**Enjoying a Balanced Spring**

**By John Peterson, MD**



*"In just-spring*

*when the world is mud-*

*luscious and... puddle-wonderful"*

*e. e. cummings*

In the ayurvedic system of health every season has a dosha, or set of qualities, associated with it. Winter, governed by [Vata](http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-knowledge/doshas/vata.html) dosha, has been cold, dry and dark. When the sun lingers longer, the ground thaws and mud heralds the beginning of [Kapha](http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-knowledge/doshas/kapha.html) dosha season. Kapha season starts out wet and cold in March and ends up wet and warm, in May and June.

In early Kapha season the world is slowly coming out of hibernation. The first spring flowers poke their heads above the mud and the birds' ecstatic singing signals that mating season has begun. Trees flower and release pollen before their leaves unfurl. As the vegetation wakes up, people who are susceptible to allergies can feel the effects of Kapha in their respiratory system.

The English word "cough" comes from the Sanskrit word Kapha. The main location of Kapha in the body is in the chest. When the Kapha dosha becomes aggravated, mucus increases, leading to colds and problems with sinus congestion, allergies and asthma.

Just as the year is divided into seasons by the doshas, the daily cycle also has its divisions into Vata, [Pitta](http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-knowledge/doshas/pitta.html) and Kapha. The Kapha time of day is 6 to 10 in both the morning and the evening. Digestion is weaker during Kapha time, especially in Kapha season. Kapha covers up agnis (digestive fires). It's good to eat the biggest meal of the day at lunch, when the digestive fires are naturally at their peak, rather than heavy breakfasts and suppers.

Childhood is the time of life governed by the Kapha dosha — so whatever proportion of Kapha dosha a child is born with will be accentuated during childhood. In my family medicine practice I see a lot of snotty-nosed kids with ear infections this time of year. I prescribe a [Kapha-pacifying diet](http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-recipes/dietary-guidelines/kapha.html), which favors the bitter, pungent and astringent tastes. Americans are more familiar with the other three tastes — sweet, sour and salty. These pacify Vata dosha during Vata season, which is now over.

I've observed in my practice that if kids eliminate heavy foods like ice cream, yogurt, peanut butter, bananas, cheese, ice-cold foods and deep fried foods, this alone will decrease ear infections by 50%.

The switch from Vata Season to Kapha season can be hard on the body. During Vata season our bodies tend to take on those qualities that pacify Vata — heavy, sweet, dense, and oily. These qualities are Kapha by nature and exactly balance Vata. This is the ayurvedic principle of opposites balancing each other.

Now that it is Kapha season and our body has been accumulating Kapha during Vata season, it's a good idea to do some kind of cleanse to have a clean slate. Spring-cleaning is a good idea, inside and out! The classic ayurvedic cleanse is called Virechana. Ask your ayurvedic physician if a Virechana spring cleanse would be good for you.

Here are some good tips for Kapha season that you can follow on your own. Make sure that lunch is your big meal of the day, so you aren't asking your body to digest a big meal during sluggish Kapha times like early morning or evening. Food should be well cooked, not raw for the most part. Make a little ginger pickle to eat about 10 minutes before meals — chop fresh [ginger](http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-knowledge/food-tips/the-healing-power-of-ginger.html) into small pieces and add a dash of salt and a squirt of fresh lemon juice.

Food can be spicier this time of year and it's also good to add bitter and astringent tastes. Cooked green leafy vegetables are bitter and legumes are astringent. Raw honey helps liquefy Kapha and move it out of the system, but cooked honey is considered poisonous in the ayurvedic system, so it shouldn't be taken in hot tea.

Add ginger and [turmeric](http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-recipes/spices/turmeric.html) to your favored-spices list, and sprinkle some of the [Organic Kapha Churna](http://www.mapi.com/products/food-spices/kapha-churna.html) spice mix onto your meals. Remember to break out the [Organic Kapha Tea](http://www.mapi.com/products/herbal-beverages/ayurvedic-teas/kapha-tea.html) to warm you up, and [Sniffle Free Tea](http://www.mapi.com/products/herbal-beverages/ayurvedic-teas/sniffle-free-tea.html) is great too.

Don't force your kids to eat a big breakfast! They might like cooked apples with cloves, or a spicy milk drink (ginger is a great addition). If you're allowed, pack them a snack for when their Pitta digestive fires kick in around 10:00 a.m. (or 11:00 a.m. with Daylight Savings Time).

Spring is a good time to ramp up your exercise routine. Once Kapha is energized it brings great strength and endurance. Your initial resistance will turn into exhilaration and you'll have energy to enjoy this puddle-wonderful time.

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<http://www.mapi.com/ayurvedic-knowledge/seasonal-health/balance-kapha-dosha-during-spring.html?utm_source=MAPI+e-News&utm_campaign=91ae0f6d18-MarNewsletter-All%2A_03_04_18&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f8ceb45f9e-91ae0f6d18-49227337>