

## Three Questions to Prashanti de Jager on Triphalā

**Question:** *Triphalā*, the famous Ayurvedic formula that contains the *tri phala* (three fruits) *bibhītakī*, *āmalakī* and *harītakī*, is known mostly for its cleansing effect. But it has many other wonderful effects that are not so known. Which ones would you like to share with us?

**Answer:** I would like to mention two of them. First triphalā helps maintain healthy cholesterol levels and, secondly, it reduces acidic conditions. How does it do it?

Triphalā has five tastes and three of them — astringent, bitter and pungent — all decrease kapha in general and fat particularly, making triphalā hypolipidemic. Triphalā also has the ability to work on very deep levels, and so its ability to reduce excessive lipids goes beyond typical body fat and extends to cholesterol, which is a lipid.

Cholesterol is a sterol, and dietary cholesterol is absorbed in the colon through sterol receptor sites. Now, imagine if all the receptor sites were busy with other sterols when the cholesterol came knocking. Tulasī, triphalā, and quite a few of our herbal allies have a significant amount of phytosterols in them, typically sitosterol. So when you consume these herbs you block the cholesterol from being absorbed into your body.



Ravi and Prashanti with Triphala Fruits

There are other mechanisms as well. Triphalā helps maintain healthy cholesterol levels by inhibiting the enzyme HMG-CoA responsible for synthesizing cholesterol in the body.

Secondly, the three fruits of Triphalā all are very alkaline and hence reduce acidity. Hyperacidity is called *āmlapitta* in Ayurveda, and one of the very best herbs for *āmlapitta* is *amla*! That does not tell you how but it confirms that triphalā would treat hyperacidity.

To answer deeper one has to ask what causes acidic conditions in the first place:

Cause	Action of Triphalā
Stomach Ulcers or the Terrain for these ulcers	Amla is one of the best treatments for stomach ulcers
Acid reflux (recycled acid accumulates)	Triphalā reduces acid reflux
Stomach Cancers or the terrain for this cancer	All three fruits of triphalā have three different mechanisms against cancer
Mental stress	Triphalā is sāt̄tvic and calms the mind alleviating stress. Triphalā also has adaptogenic properties which decrease stress
Tobacco, drug, coffee addictions	Triphalā is loaded with antioxidants that neutralizes many of the toxins that are the culprits behind the ability of addictions to devastate health in general and increase acidity in general
Variable Agni and digestion	Starting from the top, <i>bibhītakī</i> balances the kapha aspect of digestion, <i>āmlā</i> balances the pitta aspect of digestion, and <i>harītakī</i> balances the vāta stage of digestion. With all three stages balanced then <i>agni</i> is balanced. When <i>agni</i> is balanced you will have a hard time having any hyperacidity.



Parasitic infections	Yup, you guessed it, triphalā is a great anti-parasite with at least four major mechanisms
Liver disorders	(Yawn) All three of the triphalā fruits have various Liver balancing/curing functions including the ability to increase of the Liver Champion: Glutathione
Inflammation	Enough already, triphalā is a major anti-inflammatory, especially of the stomach.
The list goes on an on ...	And so does this one. Triphalā truly is epic.

**Question: What is the action of triphalā that is most interesting to you?**

**Answer:** The most interesting action of triphalā is the systemic confluence of factors making this the number one formula in the world for many millennia. There is a craze in the West these days about the importance to consume Superfoods and especially Superfruits. Some of these Superfruits, like *goji* berries and *noni* fruit, were known and used in India for thousands of years. Yet when we look at what fruit the Medicine Buddha holds in his hand — it is *haritaki*! And what aside from *tulasī* is the only herb in India that has a National Holiday devoted to it in appreciation for what an incredible *dhātrī* or nurse it is? *Āmalakī*! What is the key herb in *kāyākalpa*, the legendary treatment that takes 60 years of aging off your body and mind? *Āmalakī*! How many five-taste substances do you know? Maybe *schizandra* berries? *Āmalakī* and *haritaki* are both herbs that have all five tastes, which is really rare; and *bibhitaki* has three tastes. So, I'd say that triphalā are the three original Superfruits!

And the gestalt of triphalā's healing ability is truly epic, and it is that universal use that interests me most! From road rash to *h. pylori* to AIDS to *kāyākalpa* to attaining ones optimal potential — triphalā is the formula of choice. To call triphalā a colon cleanser is true and truly as silly as calling a Ferrari a paperweight. Yes, Ferraris do make great paperweights, and a Ferrari is, like triphalā, so vastly more than that.

**Question: The therapeutic range of triphalā is very wide, from 0.5 g to 10 g. How is this possible?**

**Answer:** The therapeutic range of air, when it comes to tires, is very wide, depending on how full or flat the tire is, from .5 PSI to easily 50 PSI. In the same way, triphalā, like many herbs, needs to be taken in low doses over long periods of time to be effective for certain imbalances, DEPENDING on the terrain of the person. Triphalā can be used this way long-term for creating and maintaining balance. Yet triphalā is also used for many acute conditions, for instance colon infections, constipation, purgation, anti-dotting toxicity and toxicity metabolites, etc. I have used

30-40 g of turmeric per day internally in cases of broken legs and necks and other traumas. In the same way, there are times when you can flush the GI tract internally with a huge dose, such as 10-20 g of triphalā's astringent tannins and *haritaki*'s purgative effects, DEPENDING on the terrain of the individual at that particular time and the desired results, e.g. detoxing food poisoning, or cleansing. *Tulasī* in this case is a great *anupāna* (carrier substance) for many of triphalā's uses.

However, it is important to make sure that your triphalā supplier uses responsible, certified organic, wild-crafted triphalā fruits as they are significantly more powerful. Most of the triphalā fruits are harvested in the Madhya Pradesh forests in central India, and if it is not certified organic, it means that the product may be wild but most likely is bought straight from the forestry department, in which case it is very possible that it is rotten fruit sitting in their warehouses. Buying organic triphalā ensures that it comes straight from tribal people trained in responsible and clean harvesting of the fruits. Also be aware that the seeds of the triphalā fruits are toxic and should never be used. Many companies just put the whole fruit into a hopper and grind it up, which means you are buying 30 per cent triphalā and 70 per cent toxic seeds. Make sure your triphalā source uses the fruit pulp only! Enjoy low doses of triphalā everyday to ensure the longevity of true wellness that triphalā is so famous for!

**Prashanti de Jager** has been immersed in the study and practice of various Vedic Sciences since 1960, most of that time with teachers in India. He has served on the board of CAAM and on the staff at the Rishikesh College of Ayurveda. He co-founded the herb company, Organic India, and is a writer, researcher and consultant to a variety of companies in the natural products industry. Contact at: E-mail: <prashanti@igc.org>  
<www.prashantidejager.com>  
<www.goldlakeayurveda.com>  
<www.organicindiausa.com>