



Review Article

PREVENTIVE PRINCIPLES OF AYURVEDA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SEASONAL
PROPHYLAXISArshia Chisti¹, Raktimabha Jena¹, Akankshya A Mishra¹, Sanjeev S Tonni^{2*}¹PG Scholar, ²Associate Professor Department of Swasthavritta, KAHER's Shri B.M.K. Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya Shahapur, Belagavi, Karnataka, India.

Article info

Article History:

Received: 11-10-2023

Accepted: 21-11-2023

Published: 10-12-2023

KEYWORDS:

Ayurveda,
Prevention,
Dinacharya (daily
regimen),
Rutucharya
(seasonal regimen),
Prophylaxis.

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the age-old "Science of life" has always emphasized at maintaining health and preventing diseases rather than laying total focus over the treatment aspects. The basic principle followed in the Ayurveda is "*Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam*" i.e., preventive aspect. Here the importance is given to prevention rather than cure. To maintain health and to prevent diseases various rules and regimens have been told. As Ayurveda has its origin in India, the seasonal changes are observed predominantly in Indian sub-continent. While passing through six seasons our body is bound to face different variations and accordingly it is likely to get affected if the same routine is followed in all seasons. A particular rhythmic pattern of *Tri-doshas* occur in relation to six seasons. *Sanchaya* (accumulation), *Prakopa* (aggravation) and *Prashamana* (mitigation) of all *Tri-doshas* takes place when the sun changes from one *Rashi* to the other. The health impact caused by seasonal variation includes not only physical problems but also physiological changes.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda primarily focuses on preventive aspect of health through a set of guidelines mentioned under *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Dharaniya* (suppression of bodily natural urges) and *Adharaniya vega* (non-suppression of bodily urges), *Sadvritta* (code of conduct and behaviour) and *Achara rasayana* (moral ethics) along with elaborate dietary recommendations. For therapeutic purpose, diagnostic, clinical and general as well as disease specific treatment guidelines are also mentioned in Ayurveda. *Panchkarma* (five bio-purificatory methods to cleanse the body) and *Rasayana* (rejuvenation therapy) are mentioned as the cornerstone prophylactic modalities in *Janpadodhwansa*^[1] (epidemic condition). *Rutu* based bio-purification (seasonal *Panchakarma*) is recommended to remove the excess accumulated *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*) from the body for maintaining the health.

Rasayana acts as antioxidant, anti-stress, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial and confer immunity against diseases^[2]. *Pratimarsha nasya* (nasal installation of oil or ghee) and *Gandusha/Kawala* (oral oil pulling therapy), steam inhalation and use of clove for throat irritation. AYUSH (Ayurveda Yoga Unani Siddhia and Homeopathy) guidelines also included use of *Samshamni vati* (tablet) for preventive and prophylactic care, AYUSH-64, *Agastya haritaki* and *Anu tail nasya* for symptom management of Covid like illness and as add on therapy to conventional treatment along with dietary recommendations.^[3]

In Ayurveda, the knowledge of *Rutucharya* (seasonal regimen) is a first-hand guide to the concept of *Kriya-kala* (choice to treatment), which describes the modes and stages of the development of diseases, with regard to the state of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha doshas* in accordance with the changes of time. A good understanding of it is very much essential for early diagnosis and prognosis for adopting preventive and curative measures. *Rutu* acts as *Vyanjaka kaarana* (associated cause) or *Nimittika kaarana* (efficient cause) in the aggravation and manifestation of disease. By modifying diet and regimen according to season one can prevent these seasonal diseases. In Ayurveda, it is mentioned that when seasonal variations occur, the *Dosha* get imbalanced in the form of *Chaya*

Access this article online

Quick Response Code

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v11i11.3009>Published by Mahadev Publications (Regd.)
publication licensed under a Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0
International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

(accumulation of *Doshas*) and *Prakopa* (aggravation of *Doshas*).^[4]

To maintain health and to prevent diseases various rules and regimens have been told^[5]. One among such regimen is *Rutucharya* (seasonal regimen) which plays an important role in acclimatizing the seasonal enforcement easily without altering body homeostasis. Season expresses its effects on the body, hence disturbing its equilibrium and this disequilibrium occurs due to failure in following the appropriate rules which leads to imbalance among *Doshas* in the body and thereafter leading to disease manifestation. Hence there arises a need to understand and implement these guidelines in accordance with the changes in season.

