



## Review Article

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### CONCEPT OF NETRA RAKSHA IN AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

In the present scenario, the Netra Raksha concept is critical to keep up the health of the human eye. Nowadays, many eye problems are eliminated by avoiding faulty lifestyles and improper dietary habits. Eyes are vital to one's quality of life. They're the windows to the soul, and yet the majority don't pay much respect to their care. The eyes usually get attention when there's a controversy, and one seek treatment for eye problems. We put our eyes through stress with the overuse of digital devices and exposure to an excessive amount of light. This is often hardly ever balanced out with adequate eye care practices. In Ayurveda Kriyakalpas like Seka, Aschyotana, Pindi, Vidalaka, Tarpana, Putapaka, Anjana for maintenance of eye health. And various Eye exercises, Dietary factors, simple procedures like Abhyanga, Snana, Nasya, Padabhyanga, Padaprakshalanam also are beneficial for the identical. So, a shot has been made to explore the strategies for preserving eye health.

**Keywords:** Netra raksha, Kriyakalpas, Pathya apathyas

#### INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, Netra Raksha has a significant role because the eyes are essential for your health. Most people rely on their eyes to see and make sense of the world around them. But some eye diseases can lead to vision loss, so it is essential to identify and treat eye diseases as early as possible. And just as it is essential to keep your body healthy, you also need to keep your eyes healthy.

The eyes and their care are detailly mentioned in our ancient Ayurvedic Samhitas. Good eye care habits always help maintain the eyes healthy and clear vision. The basic principle of Ayurveda is dependent on Tridosha, and in the case of the eye, Tejas (Alochaka pitta) is considered the main factor for vision perception<sup>1</sup>. When it's in balance, our eyes are healthy, radiant, and see clearly. Most of our day-to-day activities are keen on our vision. We supply out these activities depending on what we see and understand. The visual information is thus transformed into many different activities. When eye health is at its best, we enjoy the globe's colourful manifestation.

The outcome of the disease can range from temporary discomfort to total vision loss, which is why all eye problems and diseases should be taken seriously. If you experience any vision change, it warrants medical attention. Many eye diseases don't have any early symptoms, so by the time someone notices vision changes, an issue already is advanced. This is why we need good eye care to maintain the health and strength of the eye.

Consider the world without proper action of the eyes; it's just like a closed book. Intermittent climatic changes may produce various kinds of eye problems, so we need to take extra care of them. Especially in the summer season, the eye is easily infected with heat, sun, pollution, et al. Eyewash with clear water is one of the easiest ways to protect them, and also it's essential to maintain healthy foods habits to produce a healthy pair of eyes.

Many local therapeutics are described for eye diseases to maintain the eye's health, among all few of the procedures selected that are highly beneficial to Netra included under Kriyakalpa.

Kriyakalpa is one among the Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa and has a lot of advantages over oral administration. The drugs given orally will directly go to digestion by the influence of Pacaka pitta. The medicine administered Through Kriyakalpa are not digested by it and possibly rectify accumulated Dosas because the administration of the oral drugs finds it challenging to cross blood-aqueous, blood- vitreous and blood-retinal barriers to reach the destination of the eye. Still, topical medications can quickly get there and achieve higher bio-availability.<sup>2</sup> These procedures mainly improve the vision by strengthening the ciliary muscles, maintaining unctuousness of the eyeball, proper accommodation of the lens, delays the senile opacity of the lens.

#### NETRA TARPANA

Netra Tarpana is a special Ayurvedic treatment for the eyes; this Ayurvedic therapy utilises ghee, which is clarified butter. Ghee is one of the healing agents; it relieves tiredness, dehydration and improves eyesight.

This is an ancient Ayurvedic method that has been used for thousands of years to treat various disorders of the eyes, this procedure where Lukewarm medicated ghee is combined with medicinal herbs and poured on closed eyes within the frames of the masha paste, ghrita is run very slowly till the entire eyelashes are completely swim. Then ask the patient to open and close their eyes intermittently, which allows the medicinal properties of the liquified Ghrita to soak through.

