisions. Ayurveda intends to repair the current doshic imbalances that are contributing to diabetes by addressing the condition known as vikriti.
- **Vata Dominance:** Dietary recommendations for persons who have a Vata Prakriti or Vata Vikriti may include consuming warm, nourishing foods and maintaining a regular mealtime in order to maintain stable blood sugar levels. Yoga and other mind-body techniques like meditation and breathing exercises might be helpful in taming the agitated nature of vata.
- **Pitta Dominance:** In order to reduce inflammation and keep insulin sensitivity in check, people who have a Pitta constitution or who have Pitta imbalances may benefit from eating cooling foods and using stress reduction practises.
- **Kapha Dominance:** Those who have a predisposition toward Kapha may benefit from following a diet that restricts their consumption of heavy and sweet foods in order to

avoid weight gain and promote healthy metabolic function. The tendency of Kapha to become stagnant can be helped by engaging in behaviours that are physically and mentally stimulating on a regular basis.

Ayurvedic Interventions for Diabetes

Ayurveda, which takes a holistic and customised approach, provides a range of interventions for the management of diabetes. These interventions not only attempt to control levels of blood sugar, but also to address the underlying causes of the problem. Alterations to one's food and lifestyle, as well as mind-body practises and the application of particular herbs and pharmaceutical concoctions, are all included in these therapies.

Dietary Modifications:

- Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on customising food choices to an individual's Prakriti (constitution) and Vikriti (dosha) (current imbalances). For instance, people who predominantly have Vata in their constitution or who have Vata imbalances may benefit from eating foods that are warm and nourishing, whereas people who predominantly have Kapha in their constitution or who have Kapha imbalances may require a diet that minimises the consumption of heavy and sweet foods.
- Ayurveda classifies foods into six different tastes: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent, and astringent. The goal of taste balancing is to find a happy medium between these flavours. It is essential for the management of diabetes to strike a balance between these preferences in one's diet. Bitter and astringent tastes, like those found in bitter melon and fenugreek, are very useful in lowering blood sugar levels. Bitter melon and fenugreek both include these tastes.
- Consuming meals at regular intervals and making sure they are spaced out appropriately will assist in maintaining stable blood sugar levels. According to Ayurvedic teachings, an extended period without eating or an excessive number of snacks in between meals should be avoided.
- Herbal Teas Cinnamon, turmeric, and Indian Gooseberry (Amla) are just a few of the components that can be used to make herbal teas that can help regulate blood sugar. Both ancient Ayurvedic texts and more recent scientific investigations have found that certain plants have anti-diabetic effects.

Lifestyle Adjustments:

- **Regular Physical Activity:** Ayurveda recommends engaging in regular physical activity as a means of enhancing insulin sensitivity and promoting metabolic health in general. The individual's Prakriti and the state of their imbalances should guide their choice of physical activity.
- **Management of Stress** Prolonged exposure to stress might make diabetes symptoms worse. Ayurveda encourages the use of stress-reduction methods such as yoga, meditation, and mindfulness exercises in order to help one achieve mental peace and achieve dosha balance.
- **A Sufficient Amount of Sleep** It is essential for the management of diabetes to develop and maintain a regular pattern of sleep and to ensure that sleep is

restorative. Inadequate sleep can interfere with the management of blood sugar.

Herbal Interventions:

- Bitter Melon (*Momordica charantia*): Although it has a reputation for having a particularly astringent flavour, Bitter Melon has been shown to have anti-diabetic effects. It is possible that it will assist in improving insulin sensitivity and lowering blood sugar levels.
- Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*): The seeds of fenugreek are high in soluble fibre and have been demonstrated to assist in the regulation of blood sugar levels. Fenugreek can be found in spice blends. You can eat the seeds on their own or incorporate them into various dishes.
- Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*): It is thought that cinnamon can improve insulin sensitivity and lower insulin resistance. Cinnamon comes from the *Cinnamomum verum* tree. It is also possible to take it in supplement form in addition to foods.
- Curcuma longa, also known as turmeric, contains an active ingredient called curcumin, which possesses anti-inflammatory as well as antioxidant effects. It may contribute to the metabolic health of the body as a whole.
- Indian Amla, often known as gooseberry, is an excellent source of vitamin C as well as antioxidants. In order to assist healthy management of blood sugar, it can be ingested either fresh, as a juice, or in powder form.

Mind-Body Practices:

- Asanas (postures) and pranayama (breathing exercises) are two components of the practise of yoga that can help increase insulin sensitivity, lower stress, and boost general well-being.
- Meditation: Mindfulness meditation activities strengthen resistance to stress and emotional equilibrium, both of which are necessary for the management of diabetes.

