

Ayurveda "the knowledge for long life" or **ayurvedic medicine** is a Hindu system of traditional medicine native to India and a form of alternative medicine. The earliest literature on Indian medical practice appeared during the Vedic period in India, i.e., in the mid-second millennium BCE. The

Suśruta Saṁhitā

and the

Charaka Saṁhitā

, encyclopedias of medicine compiled from various sources from the mid-first millennium BCE to about 500 CE,

are among the foundational works of Ayurveda. Over the following centuries, ayurvedic practitioners developed a number of medicinal preparations and surgical procedures for the treatment of various ailments.

Current practices derived (or reportedly derived) from Ayurvedic medicine are regarded as part of

complementary and alternative medicine

Safety concerns have been raised about Ayurveda, with two U.S. studies finding about 20% of Ayurvedic treatments contained toxic levels of heavy metals such as lead, mercury and arsenic. Other concerns include the use of herbs containing toxic compounds and the lack of quality control in Ayurvedic facilities.

One view of the early history of ayurveda asserts that around 1500 BC, ayurveda's fundamental and applied principles got organized and enunciated. In this historical construction, Ayurveda traces its origins to the Vedas, *Atharvaveda* in particular, and is connected to Hindu religion.

Atharvaveda

(one of the four most ancient books of Indian knowledge, wisdom and culture) contains 114 hymns or formulations for the treatment of diseases. Ayurveda originated in and developed from these hymns. In this sense, ayurveda is considered by some to have divine origin. Indian medicine has a long history, and is one of the oldest organised systems of medicine. Its earliest concepts are set out in the sacred writings called the Vedas, especially in the metrical passages of the *Atharvaveda*, which may possibly date as far back as the 2nd millennium BC. According to a later writer, the system of medicine was received by Dhanvantari from Brahma, and Dhanvantari was deified as the god of medicine. In later times his status was gradually reduced, until he was credited with having been an earthly king

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named Divodasa.

