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GUIDELINES FOR OPTIMAL BENEFITS IN TREATMENT

Traditional and authentic Ayurveda provides certain guidelines to promote the calm and peace needed during your stay in our Ayushgrama resort for maximum benefits from your treatment. Please go through this very carefully.

ROLE OF THE PATIENT

1. The patient should have total faith in the physician. Ayurveda gives the patient the right to enquire and go searching for a good physician. Once he has identified the physician and decided to take his treatment, however, the patient should then place full faith in the capabilities of the physician and follows his instructions without question or doubt.

It would be very good if you could allow total control of your medicines and routine to the physicians once you are admitted in our center. This will make the task of the physicians easier and will also hasten the process of healing within you.

In spite of the explanations given by your physician, you might have some questions or doubts about the treatments and restrictions. If you don't worry but rather trust, you will be able to understand things better by the end of your treatment. There may be some intricate points related to the principles of Ayurveda, which can only be understood by experiencing them, rather than attempting verbal explanation. This is why you are expected to follow the instructions of the physicians. Please know we will try our best to simplify and clarify points to you.

Please remember that all Ayurveda physicians are studied 5 ½ years of B.A.M.S course and some even a further study of 3 years for MD in Ayurveda. Recognized by the Government of India and have very good experience in clinical medicine.

2. Once you have developed faith in your physicians and their healing prowess, you should give them as much detailed information as possible, to enable them to make an accurate diagnosis, prognosis, etc., and also to develop a customized treatment protocol for you.

Please do not hold back any information from the physicians when they come to interview you. What you may consider irrelevant or unimportant may be significant to them. Please answer all questions with due consideration.



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If you have forgotten to give some information, please do not worry. Physicians will visit you daily. You can continue giving information throughout the period of your stay. Of course, it will be more useful to your treatment plan if you can give most details relating to your condition at the beginning.

3. According to Ayurveda, the physician examines the patient by three means: *darsana*- observing, *sparsana*- by touch and *prasna*- by questioning. By keen perception, the physician makes some observations of your *dosha* and *gunas*. By touching, feeling the pulse etc., he continues to understand you and your problems. This process of *darsana*, *sparsana* and *prasna* will continue throughout your stay in our center.

OUR APPROACH TO LABORATORY INVESTIGATIONS

To enable proper documentation for your other doctors at home, and also enable tracking progress in modern medical terms, which may comfort you, the physician may recommend some investigative procedures such as blood tests, x-rays or biopsies. Or you can provide your reports from your house doctor. Though Ayurveda has historically been quite competent to deal with most emergency conditions, today conventional medicine has advanced to such an extent that it is often better suited to deal with emergencies. Therefore, any conditions our physicians feel need immediate attention will be referred to a modern medical hospital, where a physician may guide you. We are prepared if necessary to make such arrangements as needed.

If such conditions arise, we hope you will agree and understand that this arrangement is made in your best interest. Please note that such decisions are taken only rarely. They enable you to get the best treatment overall and recover so that you may then continue with Ayurvedic treatment.



ACTUAL TREATMENT PROGRAMME

Ayurveda describes four important components to treatment.

Internal medicines
External treatment
Nutritional guidelines
Restrictions

All four are equally important parts aspects of treatment. You must remain aware of them and follow all of them meticulously during your stay here.

INTERNAL MEDICINES

1. After the physicians determine your treatment program, they will decide on certain internal medicines and external treatments to be given to you, based on your imbalances *Vikruti* -dosha, disease *Vyadhi* disease condition –*Vydhyaavastha*, digestive fire -*agni*, your mind - *gunas* and body- *Sareera* and health of your body's tissues- *Dhathus*.

The internal medicines are normally of the following types:

- Medicated decoctions (*kashayam*), or concentrated herbal tea, with herbal pills (*vati*), or potent oil (*avarthi thailam*)
- Herbal powders (*choornam*)
- Medicated ghee (*ghritam*), also known as herbal clarified butter
- Medicated pastes (*lehyam*)
- Self-generated herbal wine (*arishtam / asavam*)
- Capsules / soft gels / pills with oils – (*gulika*)

2. Ayurveda knows that the entire plant, animal and mineral kingdoms are sources of medicine. There is nothing in this world that is not medicine. For practical purposes, we use approximately 600 different herbs, and a few minerals where absolutely essential, in combinations for the treatment of various diseases.

It is from this vast selection that the physicians will choose the best medicines suited to you and to your condition. The texts specifically state that there is no fixed recipe or dose for a disease. Both are determined on the basis of the disease, the nature of alimentary tract of the patient, his strength and age, place and time. Thus, as you may see, each treatment is tailored to each individual patient, not for each disease.



