



## Review Article

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### AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO ORODENTAL CARE: A REVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda being an ancient science of medicine places great emphasis on prevention of disease and encourages the maintenance of health. Now a day's people are giving more importance to cosmetic care among that dental care plays an inevitable role. Dental care refers to maintenance of healthy teeth and oral hygiene. Good oral and dental hygiene can help to prevent bad breath, tooth decay and can help to keep your teeth as you get older. Your mouth can reflect the overall health of the body, showing signs of infection or disease before you experience other symptoms. Dentistry is included under Shalaky Tantra, which is one among the Ashtangas of Ayurveda. Different regimens which are explained under Dinacharya, various Ayurvedic drugs and Ayurvedic preparation can improve the Orodental health and existing damage can usually be repaired. Dantadhavana, Jivhanirlekha, Kavala, Gandusha, Pratisarana, Nasya and Tambulasevana are highly effective daily procedure for the maintenance of Orodental health. Diet is one of the major aetiological factors for many dental diseases and Ayurveda has explained Pathya Aharas for maintaining proper dental health. An Ayurvedic view of prevention of Orodental diseases through different regimens, Pathyapathyas and drugs are discussed in this article for giving the best possible Orodental health for the individual.

**Keywords:** Orodental care, Ayurveda, Dinacharya, Ayurvedic drugs and Pathya Aharas.

#### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the renowned system of Indian medicine. It has got a great potential to cure many diseases in an efficient manner. Ayurveda totally means 'science of life'. Among the eight branches of Ayurveda dentistry included under Urdhwanga Chikitsa<sup>1</sup> which deals with the disease and treatment pertaining to Shiras (head), Netra (eye), Nasa (nose), Karna (ear) and Mukha (oral cavity)<sup>2</sup>. Access to oral health care is essential for maintaining overall health and wellbeing of an individual. When individuals can access oral health care, they are more likely to receive basic preventive services and education on personal hygiene. In contrast, lack of access to oral health care can result in delayed diagnosis and conditions, compromised health status and occasionally even death.

Mouth can reflect the overall health of the body<sup>3</sup>, showing signs of infection or disease before you experience other symptoms. The complication from a lack of dental care can extend far beyond gingivitis<sup>4</sup>. There is a proven link between gum disease and heart disease<sup>5</sup>, and gum disease can also indicate a risk of preterm childbirth in pregnant women<sup>6</sup>.

A lack of dental care can become visually apparent over time. Decaying of tooth and different gum related disease will cause discoloration of the teeth, loss of teeth, halitosis and finally tooth damage. These kinds of cosmetic problems can impact the confidence and make insecure about the appearance.

Regular dental care through Ayurveda can prevent much of this damage. Therapeutic procedures for the maintenance of oral health include Dantadhavana, Jivhanirlekha, Kavala, Gandusha,

Pratisarana<sup>7</sup> and different herbal medicine can be applied in dentistry as antiseptic, antioxidant and analgesic.

#### Ayurveda and dental care

Main aim of Ayurveda is the prevention of disease and maintains the health of a healthy individual. To maintain a complete health state, one should regularly follow some activities called Dinacharya<sup>8</sup> which are conducive to maintain a good health and can prevent the occurrence of disease. Right from waking up in the morning till sleeping at night all the daily regimens have been given utmost importance in Ayurveda. Some regimens which are explained in Dinacharya like Dantadhavana, Jivhanirlekha, Kavala, Gandusha and Tambulasevana<sup>9</sup> are best to avoid oral cavity diseases and promotes dental health. Varieties of herbal drugs and oils mentioned in Ayurvedic classics are good to promote dental health.

#### Dantadhavana

Mouth being the chief entrance and process of digestion starts from the mouth itself, so care and cleanliness of teeth plays an important role. After the evacuation of bowel oral hygiene should be attended too. Individuals should use Arka (*Calotropis procera*), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*), Karanja (*Pongamia pinnata*), Vata (*Ficus benghalensis*), Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*), karavira (*Nerium oleander*), Sarja (*Vateria indica*), Arimeda (*Acacia leucophloea*), Apamarga (*Achyranthes aspera*) and Jati (*Myristica fragrans*) for brushing of the teeth and thickness of twig should be approximately equal to the tip of one's little finger with twelve Angula length<sup>10,11</sup>, making one end brush like by chewing without injuring the gums. The lower raw of teeth should

be brushed first<sup>12</sup>. Chewing on these stems helps in attrition, levelling of biting surfaces and improve salivary secretion. Twig has got anti-bacterial, anti-fungal and anti-inflammatory activities. After cleaning the teeth, the gums are also cleaned without hurting them, by rubbing with Kushtha and Trikatu, Triphala, Trijata with Madhu<sup>13</sup>.

