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Prevention of Dementia with Yogic and Ayurvedic Methods
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Prevention of Dementia with Yogic and Ayurvedic Methods*

In the Vedic tradition, the human brain is considered the sixth sense that coordinates the other five senses. All our bodily functions are processed through our central and peripheral nervous systems. The brain’s function is not only cognition and retention, but it also coordinates other physiological functions like body movements, hunger, thirst and excretion. It is the site of mind and buddhi, the latter translated as rationality, discretion and creativity. In the hierarchy of human existence, the cause of being is soul or the invisible energy that leaves the physical body at the time of death. Next to soul is the buddhi and then chitta (the thinking process).

Dementia or vismriti or loss of retention and memory is a kind of partial human death where there is a gradual loss of memory and cognition, and then even the loss of coordination of the senses and of various physiological functions. It occurs as a result of alterations or destructions in the brain cells due to diverse ailments of the brain.

Dementia is increasing the world over at a pandemic scale and is ringing alarm bells of danger to humanity. It is important that we put together world wisdom and find ways to prevent this destructive and deadly disorder.

This monograph highlights the major risk factors for dementia in our modern world and ways to prevent them with yogic and ayurvedic methods.

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Vinod Verma

Data on Dementia

World Health Organization (WHO) data has revealed that a new case of dementia is diagnosed around the world every four seconds. That is the equivalent of 7.7 million new cases each year. In the words of global health expert Dr. Peter Piot, dementia is a ‘ticking time bomb’. The number of people living with dementia worldwide is currently estimated as 40 million. The number of people suffering from dementia worldwide is estimated to be 35.6 million. This number will double by 2030 and triple by 2050. It is estimated by the WHO that by 2020, there will be 10 million people with dementia in India alone.

Prevention of Dementia

If this is the prognosis for patients suffering from this disorder in less than 20 years, who will take care of whom? It is time that we begin to work on the prevention of this deadly ailment in a rigorous manner, especially when there is practically no treatment available. At the moment, most of the efforts and finances in research are concentrated on treatment. This monograph attempts to understand the root causes of dementia and eradicate them, take measures to strengthen the mind, and prevent dementia with personal efforts. Since this is an age-related disorder and has gradual causative factors, we should work on its prevention much ahead.

1 Dementia and its Causes: A View of Modern Science and Medicine

Dementia is a Latin word which means madness or mindlessness. De means without and ment means mind. In the present medical context, dementia is the loss of the mind’s cognitive ability. The symptoms are a gradual loss of memory and an inability to coordinate thoughts and actions.

Dementia is not a name for a particular disease but it is the result of diverse ailments that affect the functions of the mind and lead to loss of memory and cognition. Dementia is also termed in common language as senility which occurs through ageing.
There are four principal disorders that lead to dementia:

- **Dementia due to Alzheimer’s disease:** Small clumps of protein begin to develop around brain cells and disrupt the normal working of the brain leading to dementia. This disease is the major cause of dementia in the world.

- **Vascular dementia:** This is caused due to problems in blood circulation. Parts of the brain do not receive enough blood and oxygen, thereby causing disruption in normal functions of the brain.

- **Dementia with Lewy bodies:** This is caused due to some abnormal protein structures, known as Lewy bodies, which develop inside the brain.

- **Fronto-temporal dementia:** This is caused due to the shrinkage in the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain.

Besides these four major causes of dementia, any other ailment that leads to damaging of the brain cells in one way or the other will lead to dementia. It may be due to a disease like AIDS, some obstruction in blood circulation (arteriosclerosis) and high blood pressure (hypertension), brain infections from a virus or parasite, constant mental tension and pressure, among others. In other words, we can say that dementia results from deformation, damage or death of the nerve cells in the brain due to diverse reasons.

**Symptoms of Dementia**

Dementia is a syndrome (a group of related symptoms) that is associated with an ongoing decline of the brain and its abilities. These include:

- Lack of coherent thinking

- Gradual loss of memory

- Confusion in speech and language

- Decrease in understanding of simple things
Inaccuracy in coordination and judgment

People with dementia may have problems controlling their emotions and therefore behave inappropriately in social situations. They may see or hear things that other people do not, or may have false beliefs. Others perceive changes in various aspects of their personality due to the above symptoms.

Treatment

There is no cure for dementia at present, or, in other words, no way to treat the principal ailments that lead to dementia. However, some drugs are known to arrest the course of degeneration. Acetyl cholinesterase inhibitors may slow the progression of Alzheimer’s dementia and Lewy body dementia. Another drug called memantine, a glutamate blocker, may protect brain cells against damage. In vascular dementia and possibly Alzheimer’s, other drugs that enhance blood circulation may be used to slow down the damage to brain cells.

2 Dementia: A Holistic View

Let us try to first understand the major causes of dementia according to the ancient Indian medical system from the Vedas. The written Vedic medical tradition began from the last or fourth Veda called the Atharva Veda, estimated to be about 6,000 years old. Later, around 1000 BC, medical wisdom was more refined and compiled in the form of a fifth Veda— the Ayurveda. Ayurveda is in fact the most ancient medical system in the world and is the mother medical system of all existing systems. According to this ancient holistic science of life, the entire universe works on the same fundamental principles. All living (chetan) and non-living (jadda) things are made of five fundamental elements. Chetan differs from jadda for having an independent system (smaller system within the bigger cosmic system), whereas the jadda is a part of the bigger cosmic system. The equilibrium of the five elements in the cosmos speaks for harmony and their imbalance leads to catastrophes. Chetan have independent micro-cosmos where the five elements form the three principal energies or dosha (vata, pitta and kapha) for performing the functions of this system.
The mind is considered the sixth and most superior of all the senses. Without the mind, its coordinating ability and its sense of discretion (the buddhi), senses are rendered ineffectual and inadequate. But above the senses and the mind is that invisible energy (soul), which is the cause of being and is the real self of an individual. This philosophy of existence is different from the Western view from the 17th century onwards, where the mind is generally considered as the ‘self’ of an individual and is supreme.

To put these concepts in simple words, in the Vedic tradition, the soul is the continuity of a human being as it is not destroyed by death. It is mere energy, which is not material or sensual. That means it cannot be touched, seen or felt. However, this energy is the living element of the mind and the senses that constitute the physical being of an individual and it expresses itself through the physical being.

Let us first understand the dynamics of the body at the physiological and psychosomatic levels from Ayurvedic point of view.

### Dynamics of three energies or dosha: vata, pitta and kapha

*Vata* is constituted from the elements ether and air and its functions are related to these two elements. Ether or space is omnipresent and air is mobile. The functions related to movements as well as to space are performed by *vata*.

*Vata* is responsible for one’s entire body movements, blood circulation, respiration, excretion, functions related to the nerves and brain, speech, sensations, touch, hearing, feelings like fear, anxiety, grief, enthusiasm, natural urges, formation of foetus, sexual act and retention.

Fire constitutes *pitta* energy of the body and thus *pitta* is the body’s fire or *agni*. When we use the word *agni* in Ayurveda, it pertains to everything related to digestion and assimilation. *Agni* in Ayurvedic terminology is a part of *pitta*, but it also has some other functions:
Pitta is responsible for vision, hunger, thirst, heat regulation, softness, lustre, cheerfulness, intellect, mental lucidity and sexual vigour.

*Kapha* forms the solid part of the body and is responsible for the formation of new cells. An adult body constantly needs new cells. We need various secretions in the body. The inner lining of the digestive system and uterus are constantly renewed. *Kapha* constitutes all the solid structure of the body and is responsible for binding different body organs together. It gives rise to firmness and heaviness to the body and is responsible for sexual potency, strength, forbearance and restraint.

Due to external influences like cosmic changes, diverse life situations, geographical conditions, time (in terms of time of the day, time of the year and one’s age), the balance of these energies keeps changing but it reverts to normal by natural means. If human beings indulge in anti-natural acts, make perverted or negative use of their senses, eat antagonistic foods and do not follow the rhythm of nature, they fall prey to imbalance of the fundamental energies. Imbalance of one or more energies disturbs the functional system of the body and if left unattended, it becomes chronic and gives rise to numerous disorders related to the imbalance of that particular energy. The first duty of human beings (*svadharma*) is to live in tune with nature, according to space and time (*desha* and *kala*), and do everything to maintain the fundamental balance of the body to prevent ailments. They should strengthen the body by taking rejuvenating products (*rasayana*) and to live with an optimum level of energy until old age. Equally important is to maintain mental balance, live with a sense of contentment (*santosha*), and use yogic means to obtain stillness of mind (*sattva*).

**Prevention and Treatment of Mental Disorders in Ayurveda**

For a better understanding of the prevention of dementia and the methods given in this monograph, I would like to provide some fundamental features of therapy used in Ayurveda for treating ailments of the head region (for example, mental and brain disorders, sinusitis, weakness or ailments of senses, falling and greying of hair).
1. Treatment is given with brain and nerve strengthening medications like brahmi, aindri, jyotishmati, long pepper, and so on. Various rasayanas are prepared with these drugs and are given orally. Medicated oils are also prepared from these drugs for external applications like massage, shirobasti or shirodhara.