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3. According to Ayurveda, there are eleven prescribed times for giving internal medicines :

1. Without food (empty stomach at 6.00 AM and/or 6.00 PM)
2. Before meals
3. During meals
4. After meals
5. Mixed with food
6. In between meals (between lunch & dinner)
7. At the commencement & end of the meals
8. Often (frequently) irrespective of food
9. Mixed or along with one morsel of food of meals)
10. In between two morsels
11. At bed time

From the above, your individual dosage timings will be decided and informed to you by the physicians.

Please be sure to carefully follow instructions given on the intake of medicine. This is especially important for medicines given on empty stomach: you should ensure that you do not eat or drink anything for at least 90 minutes before and 60 minutes after intake of these medicine. If needed, a little water can be sipped after taking medicine.

4. Some of the medicines may be bitter – please remember that it is medicine and take it with a smile and a prayer.



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EXTERNAL TREATMENTS

1. A full normal course of intensive treatment requires an average of 45 days. For women, an extra 4 to 5 days may be required, as treatment is not done on during menstruation. But generally 14 & 21 days of treatment are also done.

2. The physicians will decide the order and types of treatment best suited to you and your condition. They will also decide the time of day optimal for your treatment. Though you can notify them of your preferences, the final decision will depend on the availability of therapists for the specific time slot that has been chosen.

3. A typical course of intensive treatment consists of:

a. preparatory *Abhyanga* (simple oil application) for the first days

b. intensive *swedana* and *snehana* treatments (pizhichil, *sirodhara*, *sirovasthi*, etc.) for the next 14 days

c. intensive detoxification (Panchakarma / shodhana) procedures (*vasti*, *virchana*, *vamana*) for 1-14 days and

d. concluding *Rasayana treatments like navarakizhi, navaratheppu* for the last few days.

This course may be altered based on the individual problems of the patient. Please note that *Abhyanga* is as much a part of the treatment as the intensive treatments. All Ayurvedic treatment programs have a preparatory phase, a main treatment phase and a post treatment or recuperative phase. All three phases are equally important for the success of the treatment.

If your physician feels that you need a particular procedure, such as *vasti* (medicated oil or decoction application to the rectum which is the main treatment for Vata dosha) or *virechana* (purgation), which is the main treatment for Pitta dosha, he will certainly explain to you any specific instructions and what to expect. To keep and protect your health or for the prevention of diseases, the doctor will explain the Kerala *rasayana treatments like Pizhichil or Dhara, Sirodhara, Navara kizhi or Sirolepa*. After the Panchakarma or *rasayana treatments* you need to consume internal medicines for a minimum period of 3 months and the follow up will be done in your country with our Ayushgrama doctors or by email communications.



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4. During the entire process, please remember to keep your physician informed of any changes you feel in your system. There could be an aggravation of your problem or there could be an abatement of pain. There could also be the formation of a new problem, which may seem unrelated. This is primarily because during the treatment we are purposely aggravating the toxins (doshas) in the body to liquefy them. We then bring them into the alimentary canal by means of *snehana* and *swedana* treatments and from where they can easily be removed, either naturally or in a forced manner. During this process of aggravation, the manifestation of new symptoms is part of the excretory process. Please do not worry or be alarmed. Just inform your physicians who will do the needful as required. On many occasions, the manifested symptoms will disappear by themselves as part of the process; you should in all cases keep your physicians informed.

5. If you desire to know more about the different treatments that are included in panchakarma, please ask your physicians. They will either explain in detail and/or refer you to useful books in our library.

6. Some of the treatments require two to four therapists simultaneously. You need not feel embarrassed by their presence. Most of the therapists are also doctors and it is one of the highlights in our center.

7. The last reminder is to trust the process. Ayurveda states that to heal, your mind must feel safe. Therefore, you should have full confidence in your physician's ability to find the best treatment for you. **You will heal faster if you can surrender to it.**



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NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES

Food in Ayurveda is not understood in Modern way like calories, vitamins and proteins etc., but instead it goes in accordance with the qualities of it as mentioned by the *Acharyas* of Ayurveda and Ayurveda lay tremendous emphasis on food.

In our center you will be provided with simple Ayurveda food, during panchakarma days which is very much suitable for patients undergoing treatment as it is right to digest & has minimum spice, salt & oil. Most of the food we choose are organically grown.

In spite of one effort of keeping your food tasty, it will be little bland to most people and we expect your co-operation to follow this diet restriction which will benefit in the treatment courses especially during your intensive treatments, where you digestive fire will be low. In case if you could not manage with the food let the physician knows your problem so as to make a possible change without deviating from the Ayurvedic principles as far as possible.