Preventive prophylaxis in *Shishira rutu* (winter season): *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*) + *Pippali* (pepper) administration)

In *Shishira rutu* the '*Sheeta*' (cold) and '*Ruksha gunas*' (dry qualities) are aggravated and also '*Sanchaya*' (accumulation) of *Kapha dosha* is seen in this *Rutu*. Due to increase in dryness and coldness in the climate '*Agni bala*' (digestive power) also aggravates. To compensate the above said conditions, '*Pippali*' with its '*Anushna*' (moderately hot), '*Laghu*' (light quality) and '*Snigdha gunas*' (unctuous quality); *Haritaki* with its '*Laghu*', '*Ushna*' *guna* and '*Kashaya pradhana*' (predominantly astringent taste) '*Pancha-rasatmak*' (predominancy of five tastes) properties seem to be drug of choice in many conditions. Hence combination of both the drugs give *Deepana* (digestive stimulant), *Pachana* (aids in digestion process) and *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) effect which helps to maintain *Bala* (strength) and vital power of the body which is key for healthy living.

Preventive Prophylaxis in *Vasanta Rutu* (Spring season): *Haritaki* + Honey (*Madhu*)

In *Vasanta rutu*, coldness is decreased and slow and steady increase in warm and slightly inclined sunrays is seen. This causes the '*Vilayana*' (liquifying) of *Sanchita kapha dosha* (accumulated *Kapha dosha*) which was accumulated in *Shishira rutu* and causing the state of *Prakopaavastha* (stage of aggravating). This results in gradual decrease in the *Jatharagni bala* (digestive power) causing *Agni mandya* (indigestion) which is also considered as the cause of several diseases. As it is the time of *Prakupita kapha dosha*, possibilities of having *Kapha-pradhan vyadhis* (*Kapha* predominant diseases) in this season. To compensate the above said condition, *Madhu* (honey) seems to be the choice of medicine. Along with *Ruksha*, *Ushna* and *Laghu gunas* of *Haritaki*, honey helps to compensate the *Kapha dosha* with its *Ruksha*, *Anushna* and *Laghu gunas* and its *Kashaya anurasa* (astringent as sub-taste).

Preventive prophylaxis in *Greeshma Rutu* (summer season) (*Haritaki* + *Guda* (jaggery) administration)

In this season both '*Ruksha*' and '*Ushna*' *gunas* are its peek and also *Sharira bala* (strength of the body) of an individual is decreased as compared to other *Rutus*. Due to direct impact of very hot and comparatively straight sunrays falling on the surface of the earth, moistness of air and watery parts of nature like lakes, ponds almost evaporate causing *Ksheena bala* (reduced strength) in nature as well as human body. To compensate the above said conditions *Madhura*, *guru* and *Sheeta gunatmaka ahara* (food) such as jaggery (*Guda*) along with *Pancha-rasatmak*, *Ushna* and *Laghu gunatmaka* herbal drug i.e., *Haritaki* helps to reduce the *Sanchita vata dosha* (accumulated *Vata dosha*). Also, *Madhura*, *Guru*, *Sheeta gunatmaka* jaggery (*Guda*) along with *Rasayana prabhav* of *Haritaki* helps to increase the *Bala* (strength) of individual with *Brumhana karma* (nourishing effect). Hence it is advisable to use *Haritaki* with jaggery in this *Rutu*.

Preventive prophylaxis in *Varsha rutu* (rainy season/monsoons): *Haritaki*+*Saindhav lavana* (*Sendhaa namak*) administration

This is the time in which *Prakopa* (aggravation) of *Vata dosha* is seen naturally. This might be because dense clouds and cold breezes cause switching of cold climate from comparatively warmer summer season (*Gresham rutu*), as both *Sheeta* and *Ruksha gunas* support *Prakopa* of *Vata dosha*. To compensate the above said conditions, *Lavana rasatmaka saindhava lavana* works best with *Pancha-rasatmaka haritaki* producing effect of all six *Rasas* (six tastes i.e., *Madhura*, *Amla*, *Lavana*, *Katu*, *Tikta* and *Kashaya*). It is believed that *Lavana rasa* is *Snigdha guna*, which is very helpful when acting upon *Ruksha gunatmaka haritaki* in *Vata prakupita ruksha sharira* (*Vata* aggravated dry body). This works on *Sanchita pitta dosha*, and also *Saindhava lavana* is said to be *Avidahi* (non-irritative) which works on *Teekshna* (sharp), *Ushna* (*Ushna*) *Gunas* (qualities) of *Pitta dosha*.