2. Nasya treatment, which is a part of panchakarma or the five purification practices, is given with special medicated oils or herbal powders through the nasal passage. The nose is considered the gateway to the head and the medications induced through the nasal passage open the channels in the head, improve oxygenation, and hence the functioning of the brain. Similarly, various odours have an important role in therapy. The popular aromatherapy of modern times is developed from Ayurvedic wisdom. To treat mental ailments in Ayurveda, various kinds of herbs are burnt and their smoke (dhooni) is inhaled.

3. The third principal therapy is the hyper-hydration of the head region with medicated oils which contain brain rejuvenating herbs. There are several ways to do it. Special head massages with oil are called champi (the word shampoo originates from it). There is a technique of holding plenty of oil in the centre of the scalp, called shirobasti. Another technique which was developed in Kerala is called shirodhara that involves pouring medicated oil on the forehead and letting it flow backwards on the entire scalp. This is a very popular technique in the West, as it relieves daily stresses.
Brain, nerves and mind

Which energy performs the functions of the brain, like perception, cognition, thought process and memory?

- Ether and air are the first two elements which form vata energy that perform all the functions which are agile and involve movement. The brain and nerve functions and cognition are the functions performed by vata energy.

- The third element is fire, that forms pitta energy and performs the functions of metabolism, vision, clarity of thought and creativity.

- The last two elements are water and earth and they form kapha energy, which is like the building material of the body. Growth, formation of new cells, glandular secretions are some of the principal functions of this energy.

In normal living conditions, the mind is constantly processing the knowledge obtained from the five senses and is always active. During sleep, the five senses are partially closed and the mind is closed to new knowledge. Nevertheless, the mind is processing old knowledge, which is stored in the form of memory and expressed in dreams. The mind is constantly undergoing modification, as its thinking process or chitta has a ceaseless chain of thoughts.

We go back to the Yoga Guru Patanjali to understand a little more about the functioning of the mind. He analysed the mind’s modification into five categories: evidence, misconception, fancy, sleep and memory. These five types of modifications can be either afflictive or non-afflictive.

For strengthening the mind by giving it rest, we need to make an effort to stop the modifications from time to time. The thought process of the mind is called chitta in Sanskrit. Chitta has a compulsive nature (vriti) to have a constant chain of thoughts. However, we human beings have the capability of stopping these chains of thought and are able to concentrate on a single point. Mind controls the mind and by doing so it opens the higher faculties and capabilities of our mind. The whole scenario of human existence is described very beautifully in Katha Upanisha.
The body is like a chariot
of which soul is the owner
the intellect is its driver
the mind plays the part of reins,
as for the horses, those are the senses,
the world is their arena.

It is the intellect or buddhi (the driver) which should lead the horses (senses) by using the reins (the mind), along with its owner, the soul, to the destination.

In Vedic tradition, the fundamentals of human existence are quite the opposite to those of Descartes and other thinkers of that time. ‘I am (due to the presence of my soul in my body), therefore I can think’ is totally opposite to ‘I think, therefore I am’. In our times, there is an over-use of the senses, exhaustion of mind, and exploitation of human capabilities due to commercialisation at every stage. We misuse our mental faculties by enforcing mind-based existence, which ignores the body on the one hand and hinders mental development on the other. An alarming rise in dementia shows that not only have we destroyed our environment and nature, we have also destroyed the human mind.

In a world of hyper-activitiy, the body is ignored and its primary balance is disturbed. Natural urges like hunger, excretion and sleep are disturbed. There is chaos from the physical to the mental level. The mental faculties can take this turmoil only to a certain extent and ultimately they give up and withdraw. This is what dementia is.

The thinking process has three characteristic qualities (guna): that related to activities (rajas), that hinders action (tamas) and the quality of peace and stillness (sattva). The activities of the mind like planning and organising are rajas qualities. Senses and the mind are active and are in coordination with each other. When these faculties are fatigued, the senses and mind reach the state of tamas or
inaction. Tamas also includes those thoughts which hinder our inner development. These are rivalry, jealousy, anger, hatred, distress and discontentment. These are popularly called negative thoughts.

Sattva is the state of stillness and peace. It is a state when modifications of the mind or the chain of thoughts are slowed down and quietened. A state of concentration on a single object or a sound, or beholding the beauty of nature or devotion to God or gods, or a realisation one's real self as soul help quieten the mind and bring a sattvic state. Worldly activities generally comprise rajas and tamas and sattva is the balancing factor for these. Lack of sattva or the inner peace and stillness leads to disorders, as it affects both body and mind.

**Body, Mind and Mental Disorders**

As mentioned, the body is constituted of five fundamental elements that form three principal energies to perform all the physical and mental functions of the body and mind. The brain and nerve functions, blood circulation, the functions related to movements are performed by vata energy formed from ether and air. A chronic imbalance of this energy leads to many ailments related to the functions of this energy. Out of the numerous disorders of chronic vata imbalance or vikriti, Charaka has described 84 prominent ones in Sutrasthana. There are some disorders amongst them which are related to the brain and nerves, and thus are the precursors of a more major disorder like shrinkage of temporal lobes, Alzheimer or other related disorders leading to dementia. These vata disorders are:

a) Frequent pain in the temporal regions and other parts of the body;

b) frequent delirium (atipralap in Sanskrit, which means often indulging in incoherent and nonsensical talk); and

c) instability of mind (anavasthitchita)

There are other symptoms during excessive vata imbalance like chittabhrama (delusion), gyanbhranti (misconception) and chaitnyanasha (destruction at the level of awareness and consciousness).
From the above description it is clear that the root cause of ailments leading to dementia lies in chronic vata imbalance. However, it is important to be aware that there are numerous disorders due to chronic vata imbalance, and which disorder one is afflicted by depends upon different factors like the life history of a person, fundamental constitution, geographical location, lifestyle and food habits. Various aches and pains (head, knee, back and shoulder are the most common these days), arthritis, hypertension, various disorders related to the circulatory system, several ailments of the heart, stiffness of the body, ears or eyes, loss of hearing, nervousness and delirium are some of the major disorders caused due to chronic vata. In the context of dementia, I can state that the key factors lie in vata imbalance and the theme of the prevention of dementia is based upon the fundamental mind–body balance. It is also important for the reader to know that if an imbalance in any one of the energies is left unattended for a long time, it ultimately causes the imbalance of all the energies as they function in coordination with each other.

Delirium is considered differently in the modern science and medicine. It is treated as an independent disorder and not as a precursor of ailments leading to dementia. ‘Delirium is most often caused by physical or mental illness and is usually temporary and reversible. Many disorders cause delirium, including conditions that deprive the brain of oxygen or other substances.’ Existing Western medical literature further emphasises that delirium is not a disease but a syndrome. It is very frequent in hospitalised patients. Ayurvedic sages believe that most allopathic drugs cause vata and pitta disturbances in the body and delirium is the result of that.

To sum up the Ayurvedic point of view for vata, delirium and dementia:

**Chronic vata imbalance ➔ Delirium and instability of mind**

**When left unattended ➔ Disorders leading to dementia**

In order to prevent dementia, we have to make an effort to eradicate the precursors of this disorder. The principal factors are chronic vata imbalance and
disequilibrium in mental qualities due to lack of sattva or inner stillness and harmony.

3 Principal Risk Factors Leading to Dementia

No ailment or disorder appears suddenly in the body. It occurs gradually due to diverse physical and mental imbalances developed over a number of years. The three fundamental energies of the body are responsible for physical and mental functions. It is our duty (svadharma) to maintain the balance of these three energies, as well as of the three characteristic qualities of the mind to maintain good health. The three states of mind and the three energies of the body mutually influence each other. An imbalance of vata creates a hectic and nervous state of mind causing rajas imbalance. The imbalanced rajas further disturbs vata. Similarly, an imbalance of kapha energy leads to inertia and thus gives rise to too much tamas. Too much tamasic action like excessive sleep, inertia, feeling of heaviness, inaction, and a passive lifestyle lead to imbalance of kapha. Sattva is the inner light of an individual and pitta is the warmth and energy of the body. It is related to intellect and clarity. Sattva is the spiritual lucidity.

To prevent a horrific ailment like dementia which is taking on pandemic proportions, we will have to systematically understand the multidimensional factors that put us at risk. Given below are the 12 major risk factors. The more risk factors you have, the more the chances of getting dementia. The longer you have lived with these risk factors, the harder you will have to work to eradicate them.

Risk Factors for Dementia

Risk Factor 1

Excessive and Negative Use of the Senses

Perverted, negative and excessive use of sense objects, time and intellect (buddhi) is the three-fold cause of both mental and physical disorders. Both body and mind are the location of disorders, as well as of pleasure. Their balanced use is the cause of pleasure.³
This citation from *Charaka* clearly states that the five senses, mind, and the capacity to discriminate and decide (*buddhi*) should be used appropriately to avoid mental and physical disorders. In the present context of dementia, the principal concern is with the sense of hearing and its object sound. This sense is related to air and space elements. Speaking loudly or too much or hearing people or sounds which are loud, unnecessary or unwanted affect your nerves and exhausts them. Living constantly in an exhausting and noisy atmosphere will have ill effects in the long run. The principle of life is that exhaustion (excessive *rajas*) leads to withdrawal, inertia (*tamas*) and suspended action of that particular organ. Ultimately, the organ develops a sub-system which is not in rhythm with the rest of the system and that is considered a major disorder.4

Imagine a mother of two children who works as a secretary or as a manager where she has to deal with many phone calls and many visitors. Besides that, she has to organise the house and spend the evenings catering to her children’s needs and demands. If she has a husband who is unable to share the load at home, it is too much for her. She is over-using her senses and has no real rest. Such are the vulnerable cases. There are people who speak needlessly loudly, even on the phone. There are others for whom the raised volume is symbolic of their higher status. With mobile phones where the sound is amplified several times, speaking loudly is unnecessarily stressful for the ears and nerves and fatigues the mind. Similarly, listening to loud music or always having the radio, television or other devices on for music or sound fatigues the sense of hearing, and ultimately has ill effects on the body and mind.

