

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم



طب سنتی ایرانی و طب سالمندی

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هُر آنگه که سال اندر آمد به شست
باید کشیدن ز بیشیت دست
ز هفتاد برنگذرد بس کسی
ز دوران چرخ آزمودم بسی

◦ شاهنامه
حکیم ابوالقاسم فردوسی

◦ As Persian sages stated “Old age may be considered the longest period of life” because it starts at the age of 60 and can be extended to the age of 120 years if the recommended health measures are perfectly observed.

- . According to Iranian traditional medicine ,human's life consists of 2 general and distinct stages:
 - intrauterine and postnatal.
 - Furthermore, each stage includes several different periods. Postnatal stage involves several life periods:
 - including childhood, adolescence, middle age, and old age (1, 2)

- Old age is a physiological phenomenon in human life and should not be considered as a disease.
- Life style modification has an important role in improving health and preventing several diseases in the elderly (7).
- In Canon of Medicine, Avicenna stated that old age is a natural process in human life, and thus to maintain a healthy life, the elderly should observe special measures and precautions because of normal changes related to senility in some body organs and their functions at this age (2).

- ITM, identifying the temperament (mezaj) is the main key for preventive, therapeutic, and lifestyle recommendations (9).
- Mezaj is defined as the interaction of different components in the human body, affecting the emotional and physical characteristic and physiological function of the body

- In general, each person owns a unique property called mezaj, which is divided into 9 major groups including
- 4 simple mezaj (warm, cold, moist, and dry),
- 4 compound mezaj (warm and moist, warm and dry, cold and moist, cold and dry),
- and a moderate one.

- Mezaj is affected by several factors including age, sex, season, job, and habits.
- Different age periods are usually related to different humour dominance, which is in accordance with seasonal variation in some way.

- Childhood and spring are related to dominance of warm-wet temperament although using humour dominance in health states is regarded wrong in ITM basis.
- In the same way, youths and summer, warm-dry (bile),
- middle age and autumn ,cold-dry(melancholy)
- old age and winter , cold-wet(phlegm) temperament

- According to world health organization's (WHO) message on the international day for the elderly in October 2013, the elderly population is increasing in most of the countries throughout the world and it is estimated that it will increase from 7% to 8% in 2025 to 15% in 2050.
- his is a warning for communities to consider specific health and economic plans for increasing social demands of this group ([11](#)).

- ITM health measures are usually simple, safe, economical, and protective; however, using ITM recommendation should be evidence-based to minimize any unwanted complications and side effects (15, 16).
- We believe that observing the health measures according to TPM sources may contribute to providing a healthy lifestyle for the elderly as a complementary treatment to new medical measures.



SENESCENCE IN ITM

- As mentioned in some ITM sources, aging results from changes in vessels, arteries, intestines, stomach, and other organs, which develop a slippery state in their inner surfaces because of slimy phlegm.
- This is due to the accumulation of moisture in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, and consequently, disturbed digestion and decreased absorption of essential trace elements and minerals. In fact, the elderly usually suffer from constipation and cannot tolerate heavy meals because of poor digestion ([4](#), [17](#)).

