

THREE SEASONS AYURVEDA



Holistic Approach to Diarrhea

According to Ayurveda, diarrhea occurs when excess Pitta Dosha weakens the digestive fire (Agni) and the goal is to pacify the heat of this dosha and bring balance to the elimination process.

Diarrhea, loose or watery stools occur when absorption and assimilation are slow, and the intestines push the stool through the bowel before excess water is reabsorbed. Diarrhea is the body's natural defense against a possible harmful virus or bacterium, an ingested toxin including medications, or food that is disagreeable. It can also occur as a result of an inflamed bowel wall, which allows excess fluid to leak into the stool, as in Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

Abdominal bloating, cramps, nausea, or possible vomiting often accompanies diarrhea, and although unpleasant, they usually clear up with diarrhea. More severe symptoms include ten or more watery stools within a 24-hour period, dehydration, blood-mucus in stool, black and tarry stools, weight loss and fever.

Dehydration is one of the most severe dangers of prolonged diarrhea and taking small sips of fluid throughout the day is one of the best ways to support hydration. There are a few options: Water with a pinch of mineral salt, and natural sugar if you like and peppermint or chamomile tea is very calming and also replenishes lost fluids.

The diet is one of the most effective ways to treat diarrhea. Begin by eating pure, grounding, nourishing foods emphasizing spices like cilantro, coconut, coriander, fennel, and mint. It is essential to avoid hot, spicy foods, especially salty foods, intensely sour foods, alcohol, caffeine, and fermented foods, as they can aggravate pitta. Also, steer clear of sugary drinks and some sugar substitutes (like sorbitol, often found in chewing gum), which draw more water into the intestines and can intensify diarrhea.

Below are some specific and easy food preparations that can help to balance the digestion and elimination system and can stop diarrhea.

Stewed Apples

Peel and slice or chop 1-2 apples. Place in a small saucepan with about 1/2" of water, add one teaspoon of ghee, a pinch of cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg and natural salt. Bring to a boil, turn down to a simmer, and cook covered until the apples are mushy (about 30 minutes) and if more liquid is needed add accordingly. This dish is delicious and easy to digest and apples are astringent and help to bind the stools.

Spiced Bananas

Chop 1-2 ripe bananas into bite-sized pieces, and garnish with 1-teaspoon warm ghee and add a pinch of cinnamon, cardamom, and nutmeg. This dish is delicious and nourishing, and the potassium in the bananas helps to bind the stool.

Cooked Rice with Yogurt

One cup of cooked basmati rice, one tablespoon of ghee and 1/4 cup plain, fresh (ideally homemade) yogurt. You can add grounding spices like: fennel, cilantro or fresh ginger. This dish is soothing and nutritive, and the probiotics in the yogurt help to restore the digestive fire (Agni).

Lassi (Diluted Yogurt)

If something lighter sounds best, blend 1/2 cup of fresh, plain yogurt (ideally homemade), 1/2 cup of water and 1/8 teaspoon fresh, grated ginger, this probiotic drink is easy to digest, and it gently kindles Agni.



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