


Weekly Focus

 Women + Moon Cycles



Reading:

Eat, Taste, Heal: Home remedies for PMS: p. 154; Daily and monthly cycles: p. 122-128

Ayurvedic Home Remedies by Dr. Lad: Menstrual readings: Read, p. 242-243; 221-223, reread p. 57-58 (top); Hypoglycemia : 206-208 (if you have it)

Ayurvedic Beauty Care: Lifestyle and "Graceful Work Life" p. 66-69

Handouts on Lesson 18 Member's Page

Charts in this homework

Exercises:

- There are many exercises in this months Growthwork. Read through them and circle that which is meaningful to you right now. Do those exercises, instead of trying to get to them all. Enjoy the work.

Menstrual Sutras

by Terra Rafael

<http://www.wisewomanhood.com/womenshealthmenstrualhealth.htm>

- Menses is women's vulnerability & women's power. Deny neither.
- Denying menstrual needs leads to disease and disempowerment of women.
- Honoring menarche honors the new woman & all of womanhood.
- Menses is women's natural monthly cleanse. By rest, appropriate eating, and supporting the downward energy this purpose is fulfilled. By ignoring or suppressing it, disease is created.
- Outward rest at menses allows intuition & inward creativity to emerge.
- The openness of menses deserves the protection of seclusion & rest, rather than secrecy & shame.
- Menses is the time of giving birth to ourselves-respecting it is respecting ourselves.
- Wise self care throughout fertility cycles allows for healthy menses.
- Ease of menses is a sign of overall balance and health.
- Women's cycles were commonly entrained to the moon & the tribe before artificial lights and isolating nuclear families.
- Moving downward energy of the body - allow it, maintain it.
- Moving downward energy of menses - respect it.
- Moving downward energy of childbirth - be it.
- The health of the woman & the womb promotes the life long health of the offspring.
- Self care through fertility cycles, allows more graceful giving birth when it is time & more graceful entering into menopause when it is time.



“The health of the family, society, and culture that revolves around a woman depends to a large degree on her health, and her health rests in turn on her ability to keep her creative energies flowing (shakti). Our concern in Ayurveda is to help women find those channels, both inside and outside themselves, within which they can flow comfortably, freely, and fearlessly, so that they may best display their own innate creativity to themselves, their loved ones and the world.”

- Dr. Robert Svoboda, [Ayurveda for Women](#) (p. 7):

Draw
what this
means to you
right now in the
space below.



If your doshas are out of balance, “ask yourself which dosha seems to be most easily perturbed or pacified by what you eat and what you do. If you can discern a pattern, you will generally find one of the doshas lurking at the center of it. That is the dosha you should focus on first.” (Dr. Robert Svoboda, Ayurveda for Women, p.76)

Fill in the table with any symptoms you have had in the last 6 months related to your cycle. Put it in the corresponding Dosha category.
(Men, fill this out with another woman you are close to.)

Menstrual Symptoms	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
1			
2			
3			
4			