Varsha rutu (rainy season) is beautiful gift to mankind. According to Ayurveda, *Varsha rutu* falls in the *Visarga kaal* (Southern Solstice) in the month of *Shravana* and *Bhadrapada* (mid-July to mid-September). When the sun sets, the heat that has built up inside the earth is released and becomes rain. However, practically all *Doshas* (*Tri-doshas*, i.e., *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*) get out of balance during this season, which is why seasonal cleaning techniques are highly advised by Ayurveda (*Rutu* based *Panchakarma* during the rainy season. Once again, the digestive fire weakens during the monsoon, causing diseases related to digestion. Ayurveda describes aggravation of *Vata dosha* in *Varsha rutu*, so the food and lifestyle should be such that it helps in balancing the vitiated *Vata*. The *Vata dosha* which was already vitiated but not shown

its impact breaks out into diseases by sudden rains and cold climates causing all painful conditions to aggravate.

According to Ayurveda, rain during hot summer, increases acidity in all food materials by its nature. This aggravates *Pitta dosha* causing fevers, acidity, digestive problems etc. Cold weather and polluted water and food exacerbate the *Kapha dosha*, which leads to colds, allergies, coughs, and skin conditions. Viral fevers are rampant during monsoon season. As *Varsha rutu* (monsoon) is the season with least *Bala* (strength), *Tri-dosha* vitiation and weakened *Jatharagni* (state of digestion and metabolism), human being is susceptible to many diseases^[6]. Various modalities are mentioned to alleviate this *Dosha* vitiation and to improve the *Jatharagni* by improving the *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity level)^[7]. One such preparation for the monsoon that can be given as prophylactic is *Samshamani vati*. It contains *Guduchi sattva*. *Guduchi* possess the properties such as *Tikta* (bitter), *Katu* (pungent), *Kashaya* (astringent) in *Rasa* (taste); *Guru* (heavy), *Snigdha* (unctuous) in *Guna* (qualities); *Madhura* (sweet) in *Vipaka* (post digestion state); *Ushna* (hot) in *Veerya* (potency). In *Varsha rutu* i.e., rainy season, it is mixed along with *Saindhava* (rock salt) to cure fever, cold, flu, sore throat and other maladies^[8].

Preventive prophylaxis in Sharad Rutu (autumn season): Haritaki+Sharkara (sugar) administration

This is the time in which *Prakopa-avastha* (stage of aggravation) of *Pitta dosha* is seen naturally.

It's the beginning of winter, so the overcast weather gives way to lovely, sunny days with a hint of cold. *Bala* (strength) of the *Sharira* (body) and *Jatharagni* (digestive power) starts to regain in this season. This season's key features include *Pitta prakopa-avastha*, *Snigdha* and *Sheeta*. *Haritaki*, which is said to possess *Pitta-shamana* (*Pitta* pacifying) action, is used in conjunction with *Madhura rasatmaka* (sweet substances) and *Sheeta gunatmaka sharkara* (sugar) to counteract these factors. *Haritaki*, which is inherently *Tridosha-hara* (balancing the *Tri-doshas*) and *Rasayana* (rejuvenation) in nature, enhances these qualities.

Preventive prophylaxis in Hemanta Rutu (late autumn season): Haritaki + Shunthi i.e., dry ginger administration

Snigdha and *Sheeta gunas* are intensified in this *Rutu* coupled with the *Bala* of *Jatharagni*, making it one of the healthier seasons of all. This is the time in which *Sanchaya-avastha* (stage of accumulation) of *Kapha dosha* is started and further carried out till *Shishira rutu* (winter season). Thus, in this, *Rutu-haritaki* is advised with *Shunthi*. *Ushna guna* (hot quality) and *Kapha-hara guna* (*Kapha* pacifying) of both the drugs gives better effect to work on *Sheeta guna* of the *Rutu*

(season) as well as *Sanchita kapha dosha* (accumulated *Kapha dosha*) and helps to compensate it.

