

AYURVEDIC WAY TOWARDS ORAL HYGIENE AND HEALTH: A REVIEW

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INTRODUCTION

As we know, all systems of medicine have 'good health' as the objective, only the means are different. Therefore increasingly conventionally trained doctors in India, as well as in other countries from different pathies are checking out alternative medical therapies like 'AYURVEDA'.

It is a science, which imparts knowledge about life with special reference to its definition and description of happy and unhappy life, useful and harmful life, long and short span of life, and such other material like 'Medicinal Plants' along with other properties and actions that promote and denote longevity in a person. Ayurveda also has specialized therapies, which while curing the diseases, strengthen the

immunity system of the body and thus helps in prevention of the diseases and preservation as well as promotion of positive health.

AIM WITH DESCRIPTION

My aim is to highlight the 'Concept of Ayurvedic approach towards Oral Hygiene and Health', which is basically described in 'Dinacharya and Swasthavrutta' includes 'Dantadhavana and Mukhamarjana 'to prevent different types of Dantarogas (Diseases of teeth) as well as Mukharogas (Diseases of mouth), ultimately to increase the life span of particular part of the body and hence improvement in digestive capacity i.e. called 'Agnivardhana' as per Ayurvedic physiology.

Lord Sushruta has beautifully explained the rules of hygiene and prophylactic measures in general in his classical text 'Sushrutasamhita' while the description of Chikitsasthana, Anagatavyadhi Pratishedhaniya Adhyaya.

He has given the rules of conducts to be daily observed by an intelligent person after leaving his bed (Dinacharya) seeking perfect health and a good body.

Rules of Swasthavrutta (i.e. for preservation of health) with special reference to oral hygiene

A) Dantadhavana (Tooth-brushing)

A person should leave his bed early in the morning and brush his teeth. The tooth-brush (DantaKashtha) should be made of fresh twig of a tree or a plant grown on a tract and it should be straight, not containing any worms, not used by anybody, not containing any knot or at most with one knot only (on one side) and should be at least twelve fingers in length and like the small finger girth.

The potency and taste of the twig (tooth-brush) should be determined by or vary according to the season of the year (Rutucharya) and the prepondance of any particular 'Dosha' in the physical temperament of its user. Further he said, that a person of a 'Kaphaja Prakruti' should use a twig of a plant possessed of a 'Pungent taste' (Tikta) while brushing his teeth. A person of a 'Pittaja Prakruti' should brush teeth with twig possessed of a 'Sweet Taste' (Madhura), while a person of 'Vatika Prakruti' should use that with an 'Astringent taste' (Kashaya). This rule should be observed even in respect of the preponderant doshas of the body in a disease.

The teeth should be daily cleansed with a compound consisting of Madhu (Honey), Powdered Trikatu (means Shunthi, Maricha & Pippali i.e Dry ginger, Piper Nigrum Linn and Piper Longum Linn), Triphala (means Haritaki, Bibhitaki and Amalaki i.e Terminalia chebula retz, Terminalia bellerica roxb and Emblica officinalis gaertn), Tejovati (Zanthoxy gum armatum DC bark), Saindhava and oil. Each tooth should be separately cleansed with the preceding cleansing paste applied on (the top of the twig bitten into the form of) a soft brush and care should be taken not to hurt the gum during the rubbing.

This tends to cleanse and remove the bad smell (from the mouth) uncleanliness (of the teeth) as well as to subdue the Kapha. This also produces a good relish for food and a cheerfulness of mind.

Benefits from this procedure

It brings a good relish of food, imparts cleanliness, lightness (Laghava) and a sense of freedom from diseases to the teeth, tongue, lips and palate (Shuchita). In short, it protects the mouth, throat, palate, lips and tongue from being affected from mouth-diseases (Mukharogas). It arrests extra salivation (Aasyavairasya), imparts an agreeable aroma to the mouth and relieves nausea also.

Where care should be taken while tooth-brushing

Ayurvedic classical texts are saying, that the care should be taken while tooth-brushing in persons suffering from affection of the teeth, lips, throat, palate or tongue or Stomatitis, Cough, Asthma, Hiccough, Vomiting, Weakness (severe), Indigestion, Epilepsy, Head-diseases, Thirst (severe), Fatigue(severe), Alcoholism, Facial paralysis, Earache, etc.

B) Role of special Therapies of 'Kavala' and 'Gandusha' (Mouth Gargles)

Sushrutasamhita, as well as Sharangadharasamhita have given solution of Kavala and Gandusha- Pratisarana vidhi in details.

