

# Book 7: Common Herbs for Immunity and Disease-Specific Herbs

## Book 7.1: Videos on Herbs for Immunity and Diseases

### 1. Introduction

We will learn about some common herbs as well as their preventive, and curative aspects. These herbs are freely available in Mauritius, grow in abundance, and can be used after a little learning.

The concept of Immunity as per Ayurveda, along with Immunity boosting herb, and the mechanisms, and ancient references regarding the healing properties of [herbs against common diseases](#) will be explained.

#### 1.1. Video: Herbs for immunity

Watch the video on Herbs for Immunity: <https://youtu.be/5aZpBctvmhA>

#### 1.2. Video: Herbs for diseases

Watch this video on **Herbs for diseases**: <https://youtu.be/MIqONxTD5hY>

## Book 7.2: Rasayana: Anti-Ageing

The book deals with an important concept of Anti-Ageing, called [Rasayana](#). The introduction, importance, types, mode of action, indications and contraindications will be detailed.

[Rasayana](#) is one of the most important concepts in preventive medicine. The inclusion of this specialty among the eight top clinical branches in the very beginning of Ayurveda underlines the significance attributed to prevention over cure. Man always strived to save nine stitches. The modern medicine is unison on free radicals being responsible for almost every [disease](#), ageing and even death. The causes, symptoms, management and preventions of free radicals effects are ditto with [Rasayana](#) principles.

[Rasayana](#) means obtaining the best qualities of [Dhatu](#). Literally the term [Rasayana](#) refers to obtaining the optimum nourishment of the Dhatus. It denotes to check further ageing and to acquire prolonged and quality life span.

### 1. Definition

*Swasthasya urjaskanyastu tat vrishyam tat Rasayanam...*

*Laabho payaao hi Shastanaam rasaadinaam rasaayanam...*

- The therapy, which produces the best quality of Dhatus is [Rasayana](#).
- The therapy, which decreases the ageing process, increases the longevity and increases the mental as well as physical strength and which destroys the [disease](#) process is [Rasayana](#).
- [Rasayana](#) is that which provides optimum quality of the bodily tissues due to which it provides both mental and physical [health](#), prevents ageing and [disease](#), retards ageing and provides nourishing of vital enhance, thus enables to live for a longer period of youthfulness.
- Through which one is benefited with optimum and best of [Rasa](#) to [Shukra](#) Dhatus is called as [Rasayana](#).

The cellular machinery of the body suffers trauma and stress resulting in various ailments of different systems; physical and mental, and deteriorates the functional capacity. For this, procedures like revitalization and rejuvenation are adopted to increase immunity. These procedures control the advancement of aging and ward off diseases. These tools have both preventive and curative effects. [Rasayana](#) in Ayurveda is prescribed for a particular period and strict regimen is followed.

### **1.1. The Aim of Rasayana**

The [Rasayana](#) therapy enhances the qualities Dhatu and one attains longevity, memory, intelligence, youthfulness, excellence of lustre, complexion and voice, optimum development of physique and sense organs, mastery over phonetics, respectability and brilliance.

### **1.2. Functions of Rasayana drugs**

- Nourishes and maintains the cell life
- Encourages the growth of new cells (Regenerative action)
- Prevents recurrent infection (Immuno-modulatory action)
- Eliminates the toxic metabolites and pollutants (Antioxidant action)
- Maintains the balance between [mind](#) and body (Adaptogenic)
- Act at subtle cellular and gross systemic levels

### **Mode of action of Rasayana drugs**

[Rasayana](#) contain Immuno-modulators of varying chemical structures and molecular sizes. These exert their effects by modulating several steps of immune system such as activation of macrophages for enhanced generation, stimulation of cytotoxic activity and phagocytosis, proliferation of lymphocytes leading to better production of T- helper and natural killer cells and activation of complement pathways. Immunostimulants offer promise in enhancing antigen specific (Vaccines) and non-specific immune response against infection.

## 2. Indications

[Rasayana](#) is indicated in a host of conditions. It cannot be used [time](#) and again, unlike Vajikaranaa, by a person but should be properly planned and followed as per the advice of the practitioner. [Rasayana](#) is indicated in

- Poor quality and volume of Dhatus
- To achieve better immunity
- To delay ageing
- To support a particular organ
- For better [mind](#) functioning
- For physical strength
- For particular [disease](#) suppression

## 3. Contraindications

[Rasayana](#) is contraindicated in many conditions. Some of them are –

1. Low [Agni](#) / presence of Ama
2. Unstable [mind](#)
3. Presence of otherwise curable diseases
4. For short tempered
5. One who cannot afford financially
6. One who is distrustful in practitioner

## 4. Criteria of selection of Rasayana drugs

The herbs which have [Rasayana](#) effects in general to build up immunity or in particular to benefit a specific organ are selected singly or in combination for maximum efficacy.

A practitioner selects the [Rasayana](#) herbs as per the [Prakriti](#), [Dosha](#) vitiation, symptoms, diseased organ / systems, adaptability etc. of the person.