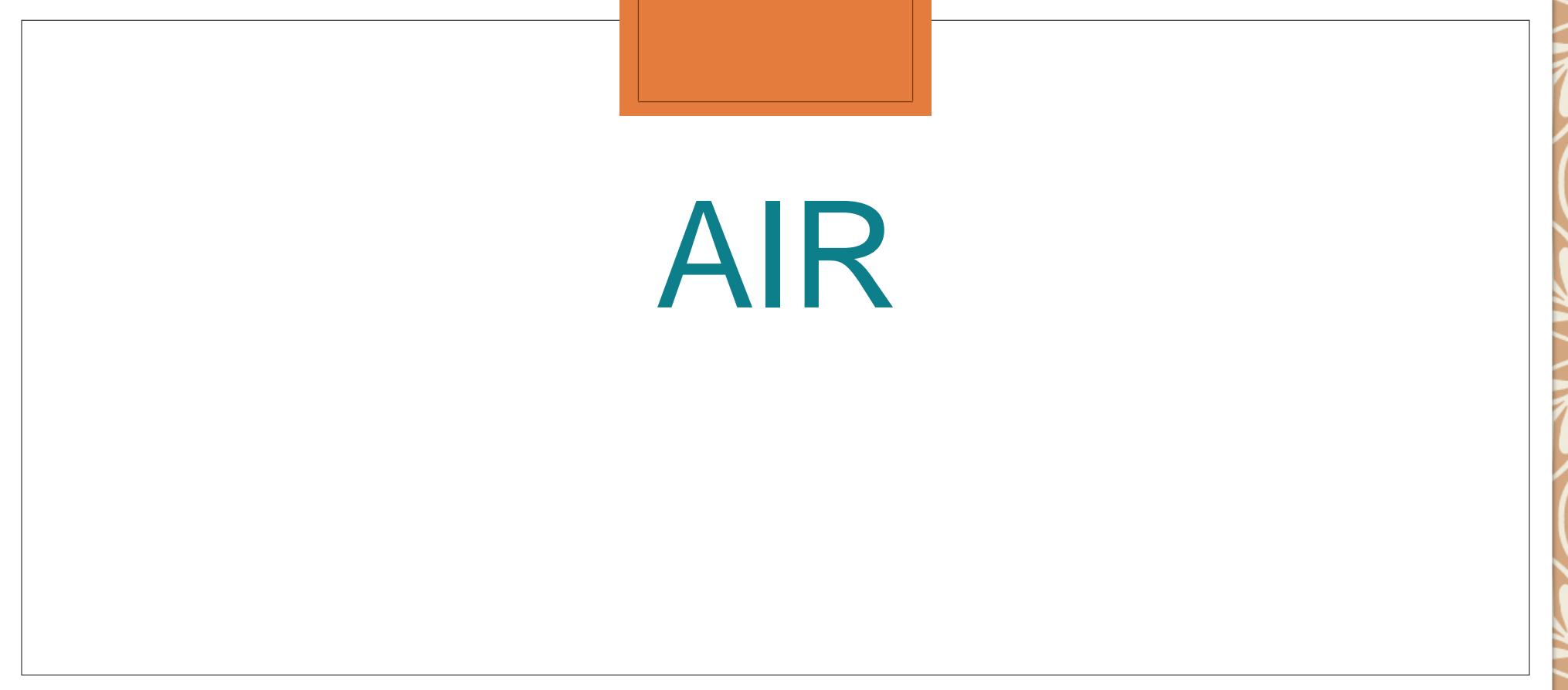
- According to ITM acknowledgment, middle-age refers to ages 40-60 years and the old age starts after the age of 60 (2).
- Mezaj or temperament of the middle-aged and the elderly are cold-dry because of the decrease in the core body temperature and weakening of the body faculties, which are natural processes of the old age.
- However, the elderly in addition to possessing cold-dry temperament suffer from dominance of foreign moisture in their main body organs including heart, liver, and GI tract, which is due to attenuation of their innate heat compared to the middle aged

- Attenuation of the substantial moisture (rotoobat-e-qarizi) and consequently innate heat (hararat-e-qarizi) results in disability and frailty in the case of inattention to ITM health measures.
- ITM sages believed that substantial moisture and innate heat are inherited from parents. Substantial moisture and innate heat may be regarded as genotype and phenotype in modern terms with connivance; however, understanding the real meaning of these 2 concepts needs a different approach to ITM terminology.
- In brief, the substantial moisture was considered as oil for an oil lamp (human body) and the innate heat as its flame (life), and the continuation of the life was believed to be related to the maintenance of either the oil or the flame

- Prevention in ITM is based on 6 essential healthy rules called sette-ye-zarurieh, which are as follow
- : (1) air,
- (2) eating and drinking,
- (3) sleeping and walking,
- (4) exercise and rest,
- (5) retention and evacuation,
- (6) mental states.

