

Kapha

The Energy of Lubrication

General Description

Kapha types are blessed with strength, endurance and stamina. In balance, they tend to have sweet, loving dispositions and be stable and grounded. Their skin is oily and smooth. Physically, kapha people may gain weight easily and have a slow metabolism. They tend to shun exercise. They have thick skin and their bodies and muscles are well developed. Their eyes are large and attractive with thick, long lashes and brows. Kapha people evacuate slowly and feces tend to be soft, pale and oily. Perspiration is moderate. Sleep is deep and prolonged. Kapha types are attracted to sweet, salty and oily foods, but their constitutions are most balanced by bitter, astringent and pungent tastes.



Psychologically, kapha people tend to be calm, tolerant and forgiving. However, they may become lethargic. While they may be slow to comprehend, their long term memory is excellent. When out of balance, kaphas tend to experience greed, envy, attachment and possessiveness. In the external world, kapha tendencies toward groundedness, stability and attachment help them to earn and hold onto money.

They are more likely to have diseases connected to the water principle such as flu, sinus congestion, and other diseases involving mucous. Sluggishness, excess weight, diabetes, water retention, and headaches are also common. Kapha can become more aggravated as the moon gets full because there is a tendency for water retention at that time. Winter is the time of greatest kapha accumulation and following the kapha-balancing dietary and lifestyle changes are most important during that season.

Dietary Considerations

Dietary guidelines for kapha people stress bitter, astringent and pungent tastes. They actually need foods that will invigorate their minds while limiting their overall consumption of food. They should avoid dairy products and fats of any kind, especially fried or greasy foods.

Those with kapha dominant constitutions need less grain than pitta or vata constitutions with buckwheat and millet (more heating) being optimal grains for them followed by barley, rice and corn. Roasted or dry cooked grains are best. All vegetables are good for kapha but one should emphasize leafy greens and vegetables grown above ground more than root vegetables while avoiding very sweet, sour or juicy vegetables. Generally kapha people can eat raw vegetables although steamed or stir-fried are easier to digest. Very sweet or sour fruits should be avoided with the more astringent and drying fruits being preferable such as apples, apricots, cranberries, mangoes, peaches and pears.

Only rarely do kapha people need animal foods and, when they do, it should be dry cooked—baked, roasted, broiled—never fried. They could eat chicken, eggs, rabbit, seafood and venison. As their bodies do not require large amounts of protein, they also should not overeat legumes although these are better for them than meat because of the lack of fat. Black beans, mung beans, pinto beans and red lentils are best for kapha types.

The heavy qualities of nuts and seeds aggravate kapha as does the oil in them. Occasional sunflower and pumpkin seeds are all right. Almond, corn, safflower or sunflower oils can be used in small amounts as well. The same holds true for dairy products: in general, kapha people should avoid the heavy, cooling, sweet qualities of dairy. A little ghee for cooking and some consumption of goat's milk is good for kapha types.

Since kapha people should avoid sweets, the only sweetener they should use is raw honey, which is heating. However, they can use all spices, except salt, with ginger and garlic being best for them. A person whose dominant dosha is kapha and who has very little influence from the other two doshas can benefit from the occasional use of stimulants such as coffee and tea. They are also not as harmed by tobacco and hard liquor. However, they really do not need alcohol at all. If they elect to use alcohol, wine is their best choice.

General guidelines for balancing kapha:

- Get plenty of exercise
- Avoid heavy foods
- Keep active
- Avoid dairy
- Avoid iced food or drinks
- Vary your routine
- Avoid fatty, oily foods
- Eat light, dry food
- No daytime naps