Time of retention of ghrita has been mentioned according to the dosha involved and site of the disease and depending on the intensity of the ailment dictates. Acharya Susruta clarified that

depending on the condition, the procedure can perform for one day, three days and five days or till the proper satiating features are attained. In Vataja eye disease, the procedure can be carried out daily, alternatively in Pittaja and Raktaja condition, with interruption of two days in the healthy eye and Sannipataja disease and with the interruption of three days in Kapha diseases.

It helps cool, lubricate, and revitalize the eyes and improves inner vision by cleaning even the most petite channels associated with inner and outer perception. It also maintains the clarity of the vision as impurities are expelled, and ailments are corrected and help correct the early formations of cataracts, insomnia, glaucoma, and conjunctivitis. It indicated in the following condition, visual disturbances, Dry eye conditions, Allergic conditions, eyelid diseases, Structural deformities. Tarpana is effective even in these conditions. Difficulty in the movement of the eyeball and eyelids, Diseases dominated by swelling, infections due to injuries.<sup>3</sup>

### **PUTAPAKA**

Putapaka is an Ayurvedic procedure similar to Tarpana, but the ingredients, medicine preparation, and durations are different. Mainly this procedure is performed after Tarpana to reduce the complication of Tarpana; it can be employed separately in conditions of chronic inflammations or irritating conditions of eye and ulcers in the eye. The treatment duration entirely depends on the consulting physician and the severity of the disorder.

Both these Tarpana and Putapaka are the Santarpana methods for the eye. The excessively nourished eye is brought to normal ph. by the help of Putapaka. Hence Putapaka always follows Tarpanam. While performing the procedure, due to the temperature, the potency of the medicine is transferred to the inner layers of the eyes and keep them in contact with the epithelium, thereby transferring essential elements to them. Its medicinal action helps to clear the obstructions in the pathways of the eyes, increases circulation, stimulates cells, and removes dirt and dead cells of the eyes.

Mainly this procedure indicated conditions like Refractive errors, Dry eyes, Conjunctivitis, Watery eyes, Computer vision syndrome, Eyestrain, Cataract, Glaucoma, Night blindness, Ptosis, Stiffness and roughness of the eye, Corneal ulcers, Inflammatory lesions of the eye. In some cases, this procedure is contraindicated, Certain infectious eye diseases, Severe headache, Fever, Certain cancerous conditions.<sup>4</sup>

### **ASCHYOTANA**

Aaschyotana is the first line of treatment for eye diseases, and it is one of the unique procedures done for eye disorders. It's a procedure where the medicated drops have been instilled on the open eyes from a height of two inches in the prescribed format. It is mainly Beneficial in inflammatory conditions of the eye, strengthens the nerves and muscles of the eyes, gives freshness to the eyes, increases the circulation of the facial muscles and facial nerves.

In Aschyotana, the medicated drops are applied over the conjunctival sac, and the number of drops varies from 5-to 12 drops. The treatment duration depends on the consulting physician for the severity of the condition. Here the medicated drops fall on the cornea and conjunctiva from a safe height of 2 angula, and the drug will have access to entering the conjunctival blood vessels.

As we know, the action of most of the topical installation or application of drugs in the eyes is limited to the ocular surface, i.e., conjunctiva and corneal epithelium. These instillations, in some instances, can influence the action of ciliary muscles like mydriasis cycloplegics.

Indications; Refractive errors, Dry eyes, Conjunctivitis, Watery eyes, Computer vision syndrome, Eyestrain, Cataract, Glaucoma, Night blindness, Ptosis, Stiffness and roughness of the eye, Corneal ulcers, inflammatory lesions of the eye.

Aschyotana is contraindicated at night, owing to the pupil being dilated and the angles of the anterior chamber is partially closed, thus impeding the drainage of aqueous humour so that aschyotana sechanarupa, the proper cleansing effect is not achieved.<sup>5</sup>

### **NETRA SEKA**

Netra seka or netra dhara is an Ayurvedic therapy that has been given fundamental importance for treating various eye diseases. This one of the most accessible procedures consists of preparing kashaya and spilling the prepared medicated decoction on the eye. Netra seka can be indicated in the following conditions blepharitis, conjunctivitis, eye strain, watering of eyes, redness in eyes and dry eye syndrome. It can be done quickly at home if advised and is safe.