- According to ITM sources, these rules are the causes of health rather than the causes of diseases.
- Humans need air to live,
- drinks and foods to survive;
- they need wakefulness to provide their needs and sleep to reinforce their faculties;
- they need retention to use air, drinks and foods; and they need evacuation to get rid of wastes as well as
- mental states including happiness, grieve, shame, fear and audacity to shape their life and deal with the external world (21)

- The best health measures for old age are:
- adequate sleeping,
- regular short-time bathing,
- and using appropriate drinks,
- eating good quality food,
- having a normal bowel habit and soft well-formed stool,
- daily physical activity



AIR

- The best season for the elderly is spring and it is best for them to stay in climates and places whose weather is similar to that of this season; i.e., moderate weather condition, not too cold and not too warm, with moderate humidity.
- The elderly should avoid drinks and foods which induce coldness in the body organs especially in cold seasons because of their cold temperament.
- Soft short-time body massage with warm oils revitalizes them and keeps them vivacious and healthy

- Long stay in crowded and closed places is harmful for the elderly because they need peaceful and calm environments to decrease their mental tensions and not to waste their mental and physical energies.
- . Besides, they should always take a bath with lukewarm water and wear warmer clothes compared to the young ([19](#), [22](#)).
- The remarkable note in the new studies is that exposure to air pollution, especially particulate matter and dust is associated with cognitive disorders in the elderly ([23](#))



**EATING AND
DRINKING**



- Generally, cold-dry temperament needs warm-wet food measurers, while cold-wet temperament needs warm-dry measures.
- it should be considered that all the elderly need warm-wet foods to maintain their health.
- the elderly with cold-wet GI tract, who could not tolerate watery foods and drinks, should decrease the volume of their meals, increase the number of their meals, and use nutritious foods that are easily digested .

- their meal should be in small portions and small in quantity, but should be nutritious, high calorie, and easy to digest with short transit time.
- Latief (small digestible foods) such as broth, soup, soft-boiled egg, and fully-baked bread with balanced amount of salt are considered to be suitable and proper for the elderly' GI tract provided that they are consumed solely and not with other foods.
- Other healthy foods for geriatrics include meat of a 6 month-old lamb, young rooster, and chicken, partridge, and milk ([18](#)).

- Accumulation of phlegm (dense moisture) in the elderly's GI tract, which is due to poor digestion and diminished innate heat, causes anorexia and low appetite.
- Therefore, they should avoid foods that produce thick phlegm and moisture as well as the materials that are the precursors of phlegm and black bile.
- In this regard, boiled milk is beneficial because of being nutritious and wet provided that it is well- tolerated and does not develop itching and hives ([3](#), [18](#)).
- Moreover, goat milk is the best milk for the elderly because it is low in fat and calories and easier to tolerate compared to cow milk

- Lamb kebab without bread, especially when it is marinating in light vinegar and ginger (to make it light and easily digestible) is a nutritious healthy food for the elderly (3, 4, 18, 19).
- The elderly should avoid the foods and spices with hot-dry temperament such as pepper and ginger in high amounts.
- The best vegetables recommended for this age group include beets, celery, and leek in small amounts. It should be considered that raw leek, onion, and garlic should be used with caution, especially in the elderly with reflux and GI problems.

- Nevertheless, ginger jam is a good remedy for the elderly with wet and weak stomach.
- Moreover, lettuce acts like a hypnotic medicine for the elderly and improves their sleep provided that it is used in moderate amounts ([3](#), [18](#), [19](#), [24](#)).
- The clinical manifestations of GI cold-wet dys temperament include drooling, increased salivation, indigestion, reflux, and bad breath.
- Herbal diuretics such as alyssum (Ghoddumeh shirazi) are recommended to decrease GI humidity ([2](#), [22](#)).

- Honey nectar is a good meal, especially for the elderly with cold-wet temperament, relieving their musculoskeletal pain, releasing their joint stiffness, and warming their body, especially when it is blended with medicinal herbs exclusive to the afflicted body organ ([19](#)).
- Based on ITM sages' opinion, the elderly are prone to minor vascular obstruction in some organs, leading to organs' function disturbance.
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- To relieve patients' sufferings, they are recommended to use some herbal medicines called opener (mofateh).
- The suitable and safe herbal openers include pennyroyal (fudanje), black pepper, athanathia (traditional Persian drugs), and amroossia (one of the compound traditional Persian drugs), and desert carrot seed ([3](#), [19](#)).



SLEEPING

- Elderly usually do not need more than 5 to 6 hours of sleep, and using hypnotics or opium is not recommended for them (1).
- In general, the elderly are more affected by bad weather, unpleasant odours, vapours, smoke, and dust because of general body weakness and acuteness of their sensation due to dryness of the brain tissue (23, 27).