Menstrual Remedies	Vata	Pitta	Kapha
1			
2			
3			
4			



Moon cycles	New Moon	First Quarter	Full Moon	Last Quarter
Characteristics of moon phase	Sun & moon conjunct. Dark sky. Mystery & unknown. New experiences, ideas & life being seeded. Led by instinct & intuition through the dark. Sun is drawing rasa away again.	Moon's first strike for independence, creating dynamic tension with the sun. Much energy available. Old structure falls away, conflict & crises as catalyst to take action. Courageous & forward looking. Energy into pioneering.	Moon directly opposite the sun. "Ideally, a woman ovulates with the full moon, the astronomical moment when the moon is pouring abundant rasa on the earth." Svoboda	Return to center. Beginning of end of current phase. Re-evaluation & re-organization. Integration of what you have learnt, & release that which does not fit into your developing consciousness. Refinement & paring away of what is not suitable for your life & purpose. Release of logic & objectivity, and return to intuition, instinct, darkness, & unknown.
28-day phase	Menstruation		Ovulation	
archetypes	Crone (kali, Sheila na gig, baba yaga) Introspective & intuitive. Open to messages from Soul. Time of cleansing & release, let go of blood, thoughts, beliefs, & habits that no longer serve. Call on Crone energy to destroy that which no longer serves. Seeding for the next cycle.	Virgin/Maiden (Bhairavi) Fertile, sexual, & complete onto herself. Bold, dynamic, energetic, confident, extraverted. Athena: goddess of wisdom Artemis: goddess of the moon Hestia: Goddess of the Hearth	Mother (lakshmi, buvaneshvari, hera, aprodite) Energy is ripe & full. Nourish, nurture, sustain & empower ourselves & our creative works. Receptivity, communion, & cooperation.	Enchantress (matangi, sundari, hestia, persephone) Introspective – return to your hearth. Quiet time allows intuition to awaken. Veil between physical & spiritual world lifts.
Doshic activity	Vata	Kapha	Kapha transitions to Pitta	Pitta
Emotional direction	Release to move forward. Liberation of woman from the demands of family & husband. Make choices of what she wants.	Goddesses of inner focus on self & her task. Pushing body to physical limits. Priestess energy.	Relationship, partnership, & well being of others above all else.	Heightened emotions & mood swings. Maintain & create a spiritual center within self. Devotion to rituals for self & shift focus to self-care.

Vata	PMS	Menstruation	Menopause	Cause	Lifestyle adjustments & Yoga
Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragility • Emotional instability • lower self-esteem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cramping, discomfort, lack of menses, or scant darker blood. Feels better with heat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bone loss, hair loss, dryness in colon (constipation, gas), insomnia, joint stiffness, pain, nervous disorders, fatigue • Vaginal dryness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried out ojas, with corresponding over stimulated ne • nerves & depleted shukra (reproductive fluid) • caffeine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • practice in a quiet, grounded and systematic way • build core strength, maintain flexibility • balance between strength and flexibility
Solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time for self, go inward • Nourishing soups & kitchari, warm moist food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot water bottle • Continue with warm & nourishing foods • Allow time for introspection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create time for self-nurturance : self-sesame oil massage, steam therapy, baths, sesame oiled cotton in vagina over night for dryness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonify nerves + agni (digestive fire) • Lubricate channels to alleviate constipation/ blockage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hold standing, sitting, forward bends, twists longer than inclined – focus on remaining still
herbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jatamansi root, ginger and licorice in (3,1,1) ratio. Steep 1 tsp mix in 6 oz.boiling water, nightly from ovulation through menstruation • triphala – 1 tsp. before bed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • same as PMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shatavari ghee • wise water (pour 1 qt. boiled water over 1 tsp. mixture of fennel, cardamom, ajwan, cumin seeds. Pour into thermos & drink throughout day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • herbs should allieviate blockage (triphala) • herb tonics & demulcents, to build and add moisture to tissue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun salutations & restorative yoga, especially with grounding postures on the floor (viparita karani) – legs up wall after work, side twist lying over bolster • Regular meals



Pitta	PMS	Menstruation	Menopause	Cause	Lifestyle adjustments & Yoga
symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anger • Violent moods • Loose stools • Acne • Overly focused/critical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loose stool moving excess heat out of body • Tends towards bright blood, excess bleeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot flashes • Irritability • Fatigue • Night sweats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workaholic • Intense activities between 10-3pm • Alcohol, caffeine • Spicy foods • BURNED UP OJAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice in an effortless, non-goal oriented way • Pitta reducing yoga is working at 70% capacity with focus on breath. Creating a less critical mind and going with the flow • Use breath to monitor effort • Moon salutations • Forward bends and twists
solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purgation to prepare for menses • cool nerves and small intestine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eat a light and cooling diet, foods cooling & moist • go inward, lessen external activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooling and relaxing therapies • natural estrogenic herbs (shatavari, wild yam, in aloe gel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • restore ojas through cooling and restoring activities 	
herbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take ¼ cup aloe juice in the morning between ovulation and menstruation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with excess bleeding, take hibiscus and/or ashoka & manjishta regularly • try Banyan's blood cleanse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shatavari ghee • Hot flashes: 1 c. pomegranate juice with 1 tsp. sweetener, 5 drops lime juice, 2-3 X Day as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bitter herbs (manjishta, burdock, aloe gel, turmeric) • cool demulcent herbs (shatavari, wild yam) 	