*Risk Factor 2*

**Incorrect Shoulder and Neck Posture**

Incorrect posture with forward bent shoulders and curved cervical vertebrae hinder blood flow to the brain and thus over a long period of time lead to disorders. A curve in the seven cervical vertebrae (neck vertebrae) hinders the passage of arteries, veins, lymphs and nerves and causes hindrance in the free flow of energy, primarily diminishing blood supply to the brain. The brain has
high metabolism and high requirements of blood. It is estimated that 15 per cent of the cardiac output is used by the brain. I am not talking of ischemia or lack of blood flow which causes cerebral cell death. I am talking of a situation where both the pressure and the quantity of blood supply are slightly affected and have a long-term effect on the brain.

**Risk Factor 3**

**Incorrect Breathing**

From the Ayurvedic and yogic point of view, we not only breathe air (oxygen being an essential component of survival), but we take in the cosmic energy or *prana* with each breath. Breathing provides us the living element of the cosmos and keeps the connection between body and soul. As soon as the intake of air or *prana* or the cosmic living element stops, the soul (the cause of being) departs from the body and the life of an individual ends. The *prana* energy or the air we breathe all our life, in fact provides us all the five elements of which the universe is constituted. It is like nourishment to the body and mind. When the breath is taken only half-way, we deprive ourselves of the cosmic energy and become prey to weakness and fatigue, as well as to mental and physical disorders. This leads to a dull appearance, a pale complexion and other signs of vata imbalance. If we get only half our food requirements, we start to show signs of weakness and fatigue. Similarly, due to incorrect breathing (which is not deep and conscious), we get only half our requirement of *prana* or the cosmic energy.

**Risk Factor 4**

**Nasal Blockades**

Constant phlegm in the nasal passages and a frequently blocked nose hinder the flow of air in the head region. If the flow is hindered, it affects the nerves and brain over a period of time, leading to sluggishness and dullness. It gives rise to lack of attention, and diminished retention and memory.
Risk Factor 5

**Chronic Cold, Excessive Mucous in Head Region and Sinusitis**

Frequent attacks of cold and constant phlegm formation that requires one to expectorate it are bad signs and indicate that the presence of phlegm causes blockades in your head region. The air-filled passages of the skull are called sinuses. In healthy conditions, they are able to drain out mucous. If the mucous accumulates in these cavities, bacteria and virus also develop, giving rise to the pathological condition called sinusitis. This leads to symptoms like headache, fatigue, frequent cold and cough, fever, nasal congestion, etc. which spoil the inner climate of the upper region and badly affect the brain.

Risk Factor 6

**A Chronic Imbalance of the Body's Vital Energies Called Vata**

I have already shown that the three vital energies are responsible for performing all physical and mental functions of the body. The vata energy is responsible for the brain and nerves. It is further stated that a chronic imbalance of vata gives rise to some ailments related to the brain and nerves, the most prominent being delirium. In fact, vata imbalance is the biggest risk factor. Vata is formed from ether and air elements and all functions which are spread in space and involve movement are the functions of vata. The brain and nerve functions (central and peripheral nervous systems) are performed by vata energy. A chronic imbalance of this energy affects the functional capacity of the brain, thus paving the way for diverse disorders leading to dementia.

Risk Factor 7

**General Body Weakness, Frequent Bouts of Fatigue and Exhaustion**

The general weakness in the body can be due to many reasons. It could be a weak digestive fire (metabolism), bad assimilation of food or bad food habits, or too much physical labour, among others. Bouts of fatigue can be due to weakness
or overwork, poor nourishment, bad food habits and mental tension. Excessive fatigue turns into exhaustion and becomes the cause of numerous ailments. In Ayurveda, this state is called dhatukashya, which means the destruction of the body's reserves. Americans call the state of exhaustion ‘burn out’. Today, people like to push themselves to their uttermost limit, as modern civilisation is mind-oriented. They do not allow themselves to stop and think, ‘I cannot take it any more and I need to rest’. They follow an obsessive-compulsive behaviour pattern: ‘I have no choice, I must do it’. When we exhaust our bodies to such a limit, all functions are affected, in particular our nerves and brain.

**Risk Factor 8**

**High Blood Pressure or Hypertension**

‘Hypertension or high blood pressure is a symptom and not a disease by itself. It is important that you learn to find out why the blood in the streams of your inner being is running more rapidly than usual and learn to stop the causes of turbulence in these streams. Hypertension or high pressure of blood (HBP) flowing in your smooth arteries destroys the fine infrastructure of the blood canals, affects their flexibility (hardens them) and can bring you at the brink of cardiovascular disorders, paralysis, stroke and other countless disorders.’ This is a citation from my own book on hypertension, which is not yet published. Hypertension is a risk factor that leads to many disorders, but is itself caused by the risk factors described here. For healthy cerebral blood supply, one needs the right density and pressure of blood. The blood supply to the brain is through the blood-brain barriers and not through arteries. It is a very delicate system, and if the blood is too dense or does not have an appropriate pressure, the brain is not properly nourished by blood and its metabolism and its functions are affected.

**Risk Factor 9**

**Constant Mental Tension and Feeling of Helplessness**

Tension is a state of mind. Human life has its ups and down and a stable person maintains balance in all kinds of situations. To remain under tension and fear or
a feeling of helplessness in certain situations gives rise to mental fatigue and exhaustion and affects the mind adversely. Some people live in a state of perpetual tension and stress. Small things like a traffic jam or a flight delay is enough to make them feel tense. This mental phenomenon has unpleasant long-term consequences for mental and physical health.

**Risk Factor 10**

**Shocks and Traumas**

Some life situations and events result in shock and trauma. These affect the human mind and may give rise to delirium which is a precursor of dementia. It is the strength and stability of the mind that helps an individual remain stable in such situations, thus not letting the ill effects of upheavals affect the brain.

**Risk Factor 11**

**Dwelling on the Past and Fearing the Future**

There are individuals who cling to the past, either feeling anguish for the difficulties they had to face or regretting the loss of good times. They are generally fearful of the future. This is not good for the mind and has long-term consequences for the mental and physical health of an individual. This attitude gives rise to delirium and hence ultimately to other mental disorders leading to dementia.

**Risk Factor 12**

**Hopping Thoughts**

Some people have a very short attention span and their thoughts digress very fast from one topic to another. At times, this digression is quite out of context. You cannot even tell such people a short story without interruption, and their intervention invariably has no relationship to the story. One word or one incident in your narration may link their thoughts to something completely different and out of context and they quickly interrupt you either by asking a question or telling you something. They repeat it often and quickly forget the original context
of the conversation. It is not the occasional apologetic interruption. It is haphazard thinking and that is why I have termed it ‘hopping thoughts’. Their thinking process hops from one topic to another and they digress to something quite out of context.

Sometimes, even stable individuals show minor symptoms of hopping thoughts. This happens due to past emotional experiences and associations. We divert our minds from a scene of accident in a movie to our own past experiences and our thoughts are momentarily not within the context of the movie. However, our thoughts quickly revert to the present. In people with an unstable mind, the hopping is at the surface, or superficial and frequent. Their thinking process does not generally return to the original story and such people have also low retention power. If not checked and corrected in time, this becomes a precursor for one of the mental ailments leading to dementia.

I have described here the major risk factors which may lead to dementia or a gradual loss of memory and cognition with aging. The more an individual has of these factors, the more he or she is at risk of getting this disorder. A gradual deformation in the brain takes place, leading to the major ailments described earlier. The 12 risk factors described also apply to other mental ailments.

4 Prevention of the Risk Factors

For prevention of dementia, the aim is to protect and preserve the nerves, the brain and the five senses so that they work in coordination with each other without any deformation until the end of an individual’s life. In the present context, this deformation is defined as the loss of retention and inability to recollect the past.

When we talk of prevention on a long-term basis, many questions arise in terms of time. Some might think they are too old for these preventive measures. Others may think that they are still too young to worry about an ailment that may or may not attack them during the later part of their lives. Some others may be sceptical of these measures on the ground that there is no double blind study
possible for these long-term preventive measures. Actually, it is never too late or too early to improve the quality of your life. These measures may save you from other ailments as well and give you more energy besides preventing this particular disorder. Therefore, whether you are 17 or 65, just do it. Correct your posture, let the energy channels flow in your body without hindrances and obstructions, and enhance your mental power and physical force. The methods presented here are based upon the age-old Vedic wisdom that has stood the test of time and I do not think they need any approval from modern scientific methods which are generally non-holistic and reductionist.

What follows are the preventive measures for the 12 risk factors already stated.

**Prevention of Risk Factor 1**

*Excessive and Negative Use of the Senses*

To prevent excessive use of the sense of hearing and its object, sound, pay attention to the following:

1. Try to speak as softly as possible. Avoid pointless conversation and be economical in your speech. Remember that words are precious and sound has sanctity. Try not to hear or speak what is unnecessary.

