

Your Elemental Nature

The main *gunas*
or qualities of
Kapha are:

- Heavy
- Slow
- Cold
- Oily
- Stable
- Slimy
- Dense
- Soft
- Cloudy
- Sticky.

Kapha Dosha

Kapha is made of all 5 elements, mostly water and earth.

Folks with more Kapha in their constitution are hardier and rounder with a relaxed, calm, and loving nature and a tendency to hold onto excess weight. Steadiness is a major quality that shows up on all levels. They can be rocks for others, providing the kind of loving support and calm presence that many find soothing (think Oprah Winfrey). While not the fastest at picking up new information, they retain what they learn and their memories are strong. They tend towards prosperity and generosity.





In balance, Kapha is steady, smooth, soft, compassionate, loving, slow, enduring, slow to learn but good memory, calm mind; larger body type, and good overall tissue development. Kapha types often have lush hair, big eyes, and smooth skin. They are often endowed with a beautiful voice.

Out of balance Kapha is stagnant, slow, sluggish, lazy, mentally dull, clinging, possessive, greedy, reluctant to change, excessively sticky (mucous), overly sweet (diabetes) and obese. Kapha needs strong treatment to break through its density and inspire change.

- Take a moment to get a feel for the balanced and imbalanced expressions of Kapha. Do any of them resonate with you? Do any of these traits run in your family?



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Attributes Of Kapha

- Guru - Heavy
- Manda - Slow
- Hima - Cool
- Snigdha - Oily
- Slakshna - Slimy
- Sandra - Dense
- Mrudu - Soft
- Sthira - Static
- Avila - Cloudy

Sub-types of Kapha

TARPAKA - White matter, myelin sheaths

BODHAKA - Tongue, Governs taste, speech, swallowing

AVALAMBAKA - Supports all systems, protects heart & Lung tissue

KLEDAKA - Stomach mucose lining

SLESHAKA - Synovial fluid

General description of Kapha

Taste: Madhura (Sweet), Lavana (Salty)

Season: Late winter, spring

Time of day: 6 a.m. - 9 a.m. & 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Essence: Ojas

Body size: Large

Body weight: heavy, overweight

Skin: Thick, oily, cool, pale

Hair: Thick, oily, curly, wavy

Teeth: Healthy, white Strong

Nose: Short, rounded

Eyes: Large, beautiful, blue, calm

Nails: Thick, oily, smooth

Lips: Smooth, oily, pale

Chin: double, rounded

Cheeks: Plump, rounded

Neck: Thick, folded

Chest: Expanded, large

Belly: Pot-bellied, fat

Belly-button: big, deep, stretched

Hips: Heavy, big

Joints: Large, lubricated

Appetite: Slow but steady

Digestion: slow, mucus forming

Tastes that balance: Bitter, pungent, astringent

Thirst: Sparse

Elimination: Thick, oily, sluggish

Physical Activity: Slow

Mental activity: Dull, slow

Faith: Consistent

Intellect: Slow, exact

Recollection: Slow, sustained

Dreams: Water, snow, romantic

Sleep: Deep, excessive

Speech: Slow, melodious

Financial: Rich holds onto money

Emotions

balanced: Love, compassion,

forgiveness

Out of balance: Attachment,

greed, possessive, indifference

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KAPHA

EARTH + WATER

Main sites of Kapha

- Mucosal lining of the stomach
- Lungs
- Pancreas
- Sinuses
- lymph nodes
- Joints - Synovial fluid
- nose
- mouth
- Mastic tissue

What imbalances Kapha

Cold drinks, cold weather, swimming in cold water, over eating, over sleeping, ice-cream, sweets, emotional eating, dairy, lethargy.

Signs and Symptoms of excess Kapha

Obesity, congestion, colds, coughs, Edema, lymphatic congestion, cold clammy hands, profuse sweating, stuffy nose, under active thyroid, cysts, and high cholesterol.

How to balance Kapha

Discipline, exercise; jogging, jumping, running, stay active. Light, hot, sharp, dry diet, light breakfast, dry wine, hot water + honey, hot ginger tea, deep dry massage (or with mustard oil), sleep on hard bed or floor, stay up late, wake up early, drink water from a copper cup, smoke herbal cigarette (with rose & Brahmi). Wear red, orange, yellow, or black. Laughter also reduces Kapha.