Kapha	PMS	Menstruation	Menopause	Cause	Lifestyle adjustments & Yoga
symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of appetite • nausea, vomiting • mild discomfort • depression • lethargy – lack of motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blood pale • mild symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depression • lethargy • weight gain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of exercise • cold heavy foods • dairy • alcohol (sugar content) • low motivation • EXCESS OJAS • Blocked channels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energetic practice • Sun salutations done with vigor • Backbends • Inversions: handstands, headstands • Yoga with much activity to stir things up • Short restorative, forward bends, and short savasana • Pranayama is key
solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily exercise to break a sweat • Warmed, spiced foods • Drink hot water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily walking • Light diet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily exercise to break a sweat • Warmed, spiced foods • Drink hot water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the channels through sweating, hot & spicy foods 	
herbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trikatu (3 peppers) • cloves • ginger • black pepper • Take ½ tsp. twice daily to get stuff melted and moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • same as PMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banyan's trim support • Punarnava guggulu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pungent herbs to heat and melt fat • Bitter herbs to scrape channels 	



Pitta, Reactivity & PMS

Which PMS food cravings follow under which doshic aggravation? Which do you experience when during your cycle (or notice in your partner's cycle)? How do you know if a craving is healthy or not?

- **Salt cravings?** (chips, pretzels, seaweed salad, miso soup)
 - *Salt cravings can indicate mineral deficiency. Try incorporating more sea vegetables in your diet, (like kombu in brown rice), use a high quality salt like Celtic Sea Salt or Himalayan pink salt.)
- **Bitter Cravings?** (coffee, tea, dark chocolate, dark beer)
 - *Bitter taste cuts through fat and stagnation in the body's organs and digestive tract. Try dark leafy greens (dandelion, kale, collards, arugula, mustard greens)
- **Spicy Cravings?** (hot sauce, pepper)
 - *Pungent cravings ignite agni, which can be an addiction for Pitta and a remedy for Kapha.
 - *Using hot sauce regularly can be a crutch to enable overeating or eating stale, bland, frozen or canned foods. Basically foods that don't have much prana or agni are hard to digest and stimulate the craving for hot sauce. Make sure your agni is sufficient to digest your meals without hot sauce.

*Try using more fresh vegetables in meals, and hot asian broths with ginger, leeks, scallions, cayenne, pepper, and more moderate spices in all 3 meals).

- **Sweet Cravings?**

- * Sweet taste grounds Vata and Pitta. Are you nourishing yourself well? Kaphas can drink spicy lemonade with maple syrup. Pittas and vatas can stew apples with dates and raisins. Eat more cooked roots.
- * Make sure to up your self-care if you're excessively craving sweet.

- **Sour Cravings?**

- * Sour is a grounding and heating taste. Make a takra (yogurt drink) with spices for your constitution, or use a live sauerkraut with your meals.

- Also notice which other desires you feel would deeply nourish you:

- * Movement or exercise?
- * Touch or affection?
- * A change of pace?

- How do the dosha's affect your (or your partner's or any menstruating woman you are close with) menstrual cycle in particular? How can you support women to turn inward turning their menses, and outward during their ovulation?



