

## Nurturing Growth in Children in Height as well as in Stature

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The human body is a marvelous creation and amazing are its potentials and capabilities. It infinitely surprises us and astounds us. The very fact that a sperm has the capacity to transform into blood, bone, tissue, collagen, muscle, character, and personalities while also carrying the lineage of the healthy and unhealthy genes is a miracle in itself. Such a structure is scientifically now understood as an auto structure which can take our conscious commands and conscious interventions of behavior and intent. Thus is explained the science of epigenetics that you can be whatever you want to be by consciously changing your behavior, thought and intent.

The Rigveda says that we are what our deepest desires are. As are our desires, so is our will. As is our will so will be our deeds and as will be our deeds so will be our destiny. Therein we become co-creators of our own destiny by altering our body, mind and soul with conscious creative actions. While conserving the breath and preserving our energy we can change the body at will. If change is constant, let us become the choreographer of that change. If each one of us is born with a predetermined genetic disposition epigenetics says that 95 percent of our genes are indeterministic and only 5 percent are deterministic. So, 95 percent are there to serve you at your command. This means we can change the expression of our genes by initiating new processes and imprinting new memories for cellular regeneration.

Having said that, there are multiple factors which determine a healthy growth spurt which is necessary for growth in children. These include gender, ethnic backgrounds, nutrition, exercise, and other hereditary challenges.

The genes we inherit from our parents, as well as the general health and nutrition, activity, recreation and rest during our years of growth decides our height as an adult. Further, not all siblings will end up the same height and there is always the possibility of having that solitary tall child unlike anyone else in the family. But we humans being the marvel of creation can alter the preset patterns with our conscious responsible behavior.

Gender also largely determines the height of an individual. Women tend to have lesser total height potential than men. In general, boys will reach maximum height in their late teens, whereas girls reach their maximum height around their mid-teens. Thus, malnutrition before puberty stunts the overall growth of the individual.

Studies have found that as nutrition has improved over time, people have gotten taller. So, children that eat a diet rich in calcium, protein, and other nutrients will be able to maximize their potential for growth.

Another deciding factor is our ethnic background. Different ethnic populations have different genetic backgrounds, while living in different environments with different dietary habits and lifestyles.

Certain hereditary challenges and mutations (gigantism, dwarfism, arthritis, cancer) can also play a role in determining a person's height.

Calibrated challenge to the body promotes the secretion of the human growth hormone. When this hormone is released, a child with open growth plates in their bones experiences more growth than they would if not physically active.

Besides any illness or nutritional deficiency, our genes predominantly determine our height. Our bones grow until we reach a certain age and once our bone plates have fused it is considered impossible to grow taller. In boys this happens in their late teens while the same happens in girls in their mid teens.

Yoga plays a vital role during the development stages of a child's growth as it is integration at the deepest level as it opens us up and stretches all our joints, limbs and muscles and results in the overall stretch of the musculo-skeletal structure.

The growth hormones thus get stimulated optimally and maximum oxygenation happens which supports cellular

regeneration. As these stimulate the digestive system as well, the demand for food grows and when nourished with optimum food, absorption of nutrients is maximized to support growth.

Practicing yoga regularly helps align our shoulders, hips, pelvis and head, and teaches us to move gracefully within our body's natural range of motion. Our body becomes stronger, more flexible and supple. As our alignment improves and we stretch our spine, our posture improves as well.

Improper muscular balance between the chest and back and poor core strength also contributes to slumping forward. Through yoga and by being aware of how we sit and stand and maintaining proper muscle strength in the back and chest will help us improve our posture from our shoulders to our hips.

It is hard to talk of yoga while discounting the immense benefits of Ayurveda as they are inseparable entities. An analogy to human growth according to Ayurveda is of a potted plant, which never attains its maximum height if the natural growth promoting factors like water, sunlight or the rooting system is restricted. Though, genetically, every person has been pre-programmed to attain a certain height, most people never reach this height simply because they do not do everything necessary for their body to maximize growth. Identifying and correcting the inhibiting factors can achieve growth promotion, in most of the cases.

Deep inside the brain in the anterior portion of the pituitary gland, lies the solution to the problem of increasing height. The pituitary gland produces HGH or Human Growth Hormone in order to maintain our body's chemical balance and cell rejuvenation.

Exercise, correct nutrition and rest help in the optimal secretion of HGH. The stimulation of the pituitary gland increases hormonal production, which would then spur the growth of the cartilaginous portions of the bones of the lower body, ultimately leading to height increase.

There are totally 25 non-fusible disks in our spinal column, which can constantly grow thicker under the stimulation of growth hormone. Their combined length accounts 25% of our total height. The thicker those disks are, the longer your spinal column is and the taller you become.

The prescribed use of certain herbs like Shilajit, Guggul, Ashwagandha, Shatavari, Amlaki, Laksha, Arjuna, Asthishrinkhala, Bala, Yashtimadhu and Guduchi also assist in growing taller. If parts of Panchkarma are added to our daily discipline like Abhyangam, it would ensure relaxation of the body, opening of the joints and

thus growth. Care should be taken while consuming any herbs or undergoing any therapies as they should be prescribed by a qualified Ayurvedic doctor.

Sprinting exercises, cycling, hanging and swimming also help in improving the metabolic rate and boost height naturally while stretching exercises, playing basketball, and yoga postures help strengthen the spine.

While making us taller, Ayurveda has been proven to increase blood circulation, improve digestion, increase metabolism, reduce tiredness, slow-down aging, smoothen breathing and promote general good health. Shirodhara as well will additionally add on to the growth process. On the cusp of the seasons one can do basti (enema) to promote organ health.

In order to help our children be the best versions of themselves, Dr. Mickey Mehta would like to introduce the Child Development Program. This program not only acts as a guide to grow taller in height but also teaches children to grow taller in stature with a good positive attitude. He achieves this with ethical eating, productive physical activities, sensible supplementation and intelligent lifestyle choices like appropriate rest, deep breathing, meditation and positive affirmations.

Let your growth hormones be maximized, let your food habits be naturalized, let your rest be optimized, to get Mickeymized!!!

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