In this procedure, a thin stream of liquid is poured on the kaneenika sandhi from a height of four inches. The lukewarm medicated liquid is needed overall the process. The duration of a single stretch procedure varies from 15 to 20 minutes. The time taken for different treatment procedures is not the same. The Seka procedure is repeated many times depending on the severity of the illness. Physical parameter of the medication throughout the treatment, like temperature, is challenging to maintain, which means after a specific time of pouring, the temperature of the medicine reduces.

Benefits of netra seka include Strengthening the nerves and muscles of the eyes, nourishing tired, dry, rough and injured eyes, Giving freshness to the eyes. Also, it can help to increase the circulation of the facial muscles and Facial nerves.<sup>6</sup>

### **BIDALAKA**

In Bidalaka therapy, the medicated drugs are made into paste form applied to the outer surface of the eyelids and exclude the eyelashes. The paste is placed over the site until it starts drying. Bidalaka helps control the initial symptoms of various eye diseases, and it can be applied any time during the day or when there are symptoms of eye disease. Medicine applied on the outer surface of lids is absorbed by the skin to a greater extent reaching subcutaneous tissues and local temperature, thereby relieving inflammation, imparting a soothing effect, and reducing the relieving pain. These also indicated some conditions like the burning sensation of the eye, Discharge, Excessive tears, Swelling, Redness/congestion of the eye, Different types of pain, Scratching, Foreign body sensation.<sup>7</sup>

### **PINDI**

Pindi is the modification of Bidalaka. Instead of directly applying the pastes to the eyelid, they are packed in thick cotton and are kept tightly over the eyelids. This procedure is also called Kawalika. It's mainly useful in the early stages of all eye diseases in general and Abhishyanda in particular. It is effective in reducing inflammatory features produced due to trauma or wounds.<sup>8</sup>

## ANJANA

Netra Anjana is a procedure applying medicinal paste or powders to the outer (Kaneenika sandhi) or inner aspect (Apanga sandhi) of the eyelid with the help Anjana Shalaka or fingertip. The Anjana Shalaka is a small rod-like applicator with both ends shaped like flower buds, thin in the centre and thicker at the ends. The size is eight Angulas in length. Anjana therapy is done only after the initial features of Dosas are settled down. These pakwa Laksanas are a complete absence of Exudates, Scratching, Swelling, Dull look Redness or congestion. If Anjana is applied in any of the above conditions, there is a risk of aggravation of these symptoms, suppuration of the eyeball and blueness of vision. Method of applying Anjana, in this Anjana Shalaka filled with Anjana is held in the right hand and spread from inner to outer or outer to the inner side. The left hand is used to stretch the eye. If medicines are meant only for the lids, they should be applied by fingertips. The medicines should not be applied excessively to any ends like Apanga and Kaninaka. Even if there is irritation, it should not be washed immediately. An early wash may produce recurrence of the disease or damage vision.

The treatment duration and course duration depend entirely on the consulting physician and the severity of the condition (as per Samhitha, the treatment duration can extend a maximum of 20-30min and treatment course max 7-14 days).

Mode of action of Anjana mainly, the drug penetrates through the conjunctiva, increases the lacrimal secretions, and improves circulation. As the drugs are used for therapy having Theekshna Swabhava, they remove the doshas from the eye, eyelid, tissues, related channels, and Srungataka Marma.<sup>9</sup>

Our Vedic science put forward many easy, safe, and practical techniques for eye care. Some primitive methods can be easily practised in day-to-day life to overcome various lifestyle related ocular disorders.