DISCUSSION

One such herbal drug that has been utilized in traditional medicine to treat a wide range of ailments is *Haritaki*. Properties of *Haritaki* are *Lavana rahita pancha rasa*, *Kasahya rasa pradhana*; *Laghu* and *Rukhsa* in *Guna*; *Madhura* in *Vipaka*; *Ushna* in *Veerya*. Taking *Haritaki* powder along with various adjuvants in different seasons is called *Rutu-haritaki* in Ayurveda and this formulation aids in sustaining health and increasing lifespan. *Haritaki* is taken with different *Anupana* (adjuvants) in six different seasons.

Rutu-haritaki i.e., seasonal usage of *Haritaki* (*Terminalia chebula*), which is mentioned in Ayurveda textbook i.e., "*Bhavaprakasha Nighantu*", in the context of '*Haritakyaadi varga*' as *Rasayana* (anti-aging property)^[9]. This *Rutu-haritaki* is a simple and cost-effective *Rasayana* that is easy to administer and this will be socially relevant if proven as a preventive drug in seasonal outbreaks in *Varsha rutu*. *Haritaki* with its *Tri-dosha shamana*, *Agni-vardhana* and *Rasayana* action will reduce the incidence of common cold, cough and fever which are very commonly affecting the population^[10]. Traditionally, *Samshamani vati*^[11] is used as first line treatment for cough, cold, fever, asthma and other respiratory problems. It is made of *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) *Ghana satwa* and reported to be an immune-modulator^[12] and also effective in various viral diseases^[13]. As these formulations are possessing *Tri-dosha shaman*, *Deepana* (digestive stimulant) *Pachana* (aids in digestion), *Sroto-shodhana* (bodily channel cleansing activity) property and *Ushna veerya* (hot potency) of both the drugs will act on *Kapha* and *Vata dosha*^[14] *Saindhava* is also *Tri-dosha shamaka* and *Agni-Vardhaka* (improves the state of digestion)^[15].

As per Ayurveda, monsoon preventive prophylaxis has to be practiced before the onset of *Varsha rutu* to boost the immunity against possible occurrence of respiratory infections like viral fever, cold, cough etc. The medications were usually practiced before the onset of monsoon (pre-rainy season) includes *Sudarhsana ghana vati*, *Samshamani vati* and *Amrutarishta*. The cold, dryness of the skin in the winter, heat stroke during summertime, pollen allergy in the spring, high frequency of water- and air-borne illnesses during the rainy season, and skin problems in the autumn have all been found to be more common. That being said, physiology supports the idea of *Rutucharya*.

The *Tri-dosha prakopa* (aggravation of all the *Tri-doshas*) and *Agnimandya* (state of indigestion) are common in all *Rutu-sandhi* (seasonal junction), but not up to the pathological mark^[16]. Additionally, according to a study published in the American Journal of Public

Health, new data suggests that periodic alterations in immunity brought on by seasonal fluctuations in the body's physiological functions may be somewhat responsible for the seasonal variation of diseases^[17].

CONCLUSION

Seasons are regarded as one of the fundamental factors in etiology, pathology and a powerful instrument in the prevention of diseases. It is to be known that disharmony in the *Doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha)* results in *Roga* (disease). The science of Ayurveda seeks to preserve health in equilibrium. According to Ayurveda, a holistic science, changes in our surroundings can have an impact on our bodily and emotional well-being. The main goal of Ayurveda is to treat preventive conditions. Importance of preventive therapeutics is now a great concern in biomedical sciences. Hence by following *Rutucharya* (seasonal regimen) one can prevent diseases, thus promoting a disease-free healthy life. Hippocrates once said, "Those who wish to properly investigate medicine should proceed thus, considering first each season of the year and what influence each of them produces."

