

# PITTA DOSHA

The term pitta comes from the Sanskrit word pinj meaning “to shine” (according to Sir Monier-Williams its exact etymology is a mystery). It carries the meaning of “that which digests” and is associated with the idea of being yellow-tinged or bilious. In its widest sense, Paittika digestive function includes all chemical and metabolic transformations in the body as well as processes which promote heat production (i.e. conversion of iodine to triiodotyrosine in the thyroid gland). Pitta also governs our ability to digest ideas and impressions and to therefore perceive the true nature of reality. It stimulates the intellect and creates enthusiasm and determination.

Pitta is often regarded as the “fire” within the body. Think of it as the energy stored in the chemical bonds of all the organic substances which make us up: its encoded in our hormones, enzymes, organic acids, and neurotransmitters. Charaka Samhita, an ancient Ayurvedic text, teaches that pitta functions in digestion, heat production, providing color to the blood, vision, and skin luster.

Here is a table which summarizes the manifestations of a balanced or unbalanced (excessive) Pitta dosha:

## EFFECTS OF PITTA DOSHA

### EFFECT OF BALANCED PITTA

Strong and complete digestion

Normal heat and thirst mechanisms

Excellent vision

Good complexion; healthy facial tone and coloration

Hair lustrous and usually slightly wavy

Courageous, cheerful, focused

Stimulated, open intellect

Steadfast concentration on the truth; disciplined, responsible

Efficient assimilation of foods

### EFFECT OF UNBALANCED (EXCESS) PITTA

Incomplete digestion; poor differentiation between nutrients and wastes

Irregular body temperature, disturbed perspiration, unregulated fluid intake

Impaired vision

Variable, blotchy skin color, inflamed; unhealthy appearance

Irritable, anxious, driven, obsessed

Loss of energy and joy for life

Dullness of reasoning faculty

Spiritually impoverished

Heartburn, peptic ulcer, irritable bowels, hemorrhoids, diarrhea