## DINACHARYA (Daily Regimen)

In Ayurveda, Dinacharya is a concept that, when practised regularly, help to support a life of optimal wellness through routine detoxification and nourishment. Dinacharya has a significant role Acharya Sushruta for maintaining a healthy eye starts a daily regimen with Netraprakshalana (eyewash), whereas Acharya Charka recommends Anjana.

a) **NETRA PRAKSHALANA:** This is one of the leading Ayurvedic procedures that cleanses accumulated dust particles in the eye, wherein Ayurvedic medicine is applied to the eye to assist in improving vision and prevents potential eye diseases caused by humidity and dust.<sup>10</sup>

b) **ANJANA:** In this procedure, medicine is applied over the inner surface of the lid margin from the medial canthus to the lateral canthus with Anjana Shalaka. It is indicated when the doshas are located in the eyes.

c) **ABHAYANGA:** Daily application of medicated oil over the head, especially the Murdha region, is a preventive measure for eye disorders. It acts as Drishtiprasadan.<sup>11</sup>

d) **SHEETODAK SHIRA SNANA:** Hot water for a head bath may adversely affect hair and eyes. So, always cold water should be used for head baths.<sup>12</sup>

e) **NASYA:** Instilling Ayurvedic medicines through the nasal route to nourish the organs above the clavicle. A regularly

practising Nasya person can never suffer from diminished vision or loss of sight.<sup>13</sup>

f) **PADABHAYANGA:** Regular massage of feet with oil is indicated as Drishtiprasadana.<sup>14</sup>

g) **PADAPRAKSHALANA:** Washing and cleaning of the foot also act as Drishtiprasadana.<sup>15</sup>

h) **CHATRA DHARANA:** Using an umbrella while going out has the Chakshushya effect as it protects eyes from dust, sunshine, and heat.<sup>16</sup>

i) **NETRA-TARPANA:** It is a helpful therapeutic Ayurvedic treatment that washes the entire eye socket in a pool of lukewarm Ghrita; this helps to nourish dry eyes, cleanse and soothe itchy eyes; Ghrita cools the pitta and lubricates Vata dosha. It is recommended for many ocular disorders. As well, it provides nourishment to ocular tissues.

Ayurveda is familiar to consider food just as powerful as medicine. Similarly, it suggests some of the foods that may help to improve the strength of your eye health

**Triphala Churna:** One of the best ingredients of Triphala is Amlaki or Amla, which is known for being the best source of vitamin C. It helps prevent the development of cataracts.

**Milk:** Milk contains a good source of riboflavin that is known to cut the possibility of developing cataracts. It is also fortified with vitamin A, one of the leading nutrients for maintaining eye health.

**Spinach:** Spinach or palak is one of the leafy vegetables. It is mainly used to fill up the body with antioxidants and some essential nutrients like vitamin A and vitamin C, along with iron and calcium.

**Carrots:** Carrots are rich in beta-carotene, which your body converts into vitamin A; this nutrient promotes good eye health.

**Citrus fruits:** Citrus fruits include oranges, lemons, grapefruits, limes. Citrus fruits are also rich in vitamin C and are good folate, potassium and beta-carotene that helps you maintain eyesight.

**Almonds:** Almonds are generally suitable for health; it contains lots of healthy fats, fibre, protein, magnesium and Vitamin E that guards against unstable molecules that target healthy tissue.

## DISCUSSION

In Ayurvedic classics, to maintain the eye's health, we need to follow some modalities like Kriyakalpa and Dinacharya.

In this kriya, Kalpa has a significant role in maintaining the eye's health, and Kriya Kalpa is a Bahirparimarjana Chikitsa. It has several advantages over oral administration because the drug administered through the oral cavity will undergo digestion under the influence of Pacaka pitta. Still, the drug administered through Kriyakalpa possibly rectifies the accumulated dosha present in the eye. Kriya Kalpa is classified into seven types according to acharya Sharangadhara, mainly seka aschyotana vidalaka, pindi, tarpana, putapaka, anjana.

Other essential factors to preventing ocular disorder are Dinacharya (lifestyle) and eye exercises. Vedic science offers many easy, safe, and practical techniques for eye care. These primitive approaches can be easily practised in our day-to-day life to overcome different lifestyle-related ocular disorders.

## CONCLUSION

Eyes are an essential part of our health. Most people rely on their eyes to see and make sense of the world around them. But some eye diseases can lead to vision loss, so it is essential to identify and treat eye diseases as early as possible. The prevention modalities advocated in Ayurveda include Kriyakalpas like Tarpana, Putapaka, Seka, Anjana, Aschyotana, Vidalaka, Pindi. A few Dietary factors may help considerably reduce the impact of ocular diseases in the general population.

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