2. Avoid people who speak too much and too loudly. They drain your energy and leave you mentally fatigued.

3. If your job demands a lot of speaking, give your sense of speech and hearing a complete rest after work. Have a hot drink and find a quiet place for a while.

4. Those with small children to take care of should still try to find about 30 minutes’ rest between office and home. Go for a quiet walk or have a warm drink.

5. Train your children to speak softly and gently. Instil in them the habit of reading.
6. Avoid unnecessary sounds of radio and television. Switch them off when you are not listening or watching.

7. Listen to some soothing, or meditative music, in your free time and before going to bed to get rid of the stresses of the day.

8. Change your routine in such a way that you get some quiet time to yourself everyday, a little more of it every week and may be half a day every month. Every six months, take at least a weekend free of sound and worries and go on a retreat. When you read this, it may sound impossible, especially for those who have families with small children. You find time for things that you think are important. It is always a question of priorities.

Prevention of Risk Factor 2

Incorrect Shoulder and Neck Posture

Correct your posture by sitting upright with your shoulders straight. With a forward bent posture, the cervical vertebrae bulge out and create a circulation problem in the head region, besides pain in the neck and shoulders. The following exercise will help you find out if your shoulder posture is correct:

Lie down and raise your arms above your head as shown in the picture below. If your arms show a curve and are lifted in the middle, you have bent shoulders.

The two pictures below are an exercise to regularly straighten your shoulders and neck, thus assuring a free flow of energy to the head region. Stand with
your hands clasped together and pull them backwards while holding your head straight. After repeating several times, stay in a still position with a backward pull and move left and right in this position.
Another beneficial yoga posture to straighten the shoulders and neck vertebrae is in a sitting position. Sit cross-legged on the floor. In case you cannot sit cross-legged, you can sit on your heels to do this exercise. Those with a stiff body may do this exercise while sitting in a chair. Take your arms back, intertwine the fingers of both your hands and stretch them backwards. Bend your head forwards, while pushing your clasped hands upwards. Some of you may not be able to straighten the arms upwards as shown in the pictures below. But let this not discourage you as one can acquire flexibility with regular practice.

If you have no neck or shoulder problem but have pain in the lower back, this should be also treated. The vertebral column is made up of 33 vertebrae, which are connected to each other with a fine disc like beads in a necklace. In fact, pain in the lower back, if related to the backbone, may also spread to the upper region. Since several people of all ages suffer from back pain, I suggest the following six exercises which are meant for the entire backbone.
Prishtavansh Asanas or Backbone Exercises

Exercise 1

Lie on your back with your hands slightly apart from the body and join your feet. Turn your feet in one direction and head in the other. Make the movements slowly and simultaneously while inhaling. Stay in this position for some seconds while holding your breath. Return to the straight posture slowly and smoothly while exhaling.

Stay in the straight posture for a few breaths and repeat the same in the opposite direction. This is one cycle. Repeat this 10 times.
**Exercise 2**

Lie straight on your back as in the previous exercise. Put your right foot over the left as shown in the picture below. Turn your head slowly to one side while turning your feet in the opposite direction. Inhale while doing this, hold the breath while in this posture, and exhale while coming back to the straight position.

Repeat the same for the opposite direction. Do this exercise 10 times.

There is a second part of this exercise, which you do by putting the left foot over the right.
Exercise 3

This exercise is done with your legs folded and your feet on the ground as shown in the figure below.

As in the earlier exercises, turn your head in one direction while you turn your feet in the opposite direction. Make sure that you do the movement slowly while inhaling.
Repeat the same for the opposite direction. Do this exercise about 10 times.

*Exercises 4-6*

These three positions are essentially the same as the previous three, but they are done while lying on your stomach. While turning your head and legs, do so in the same direction, not opposite sides. Given below are the three pictures that depict these three exercises. Repeat each several times.
Prevention of Risk Factor 3

Incorrect Breathing

Deep and conscious breathing is essential for good physical and mental health. As explained earlier, the air we inhale is the living element of the cosmos and our system should properly inhale and assimilate it. Improper breathing affects your whole body, as with each breath we replenish our body with five elements. Space or ether is one element, which is a prerequisite to any existence. With each breath, we inhale both ether and air. The third element is fire, and we take it inside us in the form of the heat of the atmosphere. Imagine yourself always breathing in air that is below zero or above 50°C. Even the thought of it is unpleasant. Thus, the equilibrium of the fire element in the air we inhale is essential. The fourth fundamental element is water and we all know that the inhalation of absolutely dry air will cause haemorrhage in our nasal passage and may also lead to other severe health complications. The water element is essential and is always present in the air we inhale.

A large part of the air consists of nitrogen, which makes the substantial part of our body in the form of proteins. There are many other elements of earth (carbon, silicon, calcium, phosphorus, etc.) in the air. The vital quality of the air changes with time of day, weather, climate and geographical location, and that affects our lives directly. We must remember that the intake of vital air lasts until we are alive and that is why the sages called it prana or the living element. By regulating our breath and controlling its journey into our being, we, therefore, control our cosmic interaction with our mental and physical processes and learn to influence them with the cosmic energy. Exhaling the air is also a means of detoxifying our body. In order to perform breathing correctly, it is suggested that you learn to practice pranayama. One of the eight parts of yoga is pranayama, or controlled and organised breathing. The literal meaning of pranayama is to develop control over one’s prana.
Initiation into Pranayama

There are three parts to pranayama—inhilation, exhalation, and the absence of the two. Improper inhaling and exhaling and without appropriate pauses may affect your power of retention; it could lead to headaches, throat or other respiratory tract infections, it may affect your senses and you may get easily fatigued. Therefore, practice and repeatedly check yourself to breathe in an appropriate yogic manner. Devote five minutes in the morning and five in the evening to do these simple four steps in fresh air or with an open window.

Step 1: Sit cross-legged or in any other posture in a relaxed manner. Begin to inhale in a regular but gradual manner until close to your total capacity. Keep your entire concentration on the prana, its rhythm and follow its journey inside you. Relax and keep the air in as long as you can. Then exhale gradually with the same rhythm. Do not let your concentration divert from your breath. When you have exhaled completely, pause for a bit without air and concentrate on your inner space. Repeat this process several times and gradually increase the length of inhalation and exhalation, as well holding or pausing with and without the air.

Step 2: This step involves energising two sides of the body separately. The left and right sides of the body represent tamas and rajas, respectively. They can also be compared to the moon (left) and the sun (right). This step involves closing one nostril and breathing exclusively through the other, as described above for all the four parts of the pranayama. With your right hand, close your right nostril with your right thumb and inhale through your left nostril. Hold the air inside by also closing your left nostril with your ring finger (see figures below). Lift your ring finger and exhale from the left side and replace the ring finger again to hold the lungs without air. Repeat the procedure six to ten times exclusively with the left nostril. Later, repeat the same for the right nostril while you keep your left nostril closed. This is called nadishodhan or purification of channels. You have purified the left and right channels with this form.
Step 3: Inhale through one nostril and exhale through the other; follow by inhaling through the nostril through which you have previously exhaled. Begin inhaling through the right nostril while the left is closed with your thumb. Then, also close the right nostril with your ring finger to hold the air inside. Let the air out through the left nostril by lifting the thumb and continue to keep the ring finger on the right nostril. Now also close the left nostril to keep the lungs without air. For the next breath, inhale through the left nostril and continue the procedure. Repeat this six to ten times. This purifies the central channel of the body.

Step 4: In this step, inhalation is through both the nostrils, but close them with your thumb and ring finger when you have inhaled and when you are holding the lungs without air. This step will help you to prolong the timings of the four steps of pranayama.
Prevention of Risk Factor 4

Nasal Blockades

Free the nasal passage from phlegm blockades or polyps. Some people have perpetually blocked nasal passages and that sows the seeds for diverse mental ailments. They cannot breathe properly or practice pranayama as a result. Here are a few steps to keep the nasal passage healthy and free from dirt and infections.

1. After taking a hot shower, dip two fingers in mustard oil, insert them into your nostrils and inhale. This may make you sneeze. Blow your nose strongly after this practice.

2. Make it a habit to blow your nose strongly after a hot shower to take out the accumulated mucous in the nasal passage. In a dry season or if living in heated houses, the nasal passages get dry and in some cases causes irritation. Smear the nasal passages with a finger dipped in ghee (clarified butter) several times a day, especially before going to bed.

3. Jal neti is a yogic practice for cleaning the nasal passages with water. For this, you need a small pot with a nozzle called a neti pot. Fill it with potable lukewarm water. Hold the pot in your right hand. Tilt your head slightly backward, then on the left side, and then slightly forward. Relax in this position, open your mouth, and breathe freely through it. Insert the nozzle of the pot in your right nostril and tilt it gently. Let the water enter through the right nostril and come out through the left. Let the water flow smoothly by continuous tilting until the pot is empty. Blow your nose after this in order to clear the passages. Now repeat the same from the left to the right nostril. Jal neti activates the mucous-secreting cells of the nasal passage and that is why you may have a momentary feeling of a slight cold. The epithelial cells of the mucous membrane of the nasal passage are activated.
by jal neti and this practice keeps them active to fight any attack by a virus, bacteria, or polluted air. After jal neti, you may find your sense of smell enhanced. The process of cleaning the nasal passages with water also activates the sensory cells, and one becomes capable of smelling nearly undetectable odours as well as odours from the internal parts of one’s body.