Kapha diet

	No	Yes
Fruit	Most sweet and sour fruit Avocado Bananas Dates Figs Mangoes Melons Pineapples	Most astringent fruit Apples Berries Cranberries Limes Pears Persimmons Plums Raspberries
Vegetables	Most sweet vegetables Cucumbers Pumpkin Squash Sweet potato Tomatoes (raw)	Most pungent and bitter vegetables Asparagus Beets Bitter melon Artichokes Broccoli Cauliflower Cilantro Corn Eggplant Green beans Lettuce Parsnips Potatoes Radish Spinach Turnip
Grains	Bread Oats (cooked) Pasta Rice Wheat	Barley Buckwheat Corn Millet Rye
Legumes	Kidney beans Soy products Urad dal	Most beans, peas and lentils Lentils Tempeh
Dairy	Butter Cheese Ice cream Yogurt	Buttermilk Cottage cheese (cottage) Goat products
Nuts	Most nuts	Cherries Pumpkin seed Sunflower seed
Oils	Coconut Olive Sesame Soy	Corn Canola Ghee Almond
Spices	Salt	All spices are good

Herbs for Kapha (Bitter, pungent, and astringent herbs)

Herbs should be prescribed by a practitioner and taken according to individual constitution, time, and place.

Punarnava (Boerhaavia diffusa), Turmeric, Neem (Azadirachta indica), dry ginger, Black pepper, Cinnamon, Pipali (Piper longum), Shilajit (Mineral Pitch), Bibhitaki (Beleric Myrobalan), Cardamom, Calamus, Cayenne, Clove, Vidanga (Embellia ribes), Mustha (Cyperus rotundus), Bilva (Aegle marmelos), Triphala (Embellia Myrobalan+Terminalia Chebula+Terminalia bellerica), Trikatu, Guggulu (Commiphora Mukul), Fenugreek, Osha, Aloe powder, Yellow Dock, Gotu Kola, Golden seal.

Yoga Asanas for Kapha

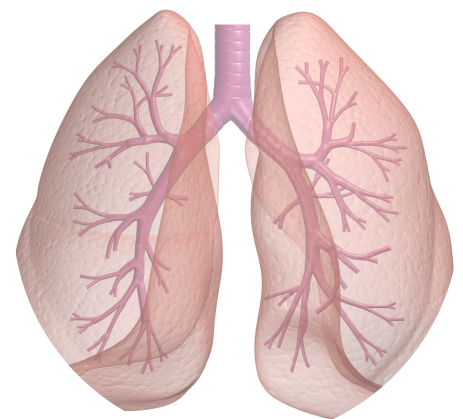
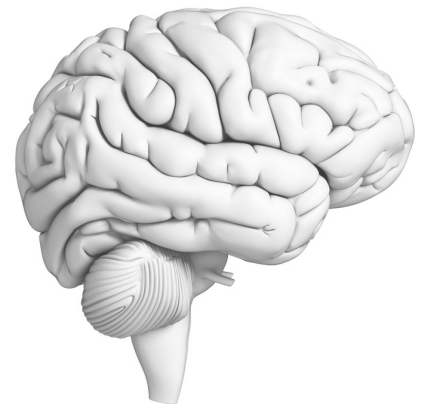
Knee to chest-Utkesepa Mudra, Cobra-Bhujangasana, Fish-Matsyarnudra, Bow-Dhanurasana, Head to knee-Utkata Pashchimottasana, Spinal twist-Matsyendrasana.



Kapha is the substance and lubrication of the body. Its main sites are the stomach and lungs, but it also has an affinity for the lymph, the mouth, the white matter of the brain, the joints, the chest and head in general, and all mucosal lining in the body. Disease in these areas of the body point to a Kapha imbalance.

Kapha's main seat is in the lungs. In the digestive tract, it is the stomach, and excess Kapha anywhere can be treated therapeutically through emesis, or vomiting.

In addition to the lungs and stomach, Kapha has a special affinity for the pancreas, the fluid in the joints, the white matter of the brain, and the salivary glands.





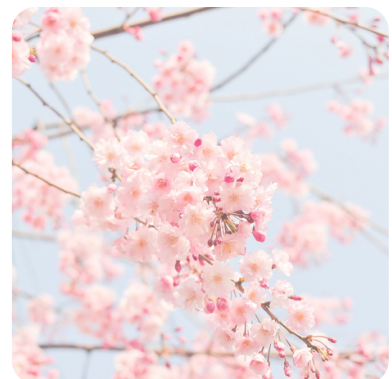
The keyword for Kapha is stimulation. Kapha-dominant individuals need the mobility that Vatas have in excess to break free from their Kapha comfort zones (while Vatas benefit from the sloooooow pace of their Kapha friends). Those with significant Kapha tend towards a sweet tooth and have a hard time digesting carbohydrates, which often lead to diabetes and obesity. A diet with more protein and vegetables is good for Kaphas and exercise is imperative.

While we treat Vata like a little bird in our hands, helping to calm and quiet its delicate nature; and we support pitta to cool down by more moderation, taking breaks from their intense focus and tendency to push too hard; we support Kapha to get moving by kicking some butt. Kapha is the one dosha we should “treat like an enemy” in the words of Dr. Vasant Lad, as its stagnation and excess lead to decay and serious illness. The density of Kapha requires a loud voice and a heavier hand than the more sensitive Vata and Pitta.