Moon Cycle Practices	in your kitchen	next action notes for you:
*	Plan your monthly calendar to align with your moon cycle or the moon's cycle. Plan on being more internal after the full moon, or after your ovulation. Plan on being more external, and eating more extravagant foods after your menses up through ovulation. Simplify your eating to align to the pulsation.	
*	Try eating more liquid foods, primarily soup for dinner. If you have ama on your tongue in the morning, use more black pepper and red chilies in your evening soups, and make your soups broth-based, instead of nut or cream based.	
*	How does eating from a bowl feel different than eating from a plate? Try eating from a bowl that seems to hold enough food to satiate your stomach. Why might eating with a bowl be pacifying to Vata? Of the 2nd chakra/ your creative energy? Do you feel more nourished?	
* *	<p>Make a <u>masala</u> to align to agni</p> <p>Dry roast: 2 tbsp. cumin seeds, 2 tbsp. caraway seeds, 1 tsp. poppy seeds, 1 tsp. yellow mustard seeds. Grind with a suribachi or a coffee grinder. Add 1 tsp. turmeric powder, 1 tsp. garlic powder. Store in a glass jar in your kitchen or dining table. Add to your cooking or sprinkle on cooked foods throughout the week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make a new masala each weekend. Allow your intuition to guide your spice choices. Ingredients may include those above and/or: peppercorns, ginger, nutmeg, coriander seeds, chilies, cardamom seeds, saffron, etc. 	
* * *	During the new moon or Vata time of your cycle make foods with fewer ingredients. Make up a seasonally appropriate recipe using 5 or less ingredients. Post it on the forum, classify it in terms of the 3 gunas, and the doshas (don't worry about doing this wrong). Try other recipes on the forum.	



Simple recipes using only a few ingredients

Roasted butternut squash with coconut

½ butternut squash
¼ c. coconut flakes
(unsweetened)
2 tsp. coconut oil or ghee

Preheat oven to 375. Slice squash in half lengthwise. Peel, and scoop out seeds. Slice into ½ inch half moons. Grind coconut flakes in coffee grinder until grainy. Coat a baking sheet with coconut oil or ghee. Place the squash on sheet and cover with coconut. Bake for 15 minutes, covered with aluminum foil. Remove foil and bake 10 more minutes.

sattvic, VP pacifying

Ginger Lemon Brussel Sprouts

1 lb. brussel sprouts
2 tbsp. salted butter
1 tbsp. ginger root
1 slice fresh lemon

Rinse sprouts and cut off ends.

Slice in half. Brown the butter in a small pot. Add the sprouts. Cover on medium low heat for a few minutes. Stir. Add ¼ c. water. Cover and let cook for 10 minutes. Grate the ginger on a lemon zester (no need to peel organic ginger!). Add to cooked sprouts and squeeze lemon juice into pot. Stir.

sattvic, pitta kapha pacifying

Apricot Almond Cookies

8 dried apricots (soaked overnight)
1 c. almonds
2 tbsp. maple syrup
1 tsp. garam masala (or cinnamon)

Preheat oven to 350'. Grind almonds in food processor into a choppy powder. Strain the apricots. Add all ingredients into processor and pulse a few times until mixed. (Add more almond powder if the mix seems too wet; more maple syrup if it seems too dry). Bake on oiled cookie sheet until lightly browned (10+ minutes).

Sattvic, vata pitta pacifying



month 5 practices	<h1>for your mind.</h1>	next action notes for you:
* *	<p>Research the menstrual, menopausal and childbirth histories of your mother and grandmothers. Are your ancestral memories attuned to intuition? How have you learned this from your mother or others who embodied this inner wisdom? How has your mother's connection to her power of creativity (Shakti) influenced your attitudes around sex, power, and reproductive health? (This is just as important for men as the women in ALC, as you might find some unconscious tendencies, that when revealed carry a deep current of connection in relationship and life force in general.</p>	<p>Talk to your mom... in real life or in meditative awareness.</p>
* *	<p>Food & Moon cycles</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does your eating change depending on your moon cycle? (women) How does your eating change depending on your cycle of creativity/rest? (men) 2. Note if your cravings change through the month. Are they healthy cravings or ama-building cravings? If they are ama-building, what are you doing to counteract the ama? 3. What is the benefit of eating one-pot meals during your inward time or menses? What happens when eat more complex foods that aren't a soup or more liquid stew or smoothie during this time? 	<p>You can keep a moon chart journal.</p>
* * *	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the benefit of eating one-pot meals during your inward time or menses? What happens when eat more complex foods that aren't a soup or more liquid stew or smoothie during this time? 	<p>Make note in your calendar for the following months.</p>