REFERENCES

1. Charaka Samhita, Vimana sthana, Janpadodhwaniya vimanam 3/13. Available from <http://niimh.nic.in/ebooks/ecaraka>
2. Girish Tillu, Sarika Chaturvedi, Arvind Chopra and Bhushan Patwardhan. The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine. May 2020. 360-364. <http://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2020.0129>.
3. www.ayush.gov.in Ministry of AYUSH (March 2020). Ayurveda immunity boosting measures for self-care during Covid 19 crisis. Available from: <https://www.ayush.gov.in>.
4. Ashtanga Sangraha. Vagbhata, Srikanthamoorthy KR, Sutra Sthana. Ch. 21, Ver. 3. 9th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2005. p. 386.
5. Charaka Samhita. Acharya Charaka. Tripathi: Chaukhamba Surabharati Prakashan Varanasi; 2007.
6. Srikantha Moorthy KR, editor. Ashtanga Sangraha of Vagbhata, Nidana Sthana. 9th ed., Ch. 12, Ver. 1. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2005. p. 41.
7. Sharma PV, editor. Charaka Samhita of Agnivesh, Sutra Sthana. 2nd ed., Ch. 6, Ver. 7. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2007. pg. 42
8. Srikantha Moorthy KR, editor. Bhavaprakasha of Bhavamishra. Purvakhand, Haritakyaadi Varga. 2nd ed., Ch. 6, Ver. 2. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Krishnadas Academy; 2004. p. 163.
9. Srikantha Moorthy KR, editor. Bhavaprakasha of Bhavamishra. Purvakhand, Haritakyaadi Varga. 2nd ed., Ch. 6, Ver. 34. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Krishnadas Academy; 2004. p. 163.
10. Sharma PV, editor. Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Sutra Sthana. 1st ed., Ch. 44, Ver. 63. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati; 2004. p. 409-10.
11. Siddha Yoga Sangraha, Jwara adhikara, AFI. Vol.2.
12. More, P. and Pai K. (2011). Immunomodulatory effects of *Tinospora cordifolia* (Guduchi) on macrophage activation. *Biol.Med.3* (2), 134-140.
13. Sachan, S., Dhama, K., Latheef, S. K., Samad, H. A., Mariappan, A. K., Munuswamy, P., et al. 2019. Immunomodulatory potential of *Tinospora cordifolia* and CpG ODN (TLR21 agonist) against the very virulent, infectious bursal disease virus in SPF chicks. *Vaccines* 7 (3), 106. Doi: 10.3390/vaccines7030106.
14. Sharma RK, Dash B, editors. Charaka Samhita of Agnivesh, Chikitsa Sthana. 2nd ed., Ch. 15, Ver. 7. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series; 2009. p. 1-2)
15. Sreekumar T, editor. Ashtanga Hridaya of Vagbhata, Sutra Sthana. 3rd ed., Ch. 6, Ver. 146. Thrissur: Harisree Hospital; 2011. p. 186.
16. Mallika K J. Critical study of Swastha-Catuska w.s.r. to Biophysical and Biochemical changes in Rutu sandhi. MD (Ayu) Thesis. Jamnagar: Gujarat Ayurveda University; 2002.
17. Harmon GE. Seasonal Distribution of Typhoid Fever-Southern and Northern states. *Am J Public Health Nations Health* 1930; 20 (4): 395-402.

Cite this article as:

Arshia Chisti, Raktimabha Jena, Akankshya A Mishra, Sanjeev S Tonni. Preventive Principles of Ayurveda with special reference to Seasonal Prophylaxis. *International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research*. 2023;11(11):67-70.

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v11i11.3009>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

*Address for correspondence

Dr. Sanjeev S Tonni

Associate Professor,
Department of Swasthavritta,
KAHER's Shri B.M.K. Ayurveda
Mahavidyalaya Shahapur, Belagavi
Karnataka, India.

Email:

sanjeevtonni.kaher@kleayurworld.edu.in

Disclaimer: IJAPR is solely owned by Mahadev Publications - dedicated to publish quality research, while every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of the content published in our Journal. IJAPR cannot accept any responsibility or liability for the articles content which are published. The views expressed in articles by our contributing authors are not necessarily those of IJAPR editor or editorial board members.