

Prakriti -constitution

Definition: Prakriti is an inherent nature of an individual determined at the time of your birth, which cannot be changed during your lifetime.

This non-pathogenic state of Dosha remains constant since birth till death and known as Prakriti.

This Prakriti is also known as Dosha Prakriti due to the predominance of Dosha.

There are 7 types of Prakriti:

- Vata Prakriti
- Pitta Prakriti
- Kapha Prakriti
- Vata Pitta Prakriti
- Pitta Kapha Prakriti
- Kapha Vata Prakriti
- Tridosha

Each Prakriti has different characteristic features.

The concept of Prakriti makes Ayurveda unique from other medical systems.

Selection of treatment, medicine is different for each individual depending upon their Prakriti.

Ayurveda also suggest about food which is conductive, foods which need to be avoided according to Prakriti. One man's food is another man's poison.

Assessment of Prakriti analysis will not only help in understanding the physical and mental constitution of patient, but also plays a vital role in prognosis, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of many diseases.

Therefore, to make one's life healthy, happy and balanced, the knowledge of constitution is absolutely necessary.”.

FORMATION OF PRAKRITI

Prakriti is formed by the Utkatata (predominance) of one, two or all three doshas at the time of union of Shukra (sperm) and Shonita (ovum) in the garbhashaya (uterus). For example, at time of birth if Vata dosha is predominant as compare to pitta and kapha, then individual is having vatajaprakriti. Predominant Vata dosha affect anatomy, physiology, psychology & immunity of that person. Features are seen according to properties & functions of Vata dosha.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRAKRITI

Prakriti or physical constitution of the fetus is determined by the following factor

1. sperms and ovum;
2. season and condition of the uterus
3. food and regimens of the mother, and
4. nature of the mahabhatas comprising the fetus.

1. Sperms and ovum;

Acharya Charka has narrated the concept of hereditary transmission in depth by giving description of three micro fine constituents of Shukra(sperm) and Shonita(ovum) viz. bija, bijabhaga and bijabhagavayava. These may be accepted as sperm or ovum, chromosomes and genes respectively. Different organs develop from different parts of bija. Abnormality of the part of bija leads to deformity of the organ from that particular region of bija and if there is no abnormality which develops in bijabhaga, there will be no abnormality in fetus for example, if there is abnormality in bijabhaga concerned with development of artava and uterus, the fetus will be sterile.

In Ayurveda, Jatiprasakta and Kulaprasakta are strictly viewed as hereditary factors and so both of them are responsible for the individual variations among persons.

2. Season and condition of the uterus

Kala(season): According to Acharyas different types of kala(time) can be interpreted as age of parents and time of copulation. Age of parents:

Predominance of doshas in body is existent according to age of parents e.g. in old age, predominant dosha is vata, in middle age predominant dosha is pitta and in childhood age, predominant dosha is kapha. These doshas affecting whole body, also affect Shukra(sperm)-Shonita(ovum) and therefore the fetus engendered in different ages of same parents have different constitution.

Time of copulation: Copulation is indicated only in anindaya kala(unforbidden) for attainment of a child of healthy state. The anindaya kala (unforbidden time) is, all the days of month except first four days of menstrual cycle, Amavasya(The day of new moon), purnamasi(the day of full moon), Chaturdashi(the fourteenth day in a lunar half month), Ashtami (The eighth day in a lunar half month), Tryodashi.(the thirteen day in a lunar half month)

If copulation is done in nindaya kala (forbidden period), resulting child suffers from abnormalities of intelligence, strength and eyes.

Birth time: in which month child is born, that month has also very important role in to format the prakriti of child, for example in child's birth is in winter season then this child has natural good stamina.

Garbhashaya (Uterus): Stipulation of healthy uterus can be appraised from the fact that defective uterine condition along with other causes delays the conception even in fertile woman and if conception takes place, it will result in malformed child with respect to shape, color and senses

3. Food and regimens of the mother

In Ayurveda, specific diet and activities have been introduced to obtain child of desired sex, colour, constitution e.g., woman aspiring for a son of tall, robust personality, fair complexion, resembling lion (in courage), energetic, chaste, endowed with qualities of goodness (satvika), is advised to follow the diet and activities as designated

Rasaja bhava (Nutritional factor):

The digested, absorbed and assimilated end product of the ingested food -rasa is one of the important procreative factor for the healthy progeny. Here rasa stands for that very fluid of the mother by which the fetus is nourished and this very factor has been recognized as one of the determinants for the development of fetus/ neonate. Mother's diet contains all the rasas (tastes), thus the rasa (nutritive fluid) derived from this diet gives strength and complexion to the fetus, and the fetus deriving its sustenance from this rasa remains alive and develops in the uterus.

4. Nature of the mahabhutas comprising the fetus.

Panchmahabhutas:

Sukshma bhuta (subtle proto-elements) are derived from past actions and are associated with the soul, along with mind/psych at the time of transmigration of soul from one body to other. Thus, sukshma(subtle) bhutas are linked with human organism from pre-embryonic period.

Mahabhuta play a basic role in the constitution of Shukra(sperm) and Shonita(ovum) of father and mother and they are also the elementary constitution of the nourishing material.

The union of sperm, ovum and the soul in the womb is designated as embryo which is regarded as the compound product of five Mahabhuta and the atma(soul).

These five bhuta instigate development of fetus by executing the functions of division, metabolism, lubrication, consistency and maturation in the embryo Factors, derived from mahabhutas:

Tejas Mahabhuta is responsible for the origin of colour but variations in it are mainly due to predominance of one mahabhuta at the time of fertilization as follows:

Jala - Gour varna (fair)

Prithvi - Krishan varna (black)

Prithvi Akash - Krishan shyam varna (whiteish)

Jala Akash - Gour shyam varna. (medium fair)

Taking in account the above-mentioned points, it may be concluded that mahabhuta affect development of human organism at sukshama(subtle) as well as sthula levels.