Procedure of these karmas according to Lord Sharangadhara

Gandusha and Kavala are advocated after the age of five years. The person to be given this therapy should be seated comfortably; his forehead, neck and shoulders should be given mild fomentation (Svedana). Then asked to take liquid (Decoction) into the mouth.

Decoction means kwath of Triphala, Dashamoola (group of roots of ten medicinal plants having *Sida cordifolia* linn) with combinations with Haridra (*Curcuma longa* linn) or Nimba (*Azardirecta indica* a juss) or Khadira (*Acacia catechi* wild) and hold it till his mouth gets cleared from accumulated Kapha or other doshas (excretions) or till he gets secretions inside his nostrils. At a stretch, three, five or seven gargles can be done to get rid of the doshas.

Speciality of 'Gandusha' and 'Kavala' Karmas (According to Sharangadharasamhita, Dashamodhyaya:

'Gandusha' is holding any liquid in the mouth of its full capacity and without any movement inside, whereas 'Kavala' is that which allows movement of the liquid. Gandusha is usually done with liquids and Kavala with 'Kalka' (Paste of drug mixed with little water). One 'Kola' by measure is the dose of either liquid (Decoction) or powder of Gandusha; while for the Kavala the dose of Kalka (paste) is one 'Karsha' according to ancient time).

Types (Bhedas) of Gandusha

Sharangadharasamhita, Dashamodhyaya have a description that 'Gandusha' is of four kinds viz. 'Snaihika' (Oleating), 'Shamana' (Palliative), 'Shodhana' (Purifactory) and 'Ropana' (Healing). Similarly, Kavala (gargling) is of four kinds.

Speciality of 'Dhumapana' Karma

(According to Sharangadharasamhita, Dashamodhyaya, Shloka nos 9-10)

Like Gandusha and Kavala, Ayurveda also gives a great importance to 'Dhumapana' i.e Medicinal Smoking.



Patient during Dhumapana

Dhuma (Inhalation) is of six kinds viz. 'Shamana' (Palliative), Bruhana (Strengthening), 'Rechana' (Purgative), 'Kasaghna' (Anti-tussive), Vamana (Emetic) and 'Vranadhupana (Fumigation).

Indications of Dhumapana

Dhuma is indicated between the ages of twelve and eighty years. It is advocated in diseases like Kasa (Cough), Shwasa (Dyspnoea), Pratishtyaya (Running nose), Manyashoola (Pain in neck).

Also, it is useful to eradicate pain in lower jaw and head (Hanusandhishoola tatha Shirrashoola) and diseases arising from Vata and Kapha. Proper usage of dhuma confers clarity of sense faculties, speech and mind, firm teeth, mustaches and hair and pleasant odour to the mouth.

The dravyas used for Kavala and Gandusha are mostly useful for Dhumapana also. For e.g. Triphala, Haridra, Chandana (*Santalum album* linn), Aguru (*Aquilaria agallocha* roxb).

Drugs of 'Eladi Gana' (group of medicinal plants having Eletteria Cardamomum maton, etc. as told by Lord Sushruta are best for 'Shamana', 'Sarjarasa' (*Brassica Compastris* linn Var. Sarson prain) mixed with ghee or oil for 'Mrudu Bruhana', paste of drugs possessing tikshna properties for 'Rechana', the root of 'Kantakari' (*Solanum Surattense* Burm.F) and 'Maricha' for 'Kasaghna' dhuma, paste of skin, tendons and hoofs of animals like goat etc for 'Vamana Dhuma' and the powder of Nimba, Vacha (*Acorus calomus* linn) etc. for 'Vranadhupana' (Fumigation of ulcers).

CONCLUSION

Hence it is very beneficial to accept Ayurvedic treatment for oral hygiene and health, as it is-

1. Economically cheap and easily available
2. Easy to carry out by self at home
3. Short duration treatment, but long-acting results and with
4. Usually no side effects
5. Having 'Rasayana Drugs' for Immunomodulation like Triphala, or Haridra as 'Krumighna' (Germicide)
6. For the diseases like Mukhapaka (Stomatitis), Mukhavranas (Mouth ulceration), Gilayushotha (Tonsilitis) or Galasarambha (Pharyngitis) etc.

PRECAUTIONS

It is better to take an advice of a medical expert before starting Gandusha/Kavala for moderate or severe disease of oral cavity.

REFERENCES

1. Sushrutasamhita.
2. Sharangadharasamhita.