**Caution:** It is advised that this practice should be learned from a teacher. If the position of the head is not accurate in order to allow the gravitational flow of water from one passage to another, there is a danger of water entering the windpipe. This may cause an obstruction in breathing and coughing.

4. Another important step to free the nasal passage is vapour inhalation with some drops of a mixture of etheric oil in it. The details of this method are described in the next step.

5. Some people are not conscious that their nasal passages are partially blocked. They should do some rapid breathing several times a day through the nose to make sure that the passages are open.
Prevention of Risk Factor 5

**Chronic Cold, Excessive Mucous in the Head Region and Sinusitis.**

There is no better method than daily *jal neti* to cure and prevent chronic cold and sinusitis. This practice slowly opens the blocked passages and reduces pain due to accumulation of mucous in the sinus. Use warm water for *jal neti*. It helps melt cumulative mucous and expectorates it. *Kapha* from the nasal passage comes out with *jal neti* and it frees the passage for *vata* and helps soften the accumulated *kapha* in the inner parts, such as around the eyes and the upper parts of the cheeks. You will observe that when doing *jal neti* regularly, old, dark-coloured phlegm may come out for the first few days. However, after several days, only a fluid will come out and the pain due to sinusitis will disappear.

If your nostrils are dry, warm water may hurt them. Smear some ghee in the nostrils prior to *neti*. From time to time, *neti* should also be done with a mixture of 50 per cent pure natural milk and 50 per cent water.

The second part of the cure for sinusitis is steam inhalation with a mixture of etheric oils in it. The inhalation is done with special breathing exercises as described below. Either use a commercial mixture of etheric oils or add a small amount of pain-relieving balm in boiling hot water. You may also make your own mixture with the following ingredients:

- Eucalyptus oil: 50g
- Citronella: 50g
- Menthol crystals: 50g
- Fennel oil: 20g
- Camphor: 20g
- Lavender oil: 10g
Let the mixture stand for at least a week before use. Shake the bottle three to four times a day for about 10 minutes. This mixture can be preserved for years if kept in a tightly closed dark bottle in a cool place. Never use plastic bottles to store these oils. Always replace the lid immediately otherwise they evaporate. Take some from the stock for everyday use.

To get rid of sinusitis, inhalations must be done regularly by adding a few drops of this mixture in boiling hot water. Use a steam inhalation apparatus (called face sauna) or boil water at a low heat in a small pot. Begin inhalation by simply breathing in these vapours either through the nose or mouth. This will help to initially open the passage. To open the blocked nasal passage, take a deep breath from the vapours through your mouth and try to exhale through your nose. Do this slowly, and the nasal passage will gradually be freed from phlegm.

At each step of inhalation, add two to three drops of the oil. For the next step, inhale rhythmically through your mouth and exhale through your nose. Then inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. In this process, you might have to stop in between to blow your nose and spit out excessive saliva. This inhalation activates the salivary glands. Blow your nose with force so that the old stuck phlegm is blown out. After this, inhale from one nostril while keeping the other closed (as you did for pranayama). Keep the vapours inside by closing both nostrils. Then exhale from the other nostril and inhale from the same. Repeat this a few times so that the passage between the two nostrils gets free, and by closing both nostrils, the vapours are forced to go to the other parts of the sinus.

The next step is to inhale to your full capacity through the nostrils or mouth, then hold the nostrils, shut the mouth, and try to push the air out with pressure. Since the mouth and nostrils are closed, the vapours will be forced to go to other parts because of the pressure being applied. You may feel some sensation in your ears by doing so.
Lastly, inhale vapours to your full capacity, close your mouth and nose as you did above, and bend backwards. While in this position, tilt your head sideways. Repeat this several times. In this manner, the medicated vapours can reach different parts of your head.

The vapours with etheric oils have a high penetration capacity. They are capable of softening the blocked mucous in the sinus passages and take it out. They can also cure the infection by creating an extremely disagreeable environment for the virus and bacteria, as some of the etheric oils in the mixture have anti-viral, anti-fungal and antibiotic qualities. However, to get rid of the infection completely, you will have to do this regularly because these viruses and bacteria multiply very quickly. After the inhalation, lie down for some time and keep yourself warm. For completely eradicating the sinus problem, you should also take a treatment with germinated wheat, which is described in Section 8.

**Prevention of Risk Factor 6**

**A Chronic Imbalance of the Body’s Air and Space Energy—Vata**

This is one of the major risk factors leading to dementia and every effort should be made to keep its equilibrium for preventing dementia. The chart below about vata will help understand the effect of the imbalance of vata, factors causing it and methods of treatment.

Our modern way of living is vata-oriented and we need to pay special attention to keeping our equilibrium in the face of this hectic pace of life. Warm drinks, warm and unctuous meals, oil application on the body followed by a hot bath or steam bath are some of the simple measures one can take. You also need a peaceful atmosphere and rest to balance the vata energy in your body.
Vata is dry and cold by nature, and that is why warm and unctuous measures are suggested. A continuous imbalance of vata is very bad for the nerves. The thinking process becomes hectic; one is distracted easily and unable to concentrate. We become nervous and unstable. If you get such symptoms, suspend your activities for a few days and saturate your body with warm oil. Oil your scalp also (see champi later) and sit in a hot bath. Then wrap your body in a bathrobe and sleep in a warm bed (prepared beforehand with a hot water bottle).

**The principal ways to heal vata imbalance are:**

1. Keep warm and avoid exposure to air, even in summer.

2. Do not take cold drinks. Drink warm water, previously boiled with cardamom.

3. Oil saturation of the body and the scalp is the key feature to cure vata imbalance.

4. A steam bath or simply a hot bath after oil saturation followed by appropriate rest provides great relief.

5. Take tea with ginger, cardamom, basil, pepper, fennel, coriander, and liquorice. If you do not have knowledge of all these, take them in dried form in equal quantity and grind them. Your pharmacist can do that for you. Boil half a teaspoon of this in half a litre of water and drink it as tea.

6. Make a simple spice mixture with the following five products in equal quantity: cumin, ajwain (an Indian spice like thyme), Nigella sativa (named kalonji in Indian shops abroad), fenugreek seeds and cress seeds. Grind
them and mix well. Take half a teaspoon of this in the morning and half in the evening with some water. Take it for at least 15 days.

7. Always eat warm meals accompanied by soups. Eat punctually and stop when two-thirds full. Do not eat snacks between meals. Never eat before the previous meal is digested.

**Vata Imbalance and Healing Measures**

<table>
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<th>Vata-dominating people</th>
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<th>Signs of vata imbalance</th>
<th>Treatment of vata imbalance</th>
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<td>• Agile</td>
<td>• Fasting</td>
<td>• Stiffness and pain in the body</td>
<td>• Food dominant in sweet and sour rasas</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Quick and unrestricted in their movements</td>
<td>• Excessive physical exercise</td>
<td>• Bad taste and dryness in the mouth</td>
<td>• Hot therapeutic measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Swift in action</td>
<td>• Exposure to cold</td>
<td>• Lack of appetite</td>
<td>• Enemas</td>
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<td>• Quick in fear and other emotions</td>
<td>• Laziness</td>
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<td>• Massages</td>
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<td>• Easily irritated</td>
<td>• Staying awake late at night</td>
<td>• Dry skin</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Intolerant to cold</td>
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<td>• Fatigue</td>
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<td>• Coarse hairs and nails</td>
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<td>• Prominent blood vessels</td>
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<td>• Over-ripened or stale food</td>
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<td>• Injury</td>
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<td>• Excessive sexual intercourse</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Withdrawn and timid behaviour</td>
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8. Keep your system clean and treat constipation immediately. Have a hot glass of milk before going to bed. Drink hot water in the morning and do exercises. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit and unctuous food. Treat constipation by changing your way of living rather than by taking purgatives.

**Prevention of Risk Factor 7**

*General Body Weakness, Frequent Bouts of Fatigue and Exhaustion*

The table shows that fatigue is one of the features of *vata* imbalance. Fatigue is also the result of improper nutrition, lack of assimilation of nutrients, and too much physical labour without appropriate rest. One should learn to accept fatigue, eat properly and rest. Besides that, one needs to take rasayanas or rejuvenating products to build up the body's immunity and vitality. Some recipes have been described later in this monograph. Fatigue has to be dealt with regularly and not accumulated to the level of exhaustion or burnout, as Americans like to call it. Ayurveda recommends that we to perform six-monthly cleansing practices in addition to *rasayana*.

**Prevention of Risk factor 8**

*High Blood Pressure (Hypertension)*

I have already stated that high blood pressure or hypertension is due to some blockades in the body. Low blood pressure is usually due to weakness and fatigue. Both low and high blood pressure may be the side-effects of allopathic medications. Make every effort to keep your blood pressure under control and do not take regular allopathic drugs at the slightest rise in your blood pressure. Use alternative methods and diet control first to stabilise blood pressure. Some principal precautions and measures to be taken are:

1. Rest, proper diet and liquid food in a timley manner. Freshly squeezed juice of carrot, apple, pomegranate, beetroot, orange, etc. Combine fruit with carrot so that the juice is not sour. Fresh juice should be consumed within half an hour after pressing or it causes *vata* imbalance.
2. If you are a healthy person and have mild hypertension, which is not due to any other disorder, try to cure it with lifestyle changes, diet and mild medicine. After an oil saturation massage and hot bath, take a mild purgative like senna leaves or something similar the next day before going to bed. After this treatment, stay on very simple vegetarian diet cooked with rejuvenating and balancing spices like cardamom, cumin, fennel, ajwain or thyme, and eat a moderate quantity.