Kapha's season is **Winter and early Spring** when the weather is at its coldest and wettest, and the Natural world has gone into a kind of false death or hibernation. During Kapha season we are most prone to Kapha disorders such as chest colds, bronchitis, stomach flus, excess weight gain (some weight gain is healthy in the fall and winter), and stagnation. Kapha's time of life is **early childhood** when we all love sweets and carry around some "baby fat." Kapha's time of day is **6 - 10 am/pm**. In the mornings, we benefit from rising just before Kapha time to awake more refreshed. Kapha time of night is the perfect time to get cozy, connect with loved ones, and go with the heavier, denser energy to prepare for a good night's rest.

Kapha, composed primarily of water and earth, **governs taste and smell**, and so both of these senses are especially effective doorways to stimulating Kapha. Kapha is balanced by the bitter, pungent, and astringent tastes, and by invigorating, warming scents like citrus and cloves.





Yoga for Kapha: Overall focus on early morning practice that is stimulating, warming, and active. Focus on clearing and opening the lungs, stomach, and head.

Surya Namaskars and
other Vinyasa Practices

Pranayama to
Balance Kapha

Bhujangasana

Salabhasana

Ustrasana

Uddiyana Bandha Kriya

Agni Sar

Nauli Kriya

Bhastrika

Kapalabhati

Nadi Shodhana



Yoga to Balance Kapha



Abdominal Work



Backbend



Fish Pose

Kapha's Subdoshas

- **Tarpaka Kapha**, in the white matter of the brain, governing memory, and in the cerebrospinal fluid, nourishing the spine. Tarpaka Kapha keeps all the fluids in the head in balance, including the fluids that lubricate our sense organs.
- **Avalombaka Kapha** is present in the mucosa of the lungs, the main seat of Kapha, which keeps the lungs moist and protected from outside invaders. In excess, there is mucous in the lungs, as in a chest cold, bronchitis, or constriction leading to asthma. The prominence of Kapha in the chest shows in Kapha's broad shoulders and chest.
- **Kledaka Kapha**, in the stomach, supports the first stage of digestion and provides a proper lining and lubrication in the stomach, protecting it from the heat of digestive acids. In excess, Kapha here leads to slow, sluggish digestion.
- **Bodhaka Kapha** in the salivary secretions of the mouth supports the very beginnings of the digestive process. Lack of saliva diminishes taste, as does emotional eating where we overuse this sense.
- **Sleshaka Kapha** in the synovial fluid of the joints keeps the joints lubricated. Excess can lead to hypermobility and lack of support.



Balancing Kapha

We balance Kapha by adding opposite qualities:

Kapha Qualities

Heavy
Slow
Cold
Oily
Stable
Sticky
Soft
Gross
Cloudy

Balancing Qualities

Light
Fast
Hot
Dry
Mobile
Rough
Hard
Subtle
Clear

We add these qualities to the foods we eat, the clothes we wear, the kinds of activities we engage in, and the way we engage in those activities.



Kapha time of day is 6 - 10 am/pm. Kapha qualities are strongest at that time, so it is good to get up a bit before the Kapha time of the morning to do some meditation/exercise and bathe to invigorate and bring clarity to the body/mind. In the evening, it is good to go with the Kapha time and do relaxing and connecting activities, when the heavy dense qualities are strongest, preparing us to sleep well.

Kapha time of year is Winter and Early spring when it is cold, damp, and heavy. This is the time of year when we tend to gain extra weight, have colds/flu (mucous) and when we can feel heavy and dull mentally (SAD) and physically.

Kapha time of life is childhood when we are growing and developing.





To reduce Kapha

- Get moving, preferably first thing in the morning (brisk walk).
- Eat light, dry, pungent food
- Stay motivated by do things in groups or with friends.
- Avoid excess sugar, carbohydrates, and dairy
- Sleep 6 -8 hours only—no napping
- Skip breakfast if not hungry—eat brunch and dinner
- Let go of excess
- Stay hydrated, but not too much liquid

Imbalance Kapha

- Avoid exercise
- Avoid new experiences
- Focus on staying comfortable
- Eat excess sugar, dairy, and carbohydrates
- Drink too much water
- Sleep in and nap
- Avoid anything that feels like a challenge.



Questions for Self-Study

1. Which of the qualities of balanced Kapha do you recognize in yourself now and in the past? Do these run in your family?
2. Which of the qualities are out of balance at this time? For how long?
3. If out of balance, do you recognize foods, activities, or approaches you bring that add to the imbalance?
4. What one or two balancing actions will you take this week? If nothing needs balancing for Kapha, pick another Vata or Pitta balancing practice. Which practices will you continue to do and when?