Essential Herbs from Ayurveda

In the field of Ayurvedic medicines for diabetes management, certain herbs have become prominent figures. In order to tackle the condition's complexities, these herbs offer a natural and all-encompassing solution. Because of their exceptional anti-diabetic properties, these herbs are highly esteemed not just in the Ayurvedic tradition but also in modern scientific circles. The key herbs from Ayurveda that have recently come to light as valuable tools for improving metabolic health, insulin sensitivity, and blood sugar regulation. Ayurveda depends on millennia of traditional knowledge when it comes to the use of botanical remedies for a range of health issues, including diabetes. It is famous for its vast pharmacopeia of medicinal plants and herbal formulations. In line with Ayurvedic principles, these herbs help balance the doshas and restore internal harmony through their unique tastes, qualities, and actions. Learn about the unique characteristics, action mechanisms, and functions of Ayurvedic medicines for diabetes in this area. These herbs can help with many facets of diabetic care. The use of these herbs in diabetes care takes a more comprehensive approach, addressing not only the management of glucose levels but also the patient's general health. This all-encompassing method incorporates, for instance, the bitter and astringent qualities of bitter melon and

turmeric, two spices with numerous uses. The guiding principle of Ayurveda is individualized care, which is compatible with the use of Ayurvedic herbs in diabetes treatment. This system of thought holds that the choice of herbs and their subsequent administration are guided by an individual's specific constitution (Prakriti) and the imbalances they are currently experiencing (Vikriti). These herbs are great instruments for tailoring therapy to each patient's unique needs because they each have their own unique character that corresponds to a specific doshic imbalance. Ayurvedic practitioners almost never employ a single herb alone, preferring instead to mix and match different plants for the most beneficial synergistic effects. The classical Ayurvedic recipes (Rasayanas) serve as the basis for these blends. Enhanced therapeutic results and overall health are the goals of these formulations, which take advantage of the synergistic effects of many herbs. The mechanisms underlying their effects, as well as their historical use and new research findings, will be investigated. Our objective is that this study will assist to clarify some of the traditional thinking that is still used to manage diabetes in the present day, thus bridging the gap between the two schools of thought.

Conclusion

In the quest for effective and comprehensive methods of managing diabetes, Ayurveda stands out as a model of timeless knowledge that keeps illuminating the path to well-being. We are almost at the end of our discussion on "The Role of Ayurveda in Diabetes Management," and it is becoming quite evident that Ayurveda offers a completely unique and personalized approach to understanding and managing diabetes, in addition to a different perspective. During this time, the intricate understanding of diabetes within Ayurveda has come to light. The ancient practice views diabetes as involving more than simply elevated blood sugar levels; it also highlights the intricate interplay between the three doshas: Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. The Ayurvedic term for diabetes, "Madhumeha," indicates that the disease extends beyond the realm of biochemistry. The intricate interplay between an individual's biology, psychology, and environment is believed to be the root cause of diabetes. Prakriti and Vikriti, the guiding principles of Ayurveda's individualized approach, stress the need of determining a person's unique constitution and any preexisting physiological imbalances. Ayurvedic treatments are effective in addressing both the symptoms and the root causes of diabetes due to the individualized nature of therapy. Ayurvedic treatment plans go way beyond what conventional medicine has to offer. These include tailoring one's food to one's own needs and preferences, changing one's way of life to be more active and less stressed, and making use of important Ayurvedic medicines like turmeric, bitter melon, and fenugreek. Renowned for their multitude of properties, these herbs offer a comprehensive strategy that encompasses glucose management and overall health enhancement. The relevance of Ayurveda in diabetes care is not confined to long-held beliefs but rather aligns with the results of contemporary scientific studies. Current theories on insulin sensitivity, pancreatic function, inflammation reduction, and blood sugar regulation are compatible with the action mechanisms of Ayurvedic treatments. Ayurveda is a holistic system that considers the whole person, including their mental and physical health. Why? Because it recognizes the connection between a person's emotional and metabolic health. Stress management and emotional balance are essential parts of diabetic care; practices like mindfulness, yoga, and meditation can help with both. Much as it was hundreds

of years ago, the wisdom of Ayurveda holds true now. By combining the best of conventional medicine with cutting-edge scientific knowledge, it offers a comprehensive, personalized, and holistic approach to diabetes care. Thru the practice of Ayurveda, one can learn to embrace themselves exactly as they are, make informed choices regarding their daily lives, and embark on a path to wellbeing by harnessing the boundless power of nature. As the number of people affected by diabetes rises around the world, Ayurveda is a powerful reminder of the relevance of traditional wisdom. Those interested in holistic health can find enduring wisdom and healing in Ayurveda. The valuable insights it shares inspire us to delve into the intricate connections between our physical, mental, and spiritual selves, and to embark on a journey toward balance, vigor, and general well-being.

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