Prakriti (Ayurvedic body-mind constitution)

A. Features of Vātika constitution

One who is wakeful (does not sleep well), is averse to cold, is jealous, is a lover of music, and has cracks in the palms and soles, has scanty and rough hair, has dry and small nails and is irritable is of Vātika constitution.

One who is impatient, has unstable friendship, unsteady mind, is ungrateful, lean and thin, has prominent veins, is a fast walker, wanders aimlessly, and walks in the sky in his dreams is of Vātika constitution.

One who has a wavering mind and rolling eyes, little wealth and jewels, has fewer number of friends and talk irrelevant things is of Vātika constitution.

A man of Vātika constitution possesses nature like that of a goat, jackal, rabbit, mouse, camel, dog, vulture, crow or an ass.

B. Features of Paittika constitution

One who perspire too much, whose body emits bad odour, whose body is yellow and lax, whose nails, eyes, palate, tongue, lips, palms, and soles are coppery or yellow in colour. Whose body is wrinkled, whose hairs are white (grey) and are falling, one who eats too much is averse to heat, loses temper quickly and become quite soon and has a medium strength and average life expectancy, is of paittika constitution.

One who is intelligent and clever is a dominating orator, is bright and difficult to be defeated in debates and sees gold, fire, lightning and thunder in his dreams is of paittika constitution.

One who does not yield out of fear, is harsh to disobedient persons but is inclined to give solace to those who yield and always suffer from oral diseases, is of paittiika constitution

person possesses nature of a snake, owl, cat, monkey, tiger, bear or mongoose.

C. Features of Kaphaja constitution

One who is well built and good looking, is a lover of sweets, is grateful, patient, tolerant, ungreedy and strong, takes time to grasp information and maintains enmity for a long time is of kapha constitution.

One who has white eyes, has dark, curly and dense hair, is wealthy, has a voice like of lion, drums (Mrdangam) or clouds, and dreams of beautiful ponds with lotuses and swans is of Kapha constitution

The person who has redness in the corner of his eyes with a clear white sclera, has well-formed body and radiant appearance, possesses satvika qualities, tolerates pain well and is respectful to his elders, is of kapha constitution.

One who has an intense faith in religious books, has abiding friends and wealth, gives a lot of charity are careful thinking, gives definite opinions is of kapha constitution.

A man of kapha constitution poses nature like that of brahma,infra,varuna,horse, elephant,bullock or swan.

D. Personality Assessment Chart

No	Characteristic	Vāta (air)	Pitta (fire)	Kapha(water)
1	Body built	Narrow hips and shoulders	Moderate built	Broad hips and shoulders
2	Body weight	Low	Medium	Heavy
3	Endurance /strength	Low, poor	Fair	High, good
4	Skin condition	Dry, dark, rough, cold and wrinkled	Soft, fair, oily, delicate with pink to red moles and pigmentation	Oily, white, pale, moist and smooth
5	Hair	Dry, dark brown to black in colour and curly	Fine, light brown, soft, associated with premature greying	Oily, thick, dense, hair straight or wavy.
6	Teeth	Large, protruding. Crooked (more cavities)	Yellowish, moderate (more discolored)	White and large
7	Eyes	Small, black or brown	Green or grey	White clear, moist
8	Voice, Speech	High pitched and fast	Medium-pitched, sharp	Low-pitched melodious, monotonous
9	Bowel movements	Dry, hard stools, constipation, irregular and less in quantity	Soft, oily, loose stools, regular evacuation	Heavy solid stools. regular evacuation
10	Physical activity	Restless, gets tired quickly	Aggressive, focused	Calm and steady
11	Appetite, digestion	Erratic	Sharp hunger	Mild hunger
12	Taste preferences	Oily, heavy, warm, sweet, salt and sour tastes	Light, cold, sweet bitter astringent	Dry, light, hot, spicy, pungent, bitter, astringent,

13	Emotional state	Fearful, anxious, insecure, unpredictable	Aggressive, irritable, angry, quarreling	Calm, agreeable, stubborn
14	Mental tendencies	Questions, postulates	Judgmental, artistic	Stable, logical
15	Sleep pattern	Short, disturbed sleep, lasting for 4-5 hours	Sound, medium disturbed, lasting for 5-7 hours	Deep, restful, prolonged, easy to fall asleep, lasting for 8 hours
16	Dreams while asleep	Fear, flying, running	Fire, emotional	Of water (being near to water areas)
17	Sex urge	Frequent	Moderate	Cyclical, infrequent
18	Memory	Short-term	Good, but not prolonged	Long-term
19	Financial behavior	Spends quickly and unwisely	Moderately saves and accumulates	Saves a lot and accumulates
20	Quality of pulse	Fast with ectopic	Moderate, jumping	Slow and steady
21	Pulse rate	80-100 beats per minute	70-80 beats per minute	60 - 70 beats per minute
22	Response when threatened	Fearful, anxious, withdraws	Angry, irritable, fights	Indifferent, withdraws

Most people will find that they have characteristics from a couple of these categories. It is very rare to find an Eka prakriti – a person with a predominance of only one dosha, like only Vata prakriti. Most individuals are a combination of two doshas i.e. Dwandvaja prakriti. They possess characteristics of two doshas, with different percentages in the combinations.

A balanced constitution is ideal (and extremely rare), where the balanced state of all the three doshas neutralize the bad or unwanted qualities in each other and support and bring out the good qualities of the others. A person with all the three doshas in equal proportion is called Samadosha or Tridosha prakriti. The evaluation of an individual's Prakriti is very useful in helping him make correct choices with respect to food and lifestyle.