

AN INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL PANCHKARMA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is an ancient science of Indian medical system which not only offers various treatment modalities for the management of different diseases but also possesses literary descriptions regarding different diseases and their cure. It also encompasses guidelines of healthy living along with rejuvenating approaches. *Panchkarma* is one of the preventive and therapeutic approaches of Ayurveda which utilizes *Shodhana Chikitsa* for the wellbeing of people. *Panchkarma* involves process of detoxification and helps to achieve balanced state of physical and mental health. This article explored various aspects of *Panchkarma* as per Ayurveda.

KEY-WORDS: Ayurveda, Shodhana, Panchkarma, Disease.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda described purification as an important aspect for maintaining good health and treating root cause of various diseases. *Panchkarma* therapy is mainly a purification process which involves utilization of five different therapies for detoxification like; *Vaman*, *Virechan*, *Basti*, *Nasya* & *Raktamokshan*. The basic preparation or pre requirement of *Panchkarma* procedures (*Purva Karma*) involves *Pachan* (Administering oral medicines to improve digestion), *Snehan* (Oleation) and *Swedan* (Hot fomentation). Oleation involves application of oil on the body to loosen accumulated toxins from the body, while fomentation produces sweat through which tissues become flexible and toxins gets liquefied thus easily reach the nearest tract from where they can be removed out of the body. Then one of the main *Panchkarma* procedures (*Pradhan Karma*) such as *vaman*, *virechan*, *basti* etc. are performed to flush out toxins from the body from the nearest tract. After this, some procedures, precautions and diet regimen are advised (*Pashchat Karma*) to prevent any complications and obtain desired results and also to bring back the patient's body to normal lifestyle and diet. These procedures can be applied as a preventive measure in different seasons to remain healthy and prevent various diseases as well as to cure various types of diseases.^[1-4]

Purva Karma***Pachan***

Pachan therapy means oral administration of some medicines to enhance digestion and digest toxins so that

patient can digest *Snehapan* easily such as *Chitrakadivati*, *Agnitundivati* etc.

Snehan

Snehan therapy means oleation which helps to loosen body toxins. It is of two types internal and external; internal oleation (*Snehapan*) utilizes *Sneha dravya* such as; medicated ghee & oil, these medicaments are administered orally in desirable amount. External oleation (*Abhyanga*) involves whole or partial body massage with medicated oils. *Abhyanga* improves tonicity of the body and pacifies *Vata dosha*. It can be performed as a *purva karma* for purification as well as *pradhan karma* independently to cure a disease.

Swedan

Swedan therapy means generating sweat using steam which liquefies the toxins and helps to bring the toxins to *Koshtha* (GIT) for elimination. *Swedan* modalities such as; *Nadi sweda*, *Pinda sweda*, *Vashpa sweda* etc. may be used for the same. It also can be performed as a *purva karma* for purification as well as *pradhan karma* independently to cure a disease.

Pradhan Karma***Vaman***

Induction of emesis by administering some medications (herbal emetics) means *Vaman*. It eliminates toxins from upper cavity (stomach) of the body after their liquefaction. *Vaman* offers beneficial effects in *kapha* and *apakva* (undigested) *pitta* predominant conditions such as; asthma, acidity etc.

Virechan

Virechan involves induction of purgation by administering some medications (herbal purgatives) to eliminate toxins through the bowel's defecation. *Virechan* is good for *pitta*-dominated and *raktapradoshaj* conditions such as; jaundice, bowel disease and skin diseases etc.

Basti

Basti means administration of medicated enema. Herbal decoctions, oils, *ghee* or milk may be administered into the rectum for this. *Basti* is very useful approach for *doshic* imbalances which are *vata*-dominated, such as arthritis, paralysis, constipation etc. *Basti* is also useful in *pitta* and *kapha dosha* imbalance such as irritable bowel syndrome, obesity etc.

Nasya

Nasya means administration of drugs through nostrils, which cleanses head region, reduces nasal congestion and opens *Pranavaha Srotas* (Respiratory tract). *Nasya* offers beneficial effects in migraine, sinusitis, headache, rhinitis etc. It is useful in *kapha* dominated diseases.

Raktamokshan

Raktamokshan means bloodletting and is used to purify blood and offers relief in *raktapradoshaj* conditions such as; eczema, psoriasis and pigmentation, etc.^[2-5]

Pashchat Karma

Pashchat Karma means the procedure which needs to be followed after *Pradhan Karma*, this involves precautions which need to be adopted to get the maximum benefits of *Panchkarma*. *Pashchat Karma* utilizes rejuvenating approaches (*Rasayan* therapy), lifestyle & diet management (*Sansarjan kram*) and use of herbal supplements (*Shaman chikitsa*).