In Dantadhavana twigs of plants possessing Katu (Pungent), Tikta (Bitter), Kashaya (Astringent) Rasas are used as it poses minimal risk of mucosal irritations in oral cavity. Herbs having Kashaya Rasa (Astringent) possess Ropana effect. It helps to heal gum wounds, oral ulcers and fight bad breath. Tikta Rasa (Bitter) clears the throat, help to improve taste, fight bad breath and anorexia. It also kills bacteria in mouth. Katu (Pungent) rasa helps to improve the salivation and thereby remove unwanted materials from the mouth, cures throat ailments and it is having the property to improve the blood circulation to the oral cavity<sup>14</sup>. Dantadhavana having benefits like it freshens up the mouth, remove bad odour from the mouth, cure tongue, throat and mouth related disorders, increases appetite and makes one feel pleasant<sup>15</sup>.

One can use powders of Triphala (Haritaki, Vibhitaki and Amalaki) or Trijata (Twak, Ela and Patra) with Madhu and Saindhava Lavana, Trikatu (Shunthi, Maricha and Pippali) with Madhu and Saindhava Lavana can be used as tooth paste<sup>16</sup>.

Tooth powder consisting of equal quantities of Ardraka (*Zingiber officinale*), Maricha (*Piper nigrum*), Karpura (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Ela (*Elettaria cardamomum*), Triphala, Tejovati (*Zanthoxylum aromatum*), Khadira (*Acacia catechu*) and Saindhava Lavana which should be mixed with Tila Taila and Dantadhavana should be done with the same<sup>17</sup>. Daily application of Tejovati churna purifies the teeth<sup>18</sup>. Proper Dantadhavana will remove unwanted oral secretion and foul smell.

#### Jihvanirlekhana

Dinacharya includes tongue scraping after brushing the teeth. Along with teeth, maintaining the health of tongue is incredibly of prime concern because failure of proper tongue cleaning can lead to accumulation of bacteria and food particles that may further leads to halitosis or other oral cavity disorders. Cleansing should be done with smooth and soft material, which is made up of thin plate of Swarna, Rajata or Tamra and one can use a leave or a thin wooden plate<sup>19</sup> and it should be of 10 Angula length<sup>20</sup>. The particles deposited at the root of the tongue give rise to foul smell<sup>21</sup> so it should be scraped daily to clear toxins, bacteria and dead cells from the tongue to prevent the bad odour. It helps to enhances the taste and promote oral health. Tongue cleaning should be done lightly and firmly from root of the tongue to tip without giving much pressure. Appropriate cleansing should be done for the proper digestion of food, by removing the mucus and bacteria from the tongue can improve not only the taste of food but also the digestion of food. To get good taste, fresh breath and healthiest oral cavity tongue scraping is inevitable.

#### Kavala and Gandusa

Gandusha and Kavalagraha are explained under Dinacharya to maintain oral health and prevent oral disease. It is mandatory to do gargle the mouth after taking food and after brushing. Keeping mouth full of fluid without moving is called as Gandusha<sup>22</sup> and moving the material easily in the mouth is named as Kavala<sup>23</sup>. Here the fluid penetrates the oral mucosa and gums by pressure and exerts its action. Gargling can be done with Sheeta or Ushna Jala, Taila, Ksheera, Madhya, Sukta and Mamsa Rasa<sup>24</sup>. Ushna Jala Kavala cleanses the oral cavity and provides fresh feeling to

the mouth. Kavala with Sheeta Jala remove unwanted residues<sup>25</sup>. Gargling with Taila strengthens the Jihwa, Danta Moola, Danta, Mukha and Shabda. Gargling with Kashaya of Khadhira (*Acacia catechu*), Lodhra (*Symplocos racemosa*), Arjuna (*Terminalia arjuna*) and Triphala makes the teeth strong, remove bad taste and excess salivation<sup>26</sup>.

