

43 - OBESITY TREATMENT IN AYURVEDA

- Obesity, or abnormal weight gain, is a common metabolic disorder found in Europe, USA, and in developing countries such as India. It is one of the oldest documented diseases or conditions.
- In [Ayurveda](#), obesity is seen as *Medoroga*, a disorder of Medo Dhatu described in classic texts such as **Veda** and **Charak Samhita** written by Maharishi Charaka.
- **Definition of Obesity** –
 - In simple terms, obesity can be defined as the increased volume of adipose tissue in the thighs, abdomen and chest, where the **body vitality decreases** and might result in **deteriorated health**.
- **Causes** –
 - From an Ayurveda perspective, the key cause is found in incorrect lifestyle and diet choices or habits. When the body's calorie intake exceeds the number of calories burned, it leads to the storage of excess calories in the form of body fat.
 - Absence of physical activity
 - Daytime sleep
 - High intake of food – especially Kapha-increasing foods, e.g. rich in fat, or foods that take longer to digest such as pork, and sweet, salty or oily foods.
- **Pathogenesis of Obesity**
 - From an Ayurveda perspective, the cause of weight gain is cyclical. According to Ayurveda, as with any other disease, obesity begins with the intake of incorrect food or the development of improper dietary habits and lifestyle that result in problems with the digestive fire, which in turn increases [Ama \(bio-toxins\)](#).
 - Increased Ama disturbs metabolic processes to form more **fatty tissue (Meda Dhatu Agni)** and blocks the formation of the furthest tissues such as ashti (bones). The poorly formed tissue layers increase unwanted **meda dhatu (fats)** and cause disturbances in the functions of Kapha.



- On the other hand, when Ama blocks the channels of all body tissues, this creates imbalance in Vata. Vata keeps stimulating the central **digestive fire (jatharagni)**, which causes an increase in appetite so the person eats more and more. However, due to **Meda Dhavagni Mandya (weak fat metabolism)**, improper or abnormal Meda Dhatu is formed, which is the root cause of obesity.
- **Obesity Signs and Symptoms Mentioned in the Ayurveda Texts -** Accumulation of fat in the abdomen, dyspnea on exertion, lethargy, and increased sweating are early symptoms of the impaired health condition. Obese people develop excessive hunger and thirst, weakness, loss of vitality, loss of sexual desire and others.
- The deposition of excess fat appears on the abdomen and upper body in males and females.
- Overweight people suffer from lethargy as body tissues are not properly formed. If symptoms are not adequately treated, various complications occur such as *hypertension, increased cholesterol, cardiac disorders, heartburn, kidney infections, diabetes, arthritis, resulting in a decrease in longevity, premature aging, and mental confusion.*
- **Obesity Treatment** - In Ayurveda, obesity is treated not only for weight loss or loss of centimeters, but also in terms of **adjusting metabolic processes** by reducing Ama and the excess fat to regulate the function of Kapha without vitiating Vata. To correct metabolism as well as strengthen the digestive and tissue fire and clear body canals, it is important to improve dietary habits and reduce the impact of stress.
- **Fluid Intake Adjustment** - Replace sweet drinks such as carbonated drinks, fruit juices and cold drinks with clean warm water with a temperature of 35-36 degrees. **Sipping hot water (at least 48 min)** before meals ignites the digestive fire and helps combating pseudo-hunger by allowing the free movement of Vata. This way hydration can help you **break the pathogenesis**.
- **Fasting with Hot Water** - Fasting once a week does wonders for the gut and **tones the digestive system**. The breakdown of the harmful leftover unabsorbed food particles begins in the digestive fire. Care should be taken not to raise the batting during fasting. Hot broth of moong dal (a tablespoon of green mung beans boiled in 750 milliliters of water until cooked) can be an alternative to **clean hot water**.



- **Conscious Nutrition**

- When food is eaten carefully, the brain perceives the taste, smell and type of food and sends signals to the stomach to release **enzymes and digestive juices** to digest the food. Eating while driving or watching TV, or in meetings, disrupts the digestive process and hinders weight loss efforts.

- **Aampachan (Eliminating Ama)**

- Ayurveda suggests that it is extremely difficult or perhaps impossible to lose weight in the **presence of Ama**. Due to this reason people fail to lose weight even when they limit their food intake. Hence, it is important to get rid of Ama first and then work on losing weight.