GUIDELINES FOR PANCHKARMA

While performing *Panchkarma* diet and life style regimen (*Pathya*) must be followed strictly as per instructions and line of *Panchkarma* treatment. Physical routine may be adopted day by day gradually.

- Seasonal consideration is also very essential while performing *Panchkarma*.
- Warm water for drinking & bathing is recommended.
- Light, hot and fresh diet is recommended.
- Daytime sleeping must be avoided.
- Exposure to diversified climatic conditions needs to be avoided.
- Complete night sleep is also required.
- Heavy and spicy foods should not be consumed.
- Abstinence should be maintained.
- Mental stress and excessive physical exercises should be avoided.^[3-6]

STANDARDIZATION OF PANCHKARMA PROCEDURES

- Standardization protocol must be designed by field experts.
- *Panchkarma* should be performed by the same person till the procedural protocol.
- Dose fixation, duration and *Anupana* must be uniform during trial procedure.
- Identification & authentication of drugs is essential.
- Drugs must be selected as per *prakruti* and *koshtha* of an individual.
- Selection of medicaments for external application & frequency of use must be predetermined before use.
- Duration of resting period must be fixed.
- Consideration of *Pathya* (diet and lifestyle to be followed) / *Apathya* (diet and lifestyle to be avoided).^[7-9]

PRECAUTIONS WHILE PERFORMING PANCHKARMA

- *Vaman* should not be done other than morning time and empty stomach.
- One should be calm and quiet while performing *Panchkarma*.
- Patient should not do *Vaman* alone without any support of other person.
- Heavy breakfast or lunch must be avoided in morning time.
- *Anuvasan vasti* is recommended after meals.
- *Niruha vasti* and *Virechan* should be performed in morning on empty stomach.
- The amount of medicine in *Vasti* should not exceed more than prescribed limit.
- During *Nasya* patient should not move upper head.
- Excessive talking and laughing should be avoided during *Nasya*.
- *Raktmokshana* should not be done just adjacent to body cavities.
- Children and geriatric patients need great attention during the therapy.^[10-11]

CONTRA INDICATIONS FOR PANCHKARMA

Panchkarma should not be performed in the conditions of:

- Lactation
- Pregnancy
- Fever
- Bleeding
- Ulcers
- HIV or AIDS
- Hypertension
- Congestive Heart Failure

Panchakarma for Specific Diseases

Panchkarma acts predominantly as *shodhana chikitsa* and offers beneficial effects in various disorders such as; *Eka-Kushtha*, *Sheetpitta*, *Chittavasada*, *Sthoulya*, *Sandhigatvata*, *Pakshaghata*, *Vatarakta*, *Pratishyaya*, *Tamak Shwasa* and *tridoshic* imbalances. The

Panchkarma pacifies vitiated *doshas* and helps to normalize *doshic* imbalance. *Panchkarma* acts as preventive as well as curative measure and improves the body immunity thus helps to maintain good physical and mental health status. *Vaman* eliminates *kapha dosha*. *Virechana* offers relief in diseases associated with *pitta dosha* while *Basti* helps to control *vata dosha*. *Panchkarma* acts as vital therapy in skin diseases since it purifies blood and improves symptom of *vaivarnyata*. *Panchkarma* also offers beneficial effects in *Rakta Pradoshaj Vyadhi* through *Raktamokshana* which offers *Shodhan* effects at local levels. It improves strength and

longevity, offers calming effect to the whole body, improves circulatory process; detoxifies whole body internally as well as externally, induces proper sleep and improves process of growth & development. *Panchkarma* opens blocked channels, improves digestive fire, boosts metabolism and offers rejuvenating effects. The *Purva Karma* of *Panchkarma* helps to treat diseases like spondylosis, arthritis, muscle cramps, gout etc. when performed independently as *Pradhan Karma*. *Panchakarma* therapy also helps in the management of *bala-roga* such as; cerebral palsy and *tamak shwasa*.

Vamana	Virechana	Basti	Nasya	Raktamokshana
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bronchial Asthma • Chronic Allergies • Vitiligo • Psoriasis • Hyperacidity • Nasal Congestion • Edema • Skin disorders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetes • Asthma • Skin disorders • Joint disorders • Digestive disorders • Constipation • Hyperacidity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemiplegia • Paraplegia • Colitis • Cervical Spondylosis • Irritable Bowel Syndrome • Sciatica • Piles • Infertility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves memory • Improves vision • Elimination of <i>Kapha</i> • Hyper pigmentation • Clarity of voice • Headache • Migraine • Stiffness of neck • Nasal allergies • Sinusitis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eczema • Psoriasis • Pigmentation • <i>Rakta Pradoshaj Vyadhi</i> • <i>Tridoshic</i> imbalances • Skin disease

Figure 1: Role of *Panchkarma* in Various Diseases.

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