Gandusha can be done with Tila Taila or Mamsa Rasa on daily basis to maintain the health of oral cavity<sup>27</sup>. Kavala Dharana with oil is good for teeth, renders the mouth aromatic and it heals up lesions and regulate or holds back deterioration or decay in the mouth<sup>28</sup>.

In case of loose teeth and sensitive teeth Gandusha can be done with Lukewarm or cold water mixed with the paste of Tila<sup>29</sup>. Both Kavala and Gandusha can be done with Ghrita or Ksheera. Madhu will generate clarity and soothes the mouth. Lipid soluble components which is present in Kavala and Gandusha will absorbed to oral cavity through mucous membrane as it has the capacity to absorb lipid soluble drugs.

Regular and appropriate practice of Kavala will help in proper movements of the jaw and facial muscles, which intern help for speech and mastication. Curing of the disease, pleasantness, vividity and lightness in the mouth and sense organs are the signs of properly performed Gandusha.

#### Pratisarana

Pratisarana is the application of medicine in buccal cavity. The medicines are either in form of paste, powder or powdered medicines are mixed with liquids to a semisolid consistency. In this procedure Dravyas are taken by Anguli and slowly rubbed over the affected part. Pratisarana or rubbing of teeth by using herbal powders, Saindhava Lavana, Madhu will make teeth and gums healthy.

By doing Pratisarana a mechanical pressure is created and exerted on that specific area, which in turn removes food particles, plaque and necrotic tissue remnants and thus it removes many causative factors of the disease. By doing Pratisarana it will create an irritation to the tissues and produces spurious inflammatory reaction on tissues and in turn it alters the absorbency of the blood vessels. By this increased permeability of blood vessels active principles of the drugs can access into local vasculature and can produce the desirable result.<sup>30</sup>

#### Tambulasevana

Tambulasevana is one among the Dinacharya and it's an ancient custom. Tambula can be prepared with drugs like Tambula (*Piper betle*), Jatiphala, Kankola (*Illicium verum*), Karpura (*Cinnamomum camphora*), Lavanga (*Syzygium aromaticum*), Pugaphala (*Areca catechu*) and Sukshmaela<sup>31</sup>. Tambula Sevana will provide ambrosial taste and aroma in mouth, gloss and charm on the countenance, it removes grime from the mouth, gives pleasant voice, cleanses tongue and cheek. Tambula Sevana can be done after waking up in from the bed, after taking food, before and after sexual intercourse, after Vamana Karma and with the company of friends. Tambulasevana will put an end to lethargy and tiredness and provide freshness to the mouth as well as mind<sup>32</sup>. Tambula Patra has got Teekshna guna, Ushna Veerya, Ruchikaraka, Kashaya Rasa Pradhana, so it will eliminate Kapha and provide clarity, good taste and oral health. 2 betel leaf, small sized areca nut, little quantity of slaked lime and extract of Khadhira can be used as ideal combination.

## **Nasya**

Nasya is one among the Panchakarma procedure. There are different types of Nasya among them Pratimarsha can be done as Dinacharya. It is a type of Nasya karma in which small amount of oil is instilled into the nostrils in all seasons in 2 Bindu Matra. Nasya can be done in tooth ache, sensitivity, and loose tooth. One who practises nasal therapy in time according to the prescribed method, his sense organs become clear. Katu Taila nasya can be given to strengthen the tongue.<sup>33-34</sup>

## **Dhoomapana**

Inhaling the medicated smoke through nose or mouth is termed as Dhoomapana. In diseases of head, eyes, nose medicated smoke should be inhaled through nose and exhale through mouth. In case of diseases of mouth, inhale smoke through mouth and exhale through mouth. By doing Dhoomapana it makes the voice soft and pleasant, teeth become strong, cure diseases like foul smell, hoarseness of voice and other disease of oral cavity.