3. Eat fruit like banana, papaya, pear, date, sweat apple and raisin. Avoid sour fruit.

4. Along with a careful lifestyle, there are homeopathic products available to regulate hypertension. Hypertension was a good German medication but is no longer available. Diacard is another German medication for hypertension. In India, Dr. Reckeweg’s R-44 drops are available to protect against hypertension. A good pharmacist can help you choose a homeopathic product for regulating hypertension. I repeat again that these are meant for mild cases and not extreme ones which are more likely the symptoms of another disorder in the body.

**Prevention of Risk Factor 9**

*Frequently Facing Mental Tension and Feeling of Helplessness*

Tension and helplessness are states of mind created by you. You need to learn methods to strengthen your mind. *Dhyana* or the yogic concentration exercises should be done regularly for a few minutes everyday in the morning upon waking and in the evening before going to bed.

**Initiation in Dhyana**

Do the breathing exercises described earlier for several months. After your breath flow becomes smooth and effortless, do the breathing exercises by sending your
breath to the point of your navel with complete concentration. Put the four fingers and thumb of your right hand together and rest them on the navel as shown in the figure.

Do this in the morning and in evening regularly, even if it is for five minutes. When you achieve unbroken concentration, you should be able to do this without putting your fingers at the point of the navel. Being regular is the key feature, as progress in dhyana is very gradual.

Just as you brush your teeth twice every day, make dhyana a way of life with the same regularity. The inner wisdom will awaken in you, you will develop intuitive power, and your mind will become strong enough to face the ups and downs in life.

**Prevention of Risk Factor 10**

*Shocks and Traumas*

We face shocks and traumas because we have to deal with unexpected situations. What can be a bigger shock for parents than to lose their young child or for young children to lose their mother or father? Disease, accident and natural calamities are some other reasons for shocks and traumas. We must learn to accept that life is ever changing and anything can happen at any time. When it happens to others, think that it can also happen to you. Do not feel shattered with events in life. Think of doing your best in a given situation. Our present life is the result of our previous karma. Past karma is already done, we have no control over it. But for our present karma, we have control and can train ourselves to be mentally stable and strong so that the ill effects of past karma is minimised and we sow better seeds for the future. Inculcate this wisdom in your children as well. The practice of dhyana can help you acquire this wisdom.

**Prevention of Risk Factor 11**

*Dwelling on the Past and Fearing the Future*

Do not dwell upon your past negative experiences and do not ask why they happened. Do not regret the loss of positive experiences or good times in your
life. Eliminate the presence of the past by developing inner stillness (sattva) and learn to live in the moment. What was is already gone and you cannot bring it back. The present time is in your hands and you can devote your energy to make the best possible use of it. Invest in your future in terms of good health and a strong mind. Worrying about the future is as useless as trying to count the stars or the hairs on one’s head. Nobody can predict the future. Some people go to astrologers for this. Good astrologers can tell you about the results of karma and the good and bad periods in your life. But they cannot predict the future, as the future is the result of a combination of your present and past karma. For example, something positive or negative happens in your life due to your past karma. The manner in which you deal with it by your present karma can be constructive or destructive in the context of that event. You perform your present karma with your power of discretion or buddhi. Nobody can predict your present karma and that is where your freedom lies. That stops life from being determined. In my opinion, it is the beauty of life that we do not know what the next moment holds. Learn to remain relaxed and train yourself to live in the present moment. Do not sow the seeds of an ailment by dwelling on the past or worrying about the future.

**Prevention of Risk Factor 12**

**Rapidly Shifting (Hopping) Thoughts**

This state of mind is due to excess rajas and an imbalance of vata. They are both interconnected. Too much rajas gives rise to vata imbalance, and vata imbalance gives rise to a hectic state of mind. For example, vata imbalance causes constipation and if constipation remains unattended, it gives rise to a restless mind and bad dreams. It also leads to lack of concentration. Treating the constipation makes one feel liberated in both body and mind. Constipation ruins the inner climate of the body, and nerves are very sensitive to smell and each odour has its negative or positive effect.

Pranayama, yogic exercises and postures, oil treatments like champi or head massage, shirodhara or shirobasti, a quiet atmosphere and repetition of a mantra
(japa) are some of the things that help get rid of hopping thoughts and give the mind the ability to concentrate. Instruction for japa is given in Section 6.

5 Getting Rid of the Fear of Dementia

1. Forgetting a few things occasionally is normal and is not a sign of dementia. This forgetfulness is due to fatigue, exhaustion, fear or excessive pressure of work. Instead of imagining that it is dementia, take appropriate rest and diet and surround yourself with a calm and peaceful atmosphere.

2. To cure a temporary phase of forgetfulness, champi (head massage) and body oil saturation massage followed by a hot bath is very helpful. Dip your fingers in oil (sesame, coconut, olive oil or any medicated preparation) and rub your scalp vigorously. Massage from all sides until the scalp is completely saturated with oil. Make your strokes stronger and faster and in all directions of the scalp. Rest for a short while after the head massage.
3. The pressure points for the brain and nerves are the thumb and big toe. Massage these with oil by applying pressure at the root of the thumb and the big toe. Also massage your hands and feet with oil and then soak them in hot water for about ten minutes.

4. Do a shoulder and neck massage and pay attention to the neck exercises shown earlier. Press the points shown in the picture to relieve and relax the nerves and the blood vessels.

5. Oil massage on temporal regions and ears, and pressing all parts of the ear lobe helps alleviate mental fatigue and revives mental power.
Vinod Verma
6. Resolve to invest enough in your health to remain healthy and wise until the end of your life and to not become sick and senile.

7. Whenever you happen to meet a person suffering from dementia or watch or read a report about the rapid spread of dementia, make a resolution that you will not be a victim, that you will take all measures against it, and use your will to prevent it and keep your mind healthy and cheerful until the end of your life. If you feel disturbed, do some rapid pranayama like dhaukani or kapalbhati to dissipate the fear in you (see the boxes below for details). These are advanced forms of pranayama, which can be done if you have been regularly doing the previously described basic pranayama. Without that preparation, these practices can be exhausting and may cause harm in certain cases.
Dhaukani pranayama

*Dhaukani* means bellows. It is an instrument which is used to blow air on a fire with pressure. This breathing practice involves pushing out the air with force and in a gush. In this breathing practice, you will imitate the function of the bellows with your breathing.

Sit cross-legged on the floor or in a chair. Inhale a small amount of air and simultaneously pull your abdomen muscles as far inward as you can. Blow out the air with force and while doing so, release the abdomen muscles to their normal position. Do not move your shoulders or other parts of your body in this process. Repeat this for several days until you can do this effortlessly.

**Caution:** Do not do this until three hours after having eaten.

*Kapalabhati pranayama*

*Kapalabhati* is a *pranayama* practice that involves inhaling towards the head region in a rapid manner.

Sit down in a comfortable manner, preferably cross-legged. Start breathing as if you are pulling your breath upwards to your head. *Kapalbhati* involves breathing rapidly and sending the *prana* energy to the head region. Pull up the air with great force and push it out with similar force. Repeat this according to your capacity. In case you have a problem, pause with normal breathing in-between.

6 Methods to Fight Senility

According to yoga guru Patanjali, there are five kinds of modifications of the mind (characteristic qualities of the flow of thoughts), which are either afflictive (*klesha*) or non-afflictive (*aklesha*). These modifications are (i) evidence, (ii)
misconception, (iii) fancy, (iv) sleep and (v) memory. They may be painful or not. In fact, whether they bring us pain or pleasure in the worldly sense, they will come under the category of afflictive. Material and sensuous pleasures do not remain constant in the ever-changing dynamic world. When pleasure departs, there is pain. For a wise person or an expert of yoga, all modifications of the mind are afflictive. In the present context, non-afflictive are those modifications of the mind which give us the wisdom to recognise one's real self, one's soul, as distinct from the destructible and perishable physical self. It is to recognise the impermanence of everything that exists around us, including our physical self. The moment we realise that, worldly happenings and events will not agitate us. We will take a balanced view of life and will not be easily disturbed. With this yogic state of mind, we learn to take life as it comes and we will not be affected even by shocks and traumas. Shocks and traumas can cause all kinds of ailments. Here are some case studies of serious disorders due to shock and trauma: woman got paralysis when her husband took another woman as his partner to have children as she herself was too old. Another woman died of a heart attack a year after her husband left her for a younger woman. A middle-aged man with two children studying in university developed multiple sclerosis when he suddenly lost his job. A woman developed dementia due to frontal lobe shrinkage after her husband brought another woman into their house.

Leading a life without expectations and accepting the ‘unexpected’ with calmness makes the mind strong and protects us from the harmful effects of a repressed brain and nerves. This is perhaps a very different philosophy of life for many people. It is a training in the yogic way of life to keep the mind stable in all kinds of situations. This stability of mind is achieved with constant effort and training. An afflicted state of mind makes one frustrated and unhappy. We become dissatisfied and ultimately prey to mental and physical disorders.

