



Seven Simple Laws of Summer

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Seven Simple Laws for Summer



As Samuel Taylor Coleridge said, Summer has set in with its usual severity. The seasons around the globe are undergoing extreme changes and it is thus becoming a major cause of concern for all nations. Winter season is becoming cooler, summer season is becoming hotter and between the two extremes, man is becoming lesser and lesser healthy. Hence it is becoming increasingly essential to adapt lifestyles according to seasons, so as to prevent the adverse effects of extreme climactic conditions. 'Ritucharya' or seasonal regimen, as advised by Ayurveda, thus has a major role to play in everybody's life.

Seasons are of two types – one that drains the energy from the body (Aadaana) and the one that imparts energy to the body (Visarga). Summer falls in the first category, whereas winter is in the second. Summer also comes with certain specific illnesses caused by the impact of heat, like skin eruptions, heat fatigue etc. In order to preserve the energy, and thus to conserve our health, ideally we need to follow certain Ayurveda instructions in summer.



1. **Exposure to sun:** Try not to be outdoors from 10 am to 6 pm. Use an umbrella, hat or a shade, if unavoidable. Try to avoid the exposure to sun between 12 noon and 3 pm totally, as that is the time when sun as well as pitta (the hot body factor) are at their peak and it can make us more susceptible to heat - induced problems, especially that of the skin and the eyes.
2. **Activities:** It is good to reduce the physical exercise in duration and intensity. This is because the body energy and tolerance will be minimal during summer season. Regular exercises should be resorted to only in the morning, well before the impact of heat starts. It is always good to restrict even that to only half one's strength.
3. **Food:** Reducing the intake of salt, pungent and sour items is ideal in summer. It will be suitable to have more items that are light, unctuous, cold and liquid. Bacteria grow faster in summer and associated illnesses are usually at its peak during this season. Hence food items should be cooked carefully and properly, especially in summer. For the same reason, leftover foods should be avoided completely. Fruits (ripe and sweet) and leaf vegetables can be taken more regularly than root vegetables.
4. **Drinks:** Water should be taken in sufficient quantity to avoid dehydration and illnesses due to heat. Good water in room temperature or even cold water can be used for drinking. Drinking water boiled with a little of coriander seeds is helpful in fighting the heat. Milk (especially buffalo milk), diluted buttermilk, tender coconut water etc are especially good for summer.

The inherent property of alcohol, whether refrigerated or added with any quantity of ice, is hot. The other properties of alcohol are just opposite to that of Ojas (body energy). One of the principles of Ayurveda is that *similar properties cause an increase in that property, and dissimilar ones cause a decrease*. Hence alcohol increases the body heat in a hot season, and also reduces the body energy. Hence it should be avoided specially in summer.

5. **Sleep:** Day sleep is permitted in summer, for those who are physically exhausted due to exposure to sun. But it should preferably be resorted to in an air- conditioned room or in a room that is least heated up.
6. **Controlling temperature:** Use of an air-conditioner is good in summer. But sudden changes in the temperature are better avoided - Going to an outdoor temperature of 40 degrees Celsius from a room that is cooled below 20 degrees Celsius will invite problems due to swift changes. It should also be noted that people who sit in air-conditioned work places become vulnerable to heat-associated illnesses when they have a weekend in sun.
7. **Good Company:** Ayurveda advices the importance of the "cooling" togetherness with the family members, near and dear ones, more so in summer.



Post-Script - An increase of even one Degree Celsius of temperature near Earth's surface can cause major impact on our life. So it is good to learn about global warming and avoid practices that enhance it. Live healthy! Leave a healthy planet for the next generation!

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