Dhoomapana act on Vata and Kapha dosha, due the Sukshma Guna of drugs it enters into the minute channels and with Ushna Teekshna Guna it will liquefy the Doshas and eliminate through the nearest route. As the medicine is in gaseous form it can increase the bio availability.<sup>35-37</sup>

## **Mukha prakshalana**

Mouth wash can be done with Kheerivriksha Kashaya with Ksheera, Amalaki Kashaya and Sheetodaka. This practice cures dryness of mouth and disease produced by Rakta and Pitta<sup>38</sup>.

## **Pathya**

Ayurveda has recognized that the body is the outcome of the food we eat. Complexion, clarity, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength and intelligence are all established in foods. Without following the proper diet if a person is taking medicine, it will become vain and there is no need of medicine for a person who is following proper diet. Proper nutrition will help to maintain good dental health. Diet is one of the major aetiological factors for many dental diseases like dental caries, periodontal diseases, enamel erosion etc. Ayurveda has explained Pathyas for maintaining proper dental health. One can include Godhuma (wheat), Yava (barley), Ksheera (milk), Ghrita (ghee), Madhu (honey) and vegetables like Kushmanda, Palandu, Vartaka and fruits like Pakwa Amra, Kharjura, Dadima in their diet to improve the dental health. Drugs like Arjuna, Madhuka, Amrakashtha, Shankhabhasma and Bhallataka are also good for teeth.<sup>39</sup> Daily use of 1 Pala (48 grams approximately) black sesame with cold water nourishes body and makes teeth strong until death<sup>40</sup>

## **DISCUSSION**

Oral diseases are one among the common problem facing now a days. Oral health can suggest overall health of a person and diseases pertaining to mouth can affect the rest of the body. The oral cavity is swarming with bacteria and most of them are harmless. Oral health care will help to keep these bacteria under control. Improper oral health care can lead to the manifestation of many infections in mouth. The anti-bacterial activity of Ayurvedic drugs can reduce bacterial load in the oral cavity. Ayurveda not only mentions treatment with specific drugs to cure different oral diseases, but also include some Dinacharya for the prevention of oral diseases and to maintain the oral health. Ayurvedic way of dental care is very useful in nowadays as it

provides a lot of information from brushing of teeth to treating the dental illness. Chewing of herbal sticks are like brushing the teeth as it cleans the oral cavity and maintain the oral hygiene, different herbal paste can also be prepared with different Ayurvedic drugs. Drugs used in Tambula having Krimihara property thus it will act on oral microbes. It will help to stimulate the salivary glands and increases salivary secretion which in turn maintain the pH and control the bacterial growth. Due to increased secretion of saliva, the mouth and teeth are rinsed and kept free off food debris and foreign particles. Both Kavala and Gandusa has got many actions like it increases mechanical pressure inside the mouth, act as a good oral cleansing method and helps to improve or maintain the oral hygiene. It also stimulates the salivary gland to secrete more saliva and increases the vascular permeability in the oral cavity. Kavala and Gandusa regulate and balance the pH of the oral cavity by that it helps to reduce bacterial growth in the mouth. By doing Pratisarana it will create a long mechanical pressure and it helps to remove the waste materials which are adherent in the oral cavity, it will also improve the permeability so that drugs can easily be absorbed. Pratisarana will enhance the gingival and periodontal health. Daily administration of Pratimarsha Nasya can act so fast as it absorbed directly through the mucous membrane, and it can cleanse the channels by removing the accumulated Kapha Doshas in the Srotas. By following all these Charyas in a proper manner it can prevent most of the dental disease and can maintain healthy teeth. Even though dentistry is not a separate branch in Ayurveda, it is well explained under Shalakyia Tantra. So, by adopting all these preventive as well as curative measures one will get strong teeth with no diseases.

## **CONCLUSION**

Oral diseases are one of the major problems facing now a days. Mouth can reflect the physical health of an individual; so, it is mandatory to and protect and increase the oral hygiene. In Ayurveda regimens like Dantadhavana, Jivhanirlekha, Kavala, Gandusha, Pratisarana and Tambulasevana are explained not only to maintain the healthy oral cavity but also to prevent the disease affecting the same. A healthy mouth enables not only nutrition of the physical body but also enhances social interaction. So Dinacharya should be practised on daily basis not only to prevent the disease but also to promote the oral health.

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