

Characteristics of *Vata Dosha*, in its aggravated and normal states

Vata is the bodily wind principle and can be translated as movement; that which moves is Vata. It is made up of the elements ether (space) and air, and it supports the two other Doshas. Vata's attributes are dry, light, cold, rough, subtle, clear, irregular, and mobile. It governs our sensory and mental balance and promotes mental adaptability and understanding. The thoughts and mind are Vata. It controls the movement of blood in the circulatory system, air in the respiratory system, the excretions out of our body, the nervous system, and moves nutrients to cells and tissues for metabolism. As with all doshas Vata pervades the entire body but it is found in abundance in the brain, ears, bones, joints, skin and thighs. The seat of Vata is the colon. The Vata constitution is the most difficult to keep in good health due to their inability to conserve and manage energy.

Vata tends to predominate during the older years (post menopause for women); during the autumn or fall season; after the digestion of food when nutrients are assimilated and wastes excreted; and during the day from early morning until dawn, and mid afternoon to dusk - the junctions of day and night

Note: All characteristics listed below indicate tendencies only, a Vata person may/may not show these, and there is no law stating that a Vata person **must** demonstrate a particular characteristic or that another Dosha type may not also demonstrate this.

Typical characteristics of people with a predominantly Vata constitution:

- Physically underdeveloped, too tall or short, thin/slender frame, have difficulty gaining weight
- Flat chests, visible veins, joints and muscle tendons due to poor muscle definition
- Dull complexion and cold, rough, dry, cracked skin that wrinkles easily
- Hair is dry, dark, and curly. Eyes small, dark, active and lack lustre; thin eyelashes
- Nose bent and turned up; nails are dry, crooked, rough and break easily
- Don't perspire much
- Appetite and digestion are irregular and physical stamina poor
- Elimination is irregular
- Sexually easily excitable but quickly satiated
- Talk and walk quickly
- Often hungry and like to snack
- High energy in short bursts, tendency to tire easily and to overexert
- Highly imaginative, creative, and mentally quick
- Quick to learn and grasp new knowledge, but also quick to forget
- Weak reasoning power, little willpower, tend toward mental instability
- Little tolerance, confidence or boldness
- Excitable, lively, fun personality
- Changeable moods, irregular daily routine
- Full of joy and enthusiasm when in balance
- Respond to stress with fear, worry, and anxiety, especially when out of balance
- Tendency to act on impulse, often have racing, disjointed thoughts
- Tendency to 'dream' and not put thoughts into action
- Tend to earn money quickly and spend it quickly also



Signs of Vata Aggravation

- Worried, tense, stressed, anxious, fearful, insecure
- Chronic tiredness yet can't relax, fatigue, exhaustion, poor stamina
- Nervous, can't concentrate
- Impulsiveness, erratic life-style, inconsistent
- Tendency towards over-exertion
- Agitated mind, emotional conflict, mental confusion, fantasy and illusions
- Sensations of being removed from thoughts, feelings, or circumstances; spaced out
- Impatient, agitated, or hyperactive
- Fast and disconnected speech
- Self-defeating, shy, insecure, restless
- Cannot make decisions, inability to focus on or finish tasks
- Most neurological disorders are related to Vata imbalance
- Weight loss, under weight
- Insomnia, waking up at night and unable to go back to sleep
- Generalised aches, sharp pains, arthritis, stiff and painful joints, cracking joints
- Tics and twitches, nerve disturbances, headaches, earaches, very sensitive to pain
- Muscle spasms, lower back pain
- Menstrual cramps, premature ejaculation, and other sexual dysfunctions
- Agitated movement, unable to settle or stay still
- Very sensitive to cold
- Nail biting, rough flaky and dry skin, chapped lips
- Fainting spells
- Heart palpitations, hypertension, irregular heart rhythms,
- Constipation, intestinal bloating, gas, diarrhoea, belching, hiccups
- Dry sore throat, dry coughs, hoarseness, loss of voice, dry eyes
- Weakened immune system

Indications of balanced Vata:

- Mental alertness and abundance of creative energy
- Good elimination of waste matter from the body
- Sound sleep
- Strong immune system
- Enthusiasm, emotional balance and orderly functioning of the body's systems
- Freshness, fun and enjoyment of life

Ways to balance Vata:

- Follow the dietary guidelines given (Vata Pacifying Dietetics)
- Maintain a consistent daily routine
- Keep exercise gentle and regulated
- Find time for rest, reflection, and nurturing of the Self
- Create a calm, safe and comforting environment for yourself
- Have regular Ayurvedic massages as this is soothing and grounding
- Choose warming foods and minimize intake of raw foods and cold foods and drinks
- Avoid very cold and very windy conditions, also very dry climates
- Minimise travel and too much movement, avoid loud and noisy places, crowds, too much talking
- Express your creativity in focussed and satisfying ways and allocate space and time for this
- Wear soft flowing clothes made of natural fibres of earth tones
- Get enough sleep
- Keep warm