- Brain in the old age tends to be drier compared to younger ages because of the normal process of senility, chronic stress, and poor cerebral blood circulation.
- The humidifying measures for the brain include using nasal oil drops of pumpkin or sweet almond, eating puttage of vegetables (parsley and leek and spinach) with lamb and rice or barley.

- Accordingly, they should avoid hot-dry spices such as pepper, mustard, and ginger in high amounts.
- Using pickles also accelerates the process of aging and exposes individuals to mental and CNS diseases ([1](#), [20](#), [21](#)).
- On the other hand, brain refreshing fragrants such as rosewater, and GI boosters including compounds of *Terminalia chebula* (halile) could vitalize and enliven the elderly ([1](#), [3](#), [19](#)).



RETENTION AND EVACUATION

- Retention measures include the way of keeping the essential elements and minerals in the body to maintain the elderly's health.
- Besides, evacuation measures refer to the way which helps the elderly to repel wastes out of their body because delay in expelling waste matters puts their health at risk ([2](#), [19](#)).

- the elderly should avoid wet-cupping, bloodletting, and leech therapy (3, 18).
- , the best way to remove unhealthy matter is using purgative or moss'hel. However, these types of interventions have limitations as well (2, 3).

- Using mild laxatives, stool softener, or suppositories have been proposed to relieve phlegm accumulation.
- In this regard, use of gentle anointment of anus with oils which are moderate in warmth and moisture is recommended, moreover, smelling scented aromatic natural oils might be beneficial ([1](#), [2](#)).

- Dried fig is a preferable remedy as a stool softener for the elderly who suffer from constipation.
- Turpentine gum may also be used as a laxative to facilitate bowel habit ([3](#), [19](#)).
- enema with proper oils is beneficial, olive oil



EXERCISE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- The elderly with physical disabilities, who cannot stand routine physical exercises, are recommended to use cradle, a pleasant relaxing safe activity that causes a moderate heat in their body and prevents the accumulation of the morbid matters and sanguine stagnation in their vessels ([2](#), [18](#)).
- In the elderly, massage (dalk) should be moderate in duration and intensity (not too hard, not too soft) to refresh the skin and create a moderate heat and humidity in the massaged organ ([2](#), [3](#), [30](#), [31](#)).

- The elderly with chronic diseases should have a regular physical activity and exercise parallel to their physical conditions to protect the afflicted organ from the harmful effects of vigorous exercise and maintain their physical and mental health.
- For example, the elderly with CNS diseases such as stroke should choose exercises with the least head and neck movements including slow to moderate walking.
- .

- On the other hand, those with disabilities in lower extremities could choose a physical activity of the upper extremities, head, and neck.
- Besides, the elderly with liver and spleen diseases should choose exercises in which the lower and upper extremities are involved with the least entanglement of the visceral.
- The old individuals with chest organ diseases should avoid all the exercises, except for those of the lower extremities. Finally, those with bladder and lower abdomen diseases should just select the exercises of the upper extremities



MENTAL STATES (ARAZ-E-NAFSAAANI)

- Slithering on a soft and comfortable bed, gaiety, and looking for happiness are recommended for the elderly. They should avoid the situations that irritate them and make them cranky and depressed.
- Chronic and drastic mental emotions also put them at risk of mental and physical illnesses. Similarly, chronic stress exposes them to acute hot dys temperament of the brain and weakens their sober force or nature to play its protective role.

- The causes of cold dystemperament of the main body organs should be known and avoided.
- Thus, chronic illness, mental stress, and mental conditions including fear and grief and external causes such as using cold odours and perfumes, eating pickles, and yogurt routinely are prohibited in the elderly ([2](#), [3](#), [32](#)).

- Depression and loneliness are also important factors that endanger the health of the elderly.
- This is in fact attributed to other health issues, ie, nutrition and physical activity. Secluded elderly are at risk of developing anorexia ([33](#)).

- Depression can be treated by meeting friends and family, increasing community relations, and going to pleasurable places.
- The elderly should live in calm, peaceful, vast, and bright places. Crowded and noisy places make them feel restless and anxious.
- Additionally, friends and close family should visit them with short intervals, but should not disturb their privacy with long staying or making them do things they do not like.

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