General [Rasayana](#) herbs are light, bitter tasting, with cold potency as these properties control Pitta most effectively and do not burden [Agni](#). Still, there are [Rasayana](#) drugs against Vata, Pitta, Kapha or combinations of [Dosha](#) and these drugs have their own specific properties.

Some specific [Rasayana](#) drugs are as follows -

1. Emblica officinalis (Amla) fruit - Antioxidant, nutritive
2. Terminalia chebula (Haritaki) fruit - Antioxidant
3. Withania somnifera (Aswagandha) root – Adaptogenic, antioxidant
4. Tinospora cordifolia (Guduchi) [Satva](#) - Immunomodulatory, antioxidant
5. Terminalia arjuna (Arjuna) bark - Hypocholesterolemic, antioxidant.

## 5. Classification of Rasayana karma

[Rasayana](#) is an elaborate system, laced with judicious uses of diet, herbs, thoughts, behavior, and meditation and so on. This tool has a potential to postpone ageing and do away with many diseases and such a noble system has to be analyzed and classified for better understanding and application.

[Rasayana](#) is classified as per following categories:-

- i. Indoor / Outdoor [Rasayana](#)
- ii. As per Contents
- iii. Achaara [Rasayana](#)
- iv. As per target entity
- v. As per purpose of action

### 5.1. Indoor / Outdoor Rasayana

- Kuti-praveshika ( Indoor / non- ambulatory)
- Vatatapika (Outdoor / ambulatory )

Indoor [Rasayana](#) treatment procedure is more beneficial than the outdoor one. The patient is admitted in an Ayurveda hospital and first, is given Ama Pachana medicines. He undergoes a fixed schedule with regard to daily routine, meals, medicines, [Panchakarma](#) detoxification, meditation etc. as the need may be. This requires more of [time](#) as patient stays in for many days. Practitioners and paramedics have to attend the patient round the clock. This makes Indoor [Rasayana](#) costly for the patient.

On the other hand, outdoor [Rasayana](#) is lesser effective and lesser costly. The patient walks in a daytime clinic, consults the practitioner and is advised life style changes, herbs and meal / exercise plan etc. to be followed back at home. As paramedics and clinicians are involved for lesser [time](#) and no residential admission is required, this is economical.

This is not the finances only that decide on whether to take indoor or outdoor [Rasayana](#). It depends upon the type and duration of [Rasayana](#) required by a particular patient. If it is not an exhaustive one and the patient is fit and ambulatory, outdoor [Rasayana](#) is more apt.

### ***5.2. As per Contents***

- Material – herbal, mineral, food etc.
- Non-material – Achaara [Rasayana](#)

[Rasayana](#) may be with or without herbs and medicines. Alternatively, this can be a combination of both i.e. a person is given some herbs to eat, some dietary tips and also counseled on the [Rasayana](#) effects of positive thinking.

Achaara [Rasayana](#) is a valuable concept and is detailed next.

### 5.3. Achaara Rasayana

[Rasayana](#) is a science of producing perfect [health](#) through better immunity. In addition to material [Rasayana](#), Achaara [Rasayana](#) is a non material [Rasayana](#) i.e. behavioural rejuvenation. Behaviour can revitalize; not only the [mind](#), but also the body. Psychosomatic diseases are much prevalent nowadays and this is high [time](#) to discover and propagate the link between positive thinking and healthy body. The definition of [health](#), both by W. H. O. and Ayurveda advocate complete [health](#) to involve social, psychological and spiritual well being too and a mere absence of diseases may not be termed as [Health](#).

Some rules on thinking process, told by Charaka are very relevant today. These relate directly to [health](#) status. Some of them are as follows –

- Not to tell a lie
- To be free from anger, violence and stress
- Avoid excess of sexual involvement
- To shun addictions
- To be broad minded and social
- To meditate
- To eat judiciously

One should always speak the truth. Apart from philosophical and religious explanations, extract medical logics are strong enough to agree to this novelty. Whenever one speaks something false knowingly or is stressed, there is a sudden surge of hormonal changes to assist and regulate the fabrication of imaginary situations being told. This load of stress hormones takes its toll. When one is into such habits, these hormones as adrenaline, growth hormone, thyroxin etc. are on rise round the clock and lead to narrowing of blood vessels, faster heart rate, faster respiration, lesser secretions in alimentary canal, poor digestion and nourishment and so on. Likewise, Anger is most unnecessary emotion. One only repents for the words and actions committed in a fit of anger.

Constant stress and anger cause:-

- Weight gain / loss
- Low Immunity
- Infections
- Diabetes Mellitus
- High blood pressure
- Depresses metabolic processes
- Ulcers
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Migraine
- Impotence, Erectile Dysfunctions
- Irregular menstrual cycles
- Accidents
- Lack of concentration
- Domestic violence

Seeing all these degenerative effects of stress, negative thinking and anger, one should shun these feeling and adhere to a placid and compassionate living. This is the learning coming from Achaara [Rasayana](#).