Please make sure that no food article is brought from outside the campus to the rooms. The food is fully vegetarian or ayur vegan during your stay in our center.

Many among you request us to give more salads and fruits/fruit juice. We must inform you that in Ayurveda, we do not recommend intake of raw vegetables during the time of panchakarma. This is also the reason why even fruits are not regularly given, though if the patient insists we permit the intake of one fruit every day that too the best suited fruit for you will be suggested by your physician.

Intake of alcohol, tobacco and narcotics are also strictly prohibited during the period of your stay in our center. We request you to co-operate with us for your own benefit.

We invite you to give recipes to the Ayurveda cook, based on the dietary restrictions that we prescribe and with the consent of the physicians .

Finally please remember that any food continuously from the same source over a long period of time will become tasteless. The reason primarily is in the mind. If you are able to control your senses and make yourself aware of the need for this food in the treatment process and pray every time you take your food, you will find that the food tasting better.



OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ayurvedic texts say, "The patient who has undergone emesis and the other cleansing therapies will be having weak body, strength and digestive fire. Hence she/he should be taken care of with all efforts just like a young (just laid) egg or a vessel filled with oil (to its brim) protecting him from all hazards and risks."

Towards the attainment of the above, the Ayurveda texts describe several recommendations, which are detailed below

- Use of only warm water for all activities for drinking, shower or bath.
- Maintenance of celibacy
- Not indulging in too much exercise. Walking or slight yoga asana are permitted.
- Not being exposed to cold, sun or wind
- Not speaking for too long or too loud especially with mobile telephones and Internet calls.
- Avoiding sleep during the day
- Going to bed early at night before 10 o clock.
- Not to travel during the days of panchakarma..
- Keeping the senses under control and avoiding desires like sweets, chocolates etc.
- Not suppressing the natural urges of the body like passage of flatus, urine, bowel movements, sneezing etc.,
- Not troubling the mind by becoming angry or sad or depressed by brooding over the problem and finds positive things and avoids negative thoughts. Find out everyday more positive things in you and your surroundings.
- Using footwear at all times so that the feet do not come in direct contact with the bare ground
- Not sitting for too long or remaining in the same posture for too long.
- Not keeping a very low or a very high pillow under the head
- Avoid too much reading and writing and avoid completely watching television.
- **NO SMOKING IN THE CAMPUS AT ALL, PLEASE AND SPECIALLY WHEN YOU ARE TAKING AYURVEDA MEDICINES AND TREATMENTS**



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This regimen is the same generally for all therapies and also for all those who are afflicted with disease.

You can check with the physicians whether all the above restrictions are applicable to you or whether some of them can be relaxed for you based on your condition.

The texts also clearly explain the reasons for each of the above regimen. In short, it may be understood that total physical and mental rest is what is advocated till treatment is over (including an equal number of days after the treatment which is also considered as part of the treatment), and in the case of patients having some disease, till the disease has subsided.

Please understand that these restrictions are for the benefit of the patient only and hence you may kindly do your best to follow all the restrictions or at least those that are insisted upon by the physicians for your specific condition.

The only activity that we recommend during this period is listening to music or mantras or spiritual discourses, which create good vibrations and support the healing process. If you need any tapes, please contact the library or inform the administration and they will arrange for the same – we do have a small library of such tapes for patients' use.

More than above recommendations, you are able to follow the vedic rituals if you are ready to accept Indian Lifestyle customs. Please note that it is nothing to do with any religion. The customs of India or Vedic rituals are a part of life style for the up liftments of our own life. Salutations of the Sun



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SOME POINTS FOR THE COMPANIONS

If you are accompanied with your wife or husband please let them help the partner by following

However the companions have a very important role to play in the healing process. They have to keep up the patient's morale, attend to all his/her needs, remain cheerful, have presence of mind, keep the physician informed of all changes within the patient, his/her likes and dislikes, problems he/she is facing etc.,

It is important for the companion not to let his own problems or boredom affect the patient or to discuss with the patient regarding such issues.

We understand that it is difficult for the companion to take the food given to the patient. Hence if he or she so desires, he can go to the restaurant and have regular food that is prepared for the Rasayana guests. In the interest of the patient, please do not take such food to the room or discuss such food with the patient.

Please keep the patient happy and even if at times, the patient is angry or sad, it is the duty of the companion to cheer up the patient and divert his attention for the cause of his/her emotion.

If both are doing treatment it is better to stay in 2 single rooms and to see each other in specific timings. Thus the companion has a very important role to play in the recovery of the patient.

As you may notice, all the instructions given above are specifically meant to help the patient to derive maximum benefit from the treatment and from the duration of the stay in our center.

