

Ayurveda-Ancient Medicine for Today | SF Bay Area Womans Journal

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September 12, 2011

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by **Myra Nissen, CCH, RSHom(NA)**
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When I graduated from Pacific Academy of Homeopathy I was fortunate to be engaged by a small retail chain in the San Francisco Bay area called *Elephant Pharmacy*. "Elephant", as it was commonly known, offered holistic as well as traditional Western medicine choices for health and wellbeing.

As one of their practitioners it was my job to give wellness consultations to shoppers at their request. Elephant sought to employ the best of Bay Area's healthcare practitioners specializing in a wide range of disciplines. Elephant closed its doors in 2009. Leaving a hole in the community; yet, the bond between

practitioners' endures.

While at Elephant, I had the honor to make the acquaintance of [Debra Riordan](#), a Clinical Ayurvedic Specialist. Ayurvedic medicine is compatible with homeopathy. Ayurveda is a complete system that assesses a person's constitution and vital energy to identify specific imbalances in body, mind, and spirit. I asked Debra to tell me about herself and Ayurvedic medicine.

Ayurveda means the knowledge or science of life and was first recorded more than 4000 years ago in the Vedas, the sacred scriptures of Hinduism.

Ayurvedic medicine is considered the traditional medicine of India and in approach is closely tied to Traditional Chinese Medicine and Tibetan Medicine.

Five Elements of Ayurveda

Ayurveda is based on five elements and their related qualities: Ether, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. The elements combine to form 3 doshas, body types or humors known as Vata (Wind) from Ether & Air, Pitta (Fire) from Fire and Water, and Kapha (Moist Earth) formed from Water & Earth. Each person is born with a unique combination of the 3 doshas.

Healthy digestion is seen in Ayurveda as the key to overall health and irregularities can start a chain reaction which aggravates the doshas. When the doshas are out of balance chronic illnesses occur. The Ayurvedic practitioner reestablishes the doshic balance with herbal preparations, body work, diet, and lifestyle changes.

Unlike homeopathy which uses the "Law of Similars" to illicit the body's healing response, Ayurveda uses opposite qualities to create a balanced state of energy and longevity.

Ayurveda Approach to Healing and Wellness

Debra shared the story of a recent client who had suffered from acid reflux and heartburn for several years. He found little support from prescribed medications and was ready for a more integrative approach. Debra designed an individualized herbal formula to support more efficient digestion.

She offered a number of simple recommendations including mindful dining, warm foods and beverages in the morning and evening. She also recommended taking a brief walk after eating and discussed specific foods which might aggravate the client's specific digestive pattern.

Within 4 weeks the client noted significant improvement of symptoms and a few months later noted virtually all his complaints had disappeared. He now has the tools necessary to maintain healthy digestion.

Debra's own healing journey began almost years ago as she sought relief from lifelong allergies and adult-onset asthma, utilizing the nutritional and lifestyle techniques recommended for her Ayurvedic constitution. Her success inspired her to study Ayurvedic medicine.

Source:

Debra Riordan C.A.S. is an herbalist, nutritionist, lifestyle counselor and wellness coach with a practice in San Francisco and San Rafael. Please visit her website [Debra Riordan](#) to learn more. If you contact Debra, be sure to mention this article.

Book:

Ayurvedic Healing: A Comprehensive Guide by Dr. David Frawley.

Myra Nissen, CCH, RSHom(NA), is a [board certified homeopath](#) (US & Canada) with a practice in Walnut Creek, CA. To learn more about Myra, check out her bio below, read her articles in the [Myra Nissen SF BAWJ Author Library](#) and visit her [Look Book!](#)

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