#### **5.4. As per target entity**

- Improving quality of [Rasa](#) – Shatawari
- Improving [Agni](#) – or digestion and metabolism - Guggulu
- Improving circulation in channels - Shatawari

#### **5.5. As per purpose of action**

1. Kamaya [Rasayana](#)
2. Naimittik [Rasayana](#)
3. Ajasrika [Rasayana](#).

We explain more on above in the next subsections

### 5.6. A . Kamyā Rasayana

[Kama](#) means a particular longing or desire. By Kamyā [Rasayana](#), specific broader areas are endeavoured. These, for instance, are [Prana](#) / Life, Medha / Intelligence etc. One tries to follow a broader goal for all-round development and [health](#). Thus, Kamyā [Rasayana](#) are promoters of normal [health](#). These boost energy levels, immunity and general [health](#). Some examples are -

- Pranakamyā – Promoter of vitality and longevity
- Medhakamyā – Promoter of intelligence.
- Shrikamyā – Promoter of complexion.
- For sense organs etc.

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## 6. Rasayana for Dhatus

One can plan [Rasayana](#) effect for each [Dhatu](#). Some herbs are linked to particular [Dhatu](#) as instanced below -

1. [Rasa](#) – Milk, Ghrita, Shatawari
2. [Rakta](#) – Iron, Amlaki
3. [Mamsa](#) – meats, milk, gold ash, Shatawari
4. [Meda](#) – Ghrita, milk etc. and Guggulu
5. [Asthi](#) – Laksha, praval, Vamshalochan

6. [Majja](#) – Ghrita, shankhapushpi and Brahmi
7. [Shukra](#) - Milk, kapikachchu etc

### 6.1. Rasayana for body systems

As for Dhatus, there are [Rasayana](#) for particular Srotas / systems as well.

Some examples are as follows –

1. Pranavaha Srotas – Piper longum, Basil, Ginger
2. Annavaha – Panchakola, asa fetida
3. Udakvaha – Punarnava, Mustaka
4. Rasavaha – Guduchi, Milk
5. Raktavaha – Iron, Bhringraj
6. Mansavaha – Shatawari, Milk, Meats
7. Medovaha – Guggulu, Shilajeet
8. Asthivaha – Gum acacia, conch
9. Majjavaha – Vacha, Ashwagandha
10. Shukravaha – Milk, ghrita, oxide of vanga
11. Mutravaha – Gokshura, Shilajeet
12. Purishvaha – Kutaja, Bilva
13. Swedavaha – Sandalwood, Dhatura

### 7. Procedure for Rasayana therapy

It is very essential for a person who wishes to undergo [Rasayana](#) therapy to undergo detoxification as a preparatory procedure. A detoxified body and [mind](#) is like a clean, soap washed cloth which readily absorbs the colour in which it has been dipped unlike a soiled cloth which looks soiled even after colouring with best colours. In this instance, cloth equates to human body, soil is for toxins on [mind](#) and body, colour is the [Rasayana](#) therapy and soap is the detoxifying procedures as [Panchakarma](#) and herbs.

## 8. Effect of Rasayana therapy

[Rasayana](#) therapy enriches nutritional quality of [Rasa](#), enhances digestion and metabolism by normalizing [Agni](#) or body fire, and promoting the competence of channels

A verse says “long life, increased memory and intelligence, freedom from [disease](#), youth, excellence of luster, complexion, voice, strength of body and [mind](#) are obtained by vitalizers.” These materials termed as “[Rasayana](#)” may be inducers of beneficial enzymes, hormones during [health](#) and [disease](#).

By following systematic [Rasayana](#) protocol, one can expect following benefits -

- It enhances the intelligence, memory, body strength, skin, and voice
- It nourishes the blood, lymph, muscles, tissues, semen, and thus prevents chronic degenerative disorders like Arthritis, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s [Disease](#) etc.
- Improves metabolic process and quality of body tissues and eradicates diseases of old age
- Helps to attain optimal physical strength and sharpness of sense organs.
- [Rasayana](#) has marked action on reproductive organs and also nourishes [Shukra Dhatu](#); also produces more of Oja.
- [Rasayana](#) nourishes the whole body and improves Immune system and natural resistance to infections.

Thus [Rasayana](#) is extremely useful in present scenario and more than a choice, this has become an essentiality as prevention is not only better than cure, many a [time](#), this is the only cure.

## 9. Summary

[Rasayana](#) is one of the most important concepts in preventive medicine. The causes, symptoms, management and preventions of free radicals effects are ditto with [Rasayana](#) principles. [Rasayana](#) means obtaining the best qualities of [Dhatu](#). The therapy, which decreases the ageing process, increases the longevity and increases the mental as well as physical strength and which destroys the [disease](#) process is [Rasayana](#). It is indicated in a host of conditions. It cannot be used [time](#) and again, unlike Vajikarana, by a person but should be

properly planned and followed as per the advice of the practitioner. [Rasayana](#) is contraindicated in many conditions as low [Agni](#) / presence of Ama, unstable [mind](#), presence of otherwise curable diseases etc.

The herbs like Amlaki, Ashwagandha, and Guduchi etc which have [Rasayana](#) effects in general to build up immunity or in particular to benefit a specific organ are selected singly or in combination for maximum efficacy.

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Thus [Rasayana](#) is extremely useful in the present scenario of too hectic lifestyle and abundance of various types of pollutions which hasten ageing.