We need to learn that life does not move along predictable lines. Events in life do not happen at our wish or command. We have to learn to accept life as it unfolds. We have to train our mind to attain a sense of contentment. It does not, however, mean that we should be passive. In yogic thinking, one should put
Vinod Verma

one’s best efforts into doing one’s duty without anticipation of results. In fact, this state of mind gives so much mental power that things run smoothly on their own. Once you have attained a sense of contentment and learn to accept reality or the dynamism of life as it unfolds, you will remain in a happy mental state. A happy mental state by itself is a healer and of course it prevents ailments. Learn to celebrate each moment of life and try to find something positive in all situations. In truth, the training of the mind is lacking in the modern world. These simple things should be taught to children the world over.

AFFLICTED STATE OF MIND

Leads to

DISSATISFACTION

Leads to

UNHAPPINESS

Leads to

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL DISORDERS
Mental stability can save us from mental disorders. Charaka has defined psychic or mental ailments very beautifully: they are due to unfulfilled desires and facing the undesired. If we have too many desires and wishes, there are chances that many will remain unfulfilled, leading to frustration and thus giving rise to mental disorders. Similarly, we should not continue to live with the undesired. We should either make every effort to get out of the unwanted situation or learn to accept it.

According to the yogic way of thinking, we must train ourselves to look at life as an onlooker. An onlooker is not a spectator. An onlooker is uninvolved in the spectacle of life. Excessive involvement and attachment with worldly happenings and goods always leads to troubled mental state. But, if we detach ourselves and remain uninvolved with the diverse events and episodes of life, we remain calm and peaceful and attain mental strength. With this philosophy of life, we do not fall prey to mental and physical disorders and certainly not to the disorders leading to dementia.

To strengthen the mind, we need to give it rest and stop its modifications or chain of thought with a conscious effort. When we succeed in doing that, we experience a state of yogic bliss (ananda). In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna preached to Arjuna the importance of yoga and Arjuna gave his opinion: ‘The yoga which you have described with such facility, I do not see it as practical because of the ever-changing nature of the mind. The mind is very unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful and therefore I consider that restraining it is as unfeasible as controlling the wind’.8

In Krishna’s response, there were two important words for controlling the mind—repeated practice and detachment. Patanjali has said that the modifications of the mind should be hindered by repeated practice and dispassion. For our purpose in the present context, japa or the repeated practice of a mantra helps to attain a thought-free mind. It has to be done regularly and with a firm aim in mind.
Strength and Purity of Mind for Prevention of Dementia

A pure mind is that which is free from the kleshas or afflictions. Afflictions are due to the modifications of the mind. To stop afflictions, we have to make an effort to hinder the modifications of the mind, as has been discussed earlier. In simple words, that implies silencing the mind for brief periods. The mind is constantly fed with new knowledge it obtains through senses along with previously acquired knowledge in the form of memory; it is constantly undergoing a chain of thought. The senses are partially closed during sleep and the mind is not acquiring new knowledge. However, the previously acquired knowledge in the form of memory is processed even during sleep. The mind never stops. During sleep, it gets partial rest but true rest is only by stopping the chain of thought and entering into a state of void or nothingness. This is done by withdrawing the senses from the phenomenal world, stopping the chain of thought, and bringing the mind back to its own pure nature. Purity of mind and strength are simultaneous. How? According to yogic sages, the mind is completely involved with the world through the senses, but when it is brought to silence and void, it is immersed in the energy of the soul. The soul is pure energy and the primal cause. By repeated practice and with concentration of the mind, we can achieve this goal of silencing the mind from time to time and invigorate it.

At a higher level than the mind is the mati or the formulation of ideas with processed knowledge. At a still higher level is the intellect or buddhi, and at the highest level is the soul, which is the cause of being and the real self of an individual. Given below is the figurative form of this analysis of the senses, mind and soul. Existence and functions of the body, mind, the formulation of ideas and intellect are not possible without the radiations from the energy of the soul.
The mind in an uninvolved state is in its pure form. It is the state of sattva or stillness. Sattva is a balancing factor of rajas and tamas—the two characteristic qualities of the mind that dominate our day-to-day life. From a state of hyper activity during the day, we come to a state of fatigue when body and mind fall into a state of inertia (tamas). We need to incorporate sattva in our actions (rajas) so that we can perform our tasks without oppressing our senses and mind. This oppression at a routine level for a long time becomes the ultimate cause of physical and mental disorders. Charaka stated the importance of sattva 2,600 years ago as follows:

‘The persons having dominating sattva are endowed with memory, devotion, are grateful, learned, pure, courageous, skilful, resolute, fighting in battles with prowess, free from anxiety, having well directed and serious intellect and activities and are engaged in virtuous acts.’

8 Prevention with Food and Home Remedies

Preventive methods with food and home remedies are based on strengthening the nerves and the brain with various products. For that you need the names of these products, also their exact doses and frequency. People get enthusiastic about certain products they hear of from the media or social media and tend to over-medicate themselves. This can have side-effects. Further, proper preparation is required to make a balanced remedy which does not disturb the dosha balance.

**Pumpkin Seeds**

There is a fine line between food and medicine in Ayurveda. There are many products we use daily in our food as herbs and spices which are also taken as preventive medicine or remedies. Remedies are in higher and precise doses as compared to the food and are consumed in a prescribed frequency. As prevention, various products are taken either regularly in low doses or seasonally. Pumpkin seeds along with the seeds of cantaloupe (honeydew melon), watermelon and cucumber are mixed together in equal quantity and this is popularly known as char magaj (four for brain) in north-west India. Magaj is a Persian word for
brain. This mixture is eaten in winter due for its heat-giving (pitta enhancing) and memory-promoting qualities and are integrated in various desserts.

There is a variety of black pumpkin seeds with soft edible husk which is grown in Austria and Hungary. These are even stronger in their action than white pumpkin seeds. Pumpkin seed oil is also available and can be used as a remedy.

### Pumpkin seeds

**Dose:** Maximum daily dose 15-20 g of seeds or two teaspoons of oil.

You can add pumpkin seeds or oil to the dishes that you prepare or follow the recipes given below.

**With Salad and Soup**

Pumpkin seeds can be eaten with salad or soup after roasting them on a hot pan for a minute. The addition of pumpkin seeds makes the pumpkin soup even more delicious.

I suggest that you use pumpkin seeds regularly in your diet in one form or another but paying attention to the daily dose.

Alternately, you can add a teaspoon of pumpkin seed oil to your salad, soup or any other vegetable preparation. Add that in the end before serving as it should not be cooked.

**Carrots with pumpkin seeds**

This recipe is for breakfast or as a starter before a main meal.

**Ingredients for one portion:**

- Carrots 2-3 or about 300 g
- Olive oil 2 teaspoons
- Pumpkin seeds 2 teaspoons (10 g)
Wash and cut the carrots in thin round pieces. Roast them in olive oil by stirring constantly until they are a little soft. This should take about 10 minutes. Add the pumpkin seeds and roast them with carrots for another two minutes while stirring constantly.

In this dish, you can enjoy the natural taste of both carrots and pumpkin seeds.

**Nuts**

Nuts are very important for both the nerves and the brain. As children, we were given nuts regularly before and during our examinations. Almond, walnut, pine nut, cashew nut and pistachio are especially useful. Peanut is in the second category due to their high oil content. Nuts are always eaten in a limited quantity and on a regular basis because they are hot in their Ayurvedic nature. Eating too much at once can cause imbalance of pitta, giving rise to skin eruptions, blisters in the mouth, pimples, etc. According to some Ayurvedic texts, it is said that honey enhances the medicinal value of food products or remedies multiple times when they are left soaked in it for several days. In Ayurvedic terminology, it is called ‘ripening’ the product in honey. The preparation given below is not only medicinally beneficial, but also delicious.

In recent medical literature there is much talk about the health benefits of nuts. Scientists have announced the results of their studies, but this knowledge is not specific. Ayurveda is very precise. In the following recipe the quantity of nuts is varied. Even the much talked about walnut for the brain and its anti-oxidant qualities should be consumed in moderate quantity. They have an astringent rasa (anti-oxidant) and when consumed in large numbers can cause vata and pitta imbalance and give rise to blisters in the oral cavity.

**Nuts with Honey to Strengthen the Brain and Nerves**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuts</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almond</td>
<td>200 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashew nut</td>
<td>200 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Buy almonds with the skin. Soak them in hot water and leave them over night. Next morning, peel off the skin and let them dry. Take the correct weight of the other nuts without their shell. Add all the nuts in a 2-litre jar. Remove the pods from the cardamom and crush all the spices into a powder and mix with the nuts. Add pure liquid honey over this and stir for about five minutes. Close the lid and let the nuts ‘ripen’ in the honey for about a week. Stir them from time to time.

**Dose:** 1 to 2 tablespoons daily. It is best taken on an empty stomach before breakfast. Remember to chew the nuts properly.

Ayurveda talks of many products that improve memory, like *brahmi*, *aindri*, *jyotishmati*, *chiranji*, lavender, etc., but the purpose of this monograph is to provide self-help and not professional help. In fact, these products are generally used for healing mental disorders. I am limiting myself to products that are easily available all over the world and recipes that are simple to follow.
Clean and dry all the ingredients and grind them to a fine powder. Mix the powder with enough honey to make a paste-like consistency. Honey is soaked by the herbal powder and that make the preparation hard. Therefore, keep the preparation overnight in the pot and observe before filling it in jars. If needed, add more honey and stir properly.

