

## Hyper-Acidity

Accumulation of pitta in the body is a natural phenomenon during the first two months of Chaturmasa due to seasonal influences. The accumulated pitta becomes aggravated in Autumn. If during this period, one consumes heavy and indigestible foods, fried, sour and spicy foods, the pitta becomes vitiated creating hyper-acidity. The pitta becomes so acidic that the stomach loses its power of digestion, causing the undigested food to remain in the stomach for extended periods. Just as food items, when kept for a long period of time in the summer putrefies, similarly the undigested food in the stomach undergoes putrefaction. As a result one experiences the symptoms of hyper-acidity like a heavy stomach, sour eructation, burning sensation in the chest and throat, uneasiness, headache, giddiness, nausea etc.

### Causes of Hyper-acidity

The intake of incompatible foods (fruits, salty or sour foods with milk), stale and spoiled foods, foods that produce a burning sensation in the stomach (extremely spicy and fried foods), very hot, oily and heavy to digest foods, incessant fasting, withholding urination and defecation, consumption of alcohol, smoking, use of narcotics, fast foods, cold drinks, bakery items and taking allopathic medicines over extended periods can lead to hyper-acidity.

If in spite of this, one continues to take such foods to satisfy the palate, it can become a chronic disorder. This disease is more prevalent in humid places like coastal areas.

The aggravated pitta increases the flow of blood and Rasa, leading to high blood pressure. Usually, hyper-acidity is the primary cause of high blood pressure and the condition can be brought under control by pacifying the aggravated pitta. However, if allopathic medicines are used to control high blood pressure or to treat headache and giddiness they only end up aggravating the disease.

Aspirin (chemically acetyl salicylic acid) is a popular painkiller used to treat headaches but it is also the primary cause of gastric ulcers and acidity. Its excessive use can even lead to life-threatening perforations in the stomach.

### Treatment

In a nutshell the remedy for this disease is to avoid those foods and surroundings that cause it and adopt salubrious diet and habits. By taking recourse to these measures we can quickly control all diseases with a little effort using household remedies.

### Salubrious Diet and Mode of Living

A brisk walk is especially beneficial in the treatment and control of acidity. Bitter, sweet and astringent foods are particularly beneficial. Bitter foods help digest the undigested food. Sweet foods pacify the pitta while astringent foods bring the pitta level back to normal.

Cow's milk, ghee, amla, coconut water, pomegranate, grapes, raisins (munakka and Kismis), candied sugar, honey, cooled boiled water, wheat, barley, green gram, a year old sathi rice, pointed gourd, sweet gourd, bitter melon, bathua, chaulai, cumin seeds, coriander and aniseeds are considered beneficial.

### Prohibited Foods and Habits

Pungent, tangy, sour, salty foods are particularly harmful. Therefore avoid yoghurt, sour buttermilk, tomatoes, newly harvested rice, arhar, urad lentils, sesame seeds and spicy foods. Food at irregular times, sleeping during the day, staying awake till late in the night, extreme tension, grief and fear aggravate acidity and therefore one should be careful accordingly.

### Medicines and Treatment

- In this condition the aggravated pitta vitiates the fresh food entering the stomach. Therefore it is imperative to undergo Virechana, i.e. to use a purgative to wash out all the impurities from within the body along with stool. This is the best-known treatment for hyper-acidity. If one undergoes proper purgation in Autumn under the direct supervision of a competent physician, it can protect against all pitta-related afflictions throughout the year.

- Take 3 to 5 grams of tasty virechana churna or Triphala churna with a decoction of black dried grapes. For the decoction, soak 8 to 10 grams of black currants, in water for 4 to 5 hours and then bring it to a boil. If there is a burning sensation in the chest or throat, eating only raisins or sucking on candied sugar alone can help alleviate the condition.

- Take 10 to 20 ml of fresh amla juice with candied sugar and cumin seeds. This provides instant relief in

cases of burning sensation in the chest, headache, vomiting and giddiness. Amla Murabba or the amla churna prepared in the ashram is a veritable boon for those suffering from hyper-acidity. Not only does it treat the disease but it also helps strengthen the body.