- **Herbs that are effective**

- **for removing Ama include:**

- **Turmeric**

- **Trikatu** (Ayurveda combination of ginger, pepper, and Pippali)

Triphala (combination of Amalaki, Bibhitaki, and Haritaki)

Guggulu (herb for effective purification according to Ayurveda).

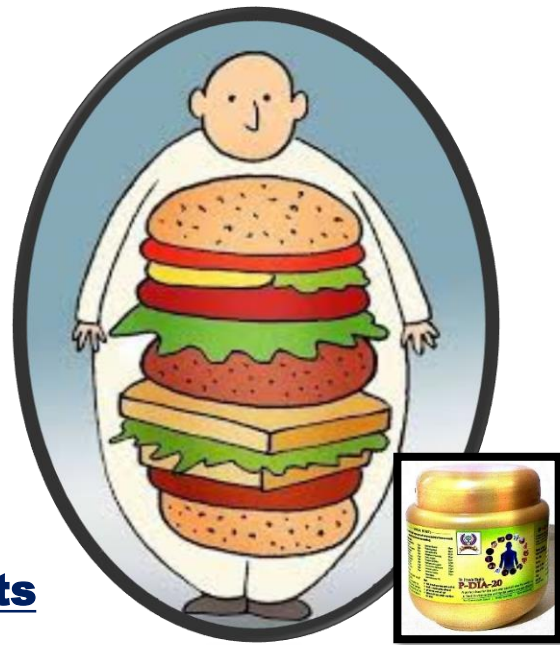
- **Classical Ayurvedic Products**

Used to Treat Obesity:

- *Ayaskriti, Aswagandharishtam, Kumaryasavam, Lohasinduram (101) 100 mg capsule, Hinguvachadi Churnam, Avipathi Churnam, Vidangadi Churnam, Triphaladi Churnam, Kolakulathadi Churnam, Varanadi Kashayam, Varadi Kashayam, Gandharvahastadi Kashayam, Trivril Leham, Brahmi Caps*

- **Proper Diet**

- Obese patients should be given food that will **reduce Kapha** and the excess fatty tissue while at the same time having an **anti-Vata property**. This means that all the food substances should be dry and light to digest, without too much oil or fat.
- Eat according to the **constitution of your body** and take well-processed foods mixed with different herbs to burn fat, for example: **cinnamon, pepper, turmeric, ginger, coriander**, etc.
- Raw vegetables, e.g. cabbage, are allowed for people with a Pitta constitution when their **digestion is already normal**. If consumed by someone with a batting constitution, it will increase the quantity of air, which will result in weight gain.



- **Sleep**

- The habit of sleep is very important, just like doing exercise to fight obesity. Insufficient sleep disrupts eating habits, resulting in increased **energy consumption**. Your [Ayurvedic expert](#) can train you how to improve your sleep without excessive energy loss, which can be enjoyed in a deep sleep.
- Do not attempt to deprive yourself of sleep as this is often the cause of obesity, hypertension, increased acidity, diabetes and many other metabolic syndromes.

- **Physical Exercise**

- Physical exercise makes up an important part of the **weight loss plan**. It helps burn calories stored in the body, e.g. fat. In addition, it also **relieves body tension and energizes the muscles**. Walking for half an hour every day is the best exercise to prepare for running, swimming or rowing in the future.

- **Panchakarma Procedures**

- **Dry deep tissue massage (Mardanam and Udwarthanam)**

- Deep dry massage (Mardanam), **massage with the Triphala and Musta herbal powders** (Udwarthanam). The Udvartana therapy is the most common [Ayurvedic treatment](#) recommended to cure obesity where **herbal powders** (in the form of oils or dry powders) are used to remove the blockages and stiffness of the body.
- Sesame oil along with other herbs is used to reduce the fat tissue and maintain the softness of the skin. This herb and oil paste opens the pores, removes vessel blockages, increases tissue heat and stimulates fat metabolism.

- **Massage**

- **Abhyangam therapy** with specific oils (*Triphala oil, Kaphaghna oil, Eladi Thailam, Valiya Lakshadi Thailam, Saindhavadi Thailam*) followed by a steam bath is recommended.
- Special herbs are used in the steam bath. The increased level of toxins, along with excess water, is removed by means of profuse sweating. The steam also allows the herbal paste to penetrate deeper into the body.
- Besides reducing cellulite and subcutaneous fat, [Panchakarma therapies](#) also nourish the skin and remove body odor.