

AYURVEDIC CONSTITUTION

Prakriti is your basic constitution. It is determined at the moment of conception and relates to your genetically inherited physical and emotional qualities. Prakriti relates to those qualities, characteristics and tendencies that are stable.

While you may experience temporary changes, like gaining or losing weight, feeling nervous, developing a cold or flu in the natural course of life you will never gain or lose five inches on your height or experience a change of eye color.

Your constitution is described by three main doshas or forces: **Vata-Air, Pitta-Fire and Kapha-Earth**. Each of us has all three doshas in our constitution, in unique proportions.

Vata foods: pungent, bitter and astringent tastes increase Vata by increasing its drying and cooling qualities. An example of the pungent taste is chili peppers. Bitter and astringent tastes are common in most leafy greens and many herbs. The sweet, sour and salty tastes decrease Vata by bringing moisture, bulk and warmth to the body, which are opposite qualities to those of Vata. An example of a naturally sweet taste is wheat; of sour: pickles; of salty: seaweed.

Pitta foods: pungent, sour and salty tastes increase Pitta, by increasing its hot quality. An example of the pungent taste is chili pepper; of sour: pickles and of salty: salt. Sweet, bitter and astringent tastes will decrease Pitta by providing the opposite qualities to those of Pitta. An example of naturally sweet taste is wheat; of bitter and astringent (which are often coupled): many leafy greens and herbs.

Kapha foods: sweet, sour and salty tastes increase Kapha by increasing bulk and moisture in the body and mind, and by perpetuating the qualities of Kapha. An example of the naturally sweet taste is wheat; of sour: a pickle; of salty: salt. The pungent, bitter and astringent tastes traditionally decrease Kapha by drying the body and providing the opposite qualities to those of Kapha. An example of the pungent taste is chili pepper; of bitter and astringent (which are often coupled): many leafy greens and many herbs.

Knowing your Prakriti can help you maintain optimal health. Answer the questions below based on your overall, lifelong tendencies and not according to temporary or recent conditions.

Rate each question with the scale: 1-does not apply; 2-somewhat applies; 3-applies

1. My lifelong tendency has been to be thin and lanky.
2. I find having a routine in life to be challenging.
3. My skin tends to be rough and dry, even if I don't live in a dry, arid climate (but especially if I do).
4. My joints are fairly prominent.
5. My teeth are protruded and/or crooked.
6. My hair is kinky, curly and tends to be dry or frizzy.
7. It is usually easy for me to lose weight and I usually have difficulty gaining weight.
8. Usually in my life I enjoy hot weather.
9. I tend to dislike wind.
10. I tend to dislike dry.

11. I have a medium build with medium bone structure.
12. I enjoy competitive activities and enjoy physical or intellectual challenges.
13. My teeth are medium-sized and/or a little yellow (stained doesn't count).
14. I have fair skin which easily sunburns.
15. I have a lot of moles or freckles.
16. I am or am becoming bald, I have grayed early, or I have thin or fine hair.
17. Chili peppers, tomatoes and spicy food in general gives me digestive distress, including heartburn or stomachache or loose stools (even if I really enjoy the taste).
18. I prefer a cool climate to a warm one.
19. I dislike heat, especially humid heat and feel easily fatigued by it.
20. I have a sharp, intelligent, aggressive mind.
21. I have a sturdy constitution with a large bone structure.
22. I have had a lifelong tendency to always be at least a little overweight.
23. My teeth are naturally large, straight and white.
24. My hair is a thick and lustrous.
25. My eyes are large and luxurious.
26. If given the opportunity, I can easily sleep deeply for 8-10 hours per night.
27. I gain weight easily and have difficulty losing weight.
28. I tend to have excess mucous.
29. I tolerate most climates well but usually in my life I have preferred hot, dry weather.
30. My energy and stamina are consistent. When I have a lot to do I can maintain my pace.

Add up the numbers to determine your predominant traits. Add in sections:
Questions 1-10 are Vata-focused; high scores here reflect a light, subtle nature.
Questions 11-20 are Pitta-focused; high scores here reflect a bright, fire-y nature.
Questions 21-30 are Kapha-focused; high scores here reflect a grounded, steady nature.

*This test cannot take the place of an evaluation by a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner.
Gratitude to Banyan Botanicals for this evaluation.*

SOURCES

To read more about food as medicine, try these books.

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Pitchford, Paul. Healing With Whole Foods. North Atlantic Books, 1993.

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Tiwari, Maya. Ayurveda: a Life of Balance. Healing Arts Press, 1993.

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