**Dose:** One teaspoon every day.

**Note:** If you cannot find Chiranji abroad, leave it out. Normally Indian grocery stores abroad have it or they can order it for you.

### Strength-promoting Wheat Milk

Wheat milk enhances immunity and vitality and is especially good for expectorating excessive phlegm from the head region. It is prepared by
germinating wheat. It is used for treating sinus problems and for that it has to be taken regularly for 30 days. I suggest that you take it for a week every few months to prevent accumulation of mucous in the head region and to promote strength. It helps prevent cough and cold if taken during the change of season.

At the beginning of germination, grains have the best rejuvenating effect on us. According to Vedic texts, all the hidden power in a dried grain comes to life with the help of the five elements of which nature is comprised. From modern biology we also know that enzymes and growth hormones are optimum at this stage. To get to this stage, you have to soak the wheat for about 24 hours in water.

**Wheat Milk Drink**

**Recipe for one person**

**Step 1: Preparation for wheat milk**

Take the best quality organically grown wheat with small grains. This is called Dinkel in German and these are the original seeds of wheat. Make sure that the grains are not old and check the date on the packet. If they are old, they will not germinate. Wash and soak them in hot water that is twice the level of the wheat. Cover it with a thin muslin cloth. You will see that the wheat soaks all the water. After a few hours, if you see that the wheat needs more water and is drying, add a small amount of hot water to keep it wet. After about 24 hours, blend the wheat in a mixer. You need to add some water to grind properly and extract the starch. Pass this mixture through a fine, large sieve. Churn the contents in the sieve with your hand or a spoon to extract all the wheat milk.

**Step two: Preparation of the wheat milk drink**

- Cow’s milk: 100 ml
- Ghee: 1 teaspoon
- Almond (chopped): 1 tablespoon
- Saffron: a pinch
Candy sugar 2 teaspoons or according to taste

Cook the wheat milk along with ghee by constantly stirring for about five minutes. Add the milk gradually and keep stirring. The wheat milk sticks to the bottom of the pan very quickly if you do not stir well and continuously. Cook for about 5 minutes after it comes to the boil. Add the rest of the ingredients and cook for another minute. It becomes like a thick soup and can be eaten for breakfast or after a light dinner as dessert. However, for treating sinusitis, you have to take it before going to bed and keep warm after that. Continue the treatment for 30 days.

A Rasayana to Enhance Ojas

This is a rasayana you can use every day to enhance your physical and mental capabilities and to increase your ojas (immunity and vitality). A regular intake of rasayana will save you from various minor ailments and will promote strength and vitality. There are many people who suffer from sexual problems due to fatigue, and this can be alleviated with this preparation or any other similar rasayana. Fatigue makes people lazy and sluggish and they limit themselves to minimum work and leave out sports, yoga, pranayama, activities that relax the mind and lead to mental contentment and happiness. All this results in is a passive individual who wants to rest most of the time to get rid of the fatigue. This leads to a frustrated and discontented mental state. These symptoms give rise to all the precursors of dementia, as seen earlier. Therefore, I highly recommend a regular intake of a good rasayana.

Ojas-enhancing Rasayana

**Ingredients:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ajwain or Thyme</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basil (tulsi leaves)</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big cardamom</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingredient</td>
<td>Amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black pepper</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clove</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coriander (dhaniya)</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumin</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dill seeds</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried ginger</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fennel</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fenugreek (methi)</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquorice (mullethi)</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long pepper</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small cardamom</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triphala&lt;sup&gt;10&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>100 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clean and dry the ingredients. Take the cardamoms out of their pods. Grind in a coffee or spice grinder. Larger ingredients like liquorice or dried ginger should be made into small pieces before grinding. Pass this powder through a fine strainer and crush the rough pieces again. Pass them through the strainer and discard the contents which are still rough. Mix the powder with honey and stir well. Normally, you will need three times the amount of honey to the volume of the powder. The powder soaks the honey and it becomes like a paste.

**Dose:** Depending on your body weight, take 1 to 1½ teaspoons every day. In case of fatigue, take a teaspoon twice a day.
Note: If you cannot get some of the ingredients, you may leave them out. Your rasayana will still be effective.

An Ojas-enhancing Spice Mixture

The following is an ojas-enhancing spice mixture that can be used in various soups and other food preparations. Besides this, also use the seasonal herbs available.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ojas-enhancing Spice Mixture</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ingredients:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ajwain or thyme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black pepper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardamom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinnamon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clove</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dill seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried ginger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried mint leaves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fennel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coriander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long pepper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clean and dry these ingredients and remove the cardamom from the pods. Grind all the ingredients together and pass them through a sieve to get the
Vata-balancing and Nerve-strengthening Tea

After a day’s work full of rajas (activities) that obviously leads to slight vata imbalance, I suggest this tea to restore the balance and strengthen your nerves.

**Ingredients:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black pepper</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardamom</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coriander</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried Basil leaves</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fennel</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquorice</td>
<td>50 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long pepper</td>
<td>25 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clean, dry and grind these ingredients as described earlier. Keep the powder in a glass bottle. Take half a teaspoon in 250 ml of water and bring it to the boil for about two minutes. Filter with a sieve and take it one hour after your dinner or in the afternoon. Take one to two cups daily.

**A Word about the Products**

Those who are not familiar with Ayurveda need to know the following:

- Do not buy powdered ingredients. A coffee grinder or a spice grinder should be used to make fresh powders. Powdered ingredients, if kept for a long time, lose their nutritional and medicinal properties.
• Make sure that the ingredients are not old. You can find fresh ingredients at Indian grocery stores abroad too.

• Keep up your courage and do not give up. The time taken for yourself is time well invested and you will have multiple returns over your lifetime.

**Appendix**

Ayurvedic preventive medicine needs a lot of personal effort. As long as we are not sick, the ailment is just a concept and it sounds abstract to most people. I have observed varied reactions in this context. Some people do not feel inspired to do something as they do not want to deal with the ‘trouble not yet come’. There are others who believe they will never fall sick. Contrary to these, there are others who are anxious about all kinds of ailments and live in fear that they will be the first to succumb when they hear about any widespread ailment or disorder. They take all kinds of exclusive and expensive products without much scientific and precise information. Ultimately, their obsessive fear of falling ill does them more harm than good.

I suggest taking a middle path. Follow the preventive methods described in this monograph to improve your quality of life and gain strength. Although this paper concentrates on preventing an age-related disorder, you will see the effect of these instructions immediately in terms of improving overall quality of life. This is really the essence of preventive medicine in Ayurveda. We should keep our body’s defence system so good, our vitality so high and our mind so pure that the enemies of life (sickness, ailments and disorders) are brought to their knees.

In this system of prevention, the mind is very important. Yoga is very popular but unfortunately, it is reduced mostly to exercises for health. Yoga is actually the science of the senses, mind and soul. I hope this will inspire you to work more on yourself with various yogic methods and let your inner being blossom.

**Notes**

Vinod Verma


5. I have been teaching these exercises since my student days from the 1980 and have benefited millions of people around the world. They were also written in my first yoga book published in 1988. The latest edition of this book, *Yoga: A Natural Way of Being*, is available at www.amazon.com.

6. There are three principal channels in the body located at the left and right of the vertebral column and in the centre. They intertwine and cross each other at seven places. This cross point is the site for seven major energy chakras of the subtle or the energy body. More details are available in the above mentioned book.


8. *Bhagavadgita* VI 33-34.


10. *Triphala* is a combination of three Himalayan fruits called *amala*, *harad* and *baheda*. The pulp of the dried fruits is taken in equal quantities and powdered.

11. The complete book on Dementia Prevention is published in English and translated editions are in German and Slovenian.
Along with a doctorate degree in reproduction biology in India, Dr. Verma studied Neurobiology in Paris University and obtained a second doctorate. She pursued advanced research at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda (USA) and the Max-Planck Institute in Freiburg, Germany. Dr. Verma founded The New Way Health Organisation (NOW) in 1986 to spread the message of holistic living, preventive methods for health care and to promote the use of mild medicine and various self-help therapeutic measures.

Dr. Verma has studied Ayurveda in the traditional Guru-shishya style with Acharya Priya Vrat Sharma of the Benares Hindu University for 23 years. She is an ardent researcher and is working hard to compile the living tradition of Ayurveda and spread it in the world through her books and other activities. She has published twenty-three books on Yoga, Ayurveda, Women and Companionship and several articles. A film on Ayurveda featuring Dr. Verma was made by German television in 1995 and was shown in 100 countries, in 130 languages and also on Doordarshan.

Dr. Verma’s biggest contribution is research in Ayurvedic food culture and Ayurvedic living traditions on healing women’s troubles and ailments. She has also founded Charaka School of Ayurveda, and The Ayurveda Health Organisation.

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Tel: 0091-0-1202527820/ 0-9873704205/0-9412224820
The India International Centre was founded with a vision for India, and its place in the world: to initiate dialogue in a new climate of amity, understanding and the sharing of human values. It is a non-government institution, designed, in the words of its founder president, Dr. C.D. Deshmukh, to be a place where various currents of intellectual, political and economic thought could meet freely. 'In its objectives, the Centre declares its purpose as being that of society to 'promote understanding and amity between the different communities of the world by undertaking or supporting the study of their past and present cultures, by disseminating or exchanging knowledge thereof, and by providing such other facilities as would lead to their universal appreciation.'