Update your health history (physical, mental, emotional) :

- Women: your menstrual pattern cycles
 - Which doshas dominated when?
 - In which tissues or channels?
 - What is your mother's health history? Include menses, conceptions, pregnancies, births, postpartums, menopause
 - What is your grandmother's health history? Include menses, conceptions, pregnancies, births, postpartums, menopause)
- Men: cycles of creativity and stagnation. Note the seasons of greatest imbalance in the annual cycle.



How to Build Your Shakti Prana

During kapha time of your cycle (before and through ovulation), squat, and magnetize your shakti prana with the earth's shakti prana - attuning to the magnetic energy of earth. Feet hip width apart, parallel, pillow below heels if necessary. Bend slightly forward and rest your palms on the floor/earth. Exhale vigorously through both nostrils, then breathe easily, visualizing shakti prana circulating in your creative center (womb for women) as it communes with mother earth energy. Practice for 5 minutes.

- -from Women's Power to Heal by Swamini Mayatityananda (formerly Maya Tiwari)



What feeds your Shakti?

- How can you simplify your life to attune to the Shakti that flows through Nature's cycles?
- How are you inspired to nourish the shakti of women in the world in reflection of this month's contemplations?
- How can your holistic understanding begin to shift our cultures blind spots?
- How does aligning and protecting your Shakti serve your larger vision?
- Where does your power come from? Does it come from the rhythm of Shakti's cycles of life and death, growth and dissolution?
- How awake is your innate power of Shakti?
- How does the anatomy as women reflect the dynamic pulsation of rhythm?



Online Resources

iGoogle Moon Status

(add to your google toolbar to get the moon phase with your local time).

http://www.moonconnection.com/moon_gadget.phtml#rt2ig2_1295884915

Optional Reading and attachments on the feminine shakti:

- Banyan attachment
- *Remedies For Premenstrual and Menstrual Problems*, by Alakananda Ma
- *Menstrual Sutras* , by Terra Rafael

- *charts menses VPK* by cate
- *goddess chart* by cate

- check out site from Sister Zeus.com

Ayurvedic Herbal supply companies:

- Banyan botanicals:
www.banyanbotanicals.com
- Bazaar of India:
www.bazaarofindia.com
- The Ayurvedic Institute:
www.ayurveda.com
(shatavari ghee)

Books

Taking Charge of Your Fertility,

by Toni Weschler & her book:

Cycle Savvy for Teen Girls

A Women's Best Medicine by Dr. Nancy Lonsdorf (only available used)

The Ageless Woman by Dr. Nancy Lonsdorf (peri-menopause & beyond)

Ayurveda for Women by Dr. Robert Svoboda

Optional reading on Ayurveda and menstruation:

- http://www.mapi.com/ayurveda_health_care/self_care/smoothcycle.html
- <http://www.wisewomanhood.com/>

"There is a general consensus among Ayurvedic physicians, who come from India to tour the country, as to why the excessive amount of female disorders plagues the West and not the East, and it has much to do with honoring the cycle itself." (Douillard, *Banyan attachment*)

"Self care through fertility cycles, allows more graceful giving birth when it is time & more graceful entering into menopause when it is time." *Menstrual Sutras*, Terra Rafael

How have you observed this, or not, in your own experience and in observation of our culture, our women, and the women in your life (including yourself, if you're female)?