Our center has good facilities and high standards of service in the hospitality and hygiene and we are constantly trying to improve the quality of our services. However we are also very careful and ensure that any failure of this does not interfere with the actual treatment and that the patient does not suffer physically due to this.

Please inform the physicians or the concerned staff regarding any problems that you may have with regard to treatment, Nutrition, hygiene or anything else, and they will certainly take care to ensure that your health is not affected due to lack of adequate attention to any of the above areas.



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THE TREATMENTS IN OUR RETREAT

Some of the specialized treatments provided in Ayushgrama, popularly called "Kerala Treatments", were developed centuries ago by the physicians of Kerala. With a spirit of enquiry, characteristic of true exponents of the healing arts, they improved upon some of the principles enshrined in the classical texts of Ayurveda. The research done by the ancient physicians leave their imprint on such therapeutic techniques like DHARA, PIZHICHIL, NAVARAKIZHI, SIROVASTHI and SIROLEPA which are known to bring rejuvenating effects in chronic disease conditions. The Kerala Rejuvenating / Rsayana treatments along with classical Panchakarma treatments are the specialty in our center. However the panchakarma treatments are done first and Rasayana are done after. With our long experiences in the western countries we suggest you to follow Panchakarma first either in the consecutive years till your diseases are cured and then to follow the rasayana treatments for the prevention of diseases. If you have time for more than 21 days better to follow both in the same year.

SIROLEPA

The application of herbal paste on the patients head is called Sirolepa. The most commonly used herb is pericarp of the fruits of Indian gooseberry cooked in buttermilk. The patient must sit on a stool facing east after applying oil on head and body. A piece of cloth is tied around the forehead just above the ears. Then the medicinal paste is applied on his head in a thickness of one finger. A gap is made at the center of the head by removing medicinal paste from that part. Banana leaf made into cone shape is kept over his head. Mild massage is done on his body and neck during the treatment. The paste remains on the person's head for almost 40 to 50 minutes giving wonderful relaxation to the mind. The effect of the medicines calms down the nerves, relieves mental tension, increases the person's memory power and improves his sleep pattern In Thalapothichil, / Sirolepa the person's scalp is completely applied with high value medicinal pastes. This enables the medicines to penetrate faster into the brain cells. The healing properties of the herbs also calm down the nervous system and rejuvenate the person. To start the treatment, the person sits on a chair, well relaxed.. Treatment is renowned for its ability to heal problems related to the head and neck regions. Alzheimer's disease, migraine, certain psychosomatic diseases, arthritis, headache, insomnia, mental illness, hyper tension, sinusitis etc. are some of the most common ailments treated using this method.



DHARA :

This treatment is a process in which medicated oil, milk, butter milk, etc., are poured in a continuous stream on the patient's head in a prescribed manner. Dhara alleviates fatigue, lack of vitality, improves memory and restores the equilibrium of DOSHAS. This treatment is also highly effective in insomnia, chronic headaches like migraine, ear and nose diseases, neuropathy, spondylitis, paraplegia, etc.,

PIZHICHIL :

This is a treatment in which warm medicated oil is continuously poured on the patient's body. This is very effective in all kinds of muscular and skeletal diseases like Rheumatoid Arthritis, Osteo Arthritis, Lumbago, Sciatica, Hemiplegia, Neuropathy, etc.,

NAVARAKIZHI :

This therapeutic measure is so called because of the fact that boluses of cooked Navara rice are used in the process. Navarakizhi is advised for all skeletal and muscular diseases, Paralysis, Sciatica, etc., this has been proven to improve general health also as a nourisher.

SIROVASTI :

This is a special technique to administer medicated oil on the head. In this the patient is made to sit upright and medicated oil is applied on the body and the prescribed oil is held inside a leather cap fitted on the head. This is exceptionally effective in eye, nose and ear diseases, chronic headaches, facial paralysis, spondylitis, insomnia and numerous other disorders arising out of deranged VATA. It improves vision, memory and mental faculties.



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In addition to the above Rasayana treatments, PANCHAKARMA treatments like Vamana, Virechana, Snehavasthi, Kashaya vasthi and Nasyam are also given based on the condition of the patient and after the assessment by the physician. During all these treatments the patient is advised to take total physical and mental rest. Further internal medicine and regulated diet also form important components of the healing process.

A normal course of treatment at Ayushgrama would be between 14 to 45 days – however this is subject to change based on the assessment by our physicians. We may finally mention that we are here as instruments of Lord Dhanwanthari, to look after you and to aid you in your recovery. We will all work together in the healing process. Please be a willing partner without any resistance whatsoever and most importantly keep the mind calm and peaceful and observe the changes that take place within you – you will certainly hasten the healing process within you.

WE WISH YOU ALL THE BEST IN THIS HEALING EXPERIENCE

