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# Pathya and Apathya in Arsha

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda provides detailed descriptions of various diseases and their treatments, including Arsha, a common anorectal disorder comparable to hemorrhoids in modern medicine. Despite the availability of numerous medical and surgical treatment options, Arsha continues to cause significant distress among sufferers. The prevalence of anorectal disorders, including Arsha, has risen due to unhealthy lifestyle choices and improper dietary habits. The widespread consumption of fast food and deviation from Shastra-based eating principles have exacerbated these conditions. Ayurveda emphasizes the role of Pathya (wholesome regimen) and Apathya (unwholesome regimen) in disease management. These regimens are customized based on an individual's Dosha, Dushya, Deha Prakriti, and Vyadhi. A well-designed Pathya not only enhances the efficacy of treatments but also minimizes infections and clears obstructions in bodily channels (Shrotas). This paper highlights the significance of Pathya Kalpana in the holistic management of Arsha, stressing the importance of dietary and lifestyle modifications. By incorporating a Pathya regimen, therapeutic outcomes are improved, and the recurrence of the condition is reduced. This approach aligns with the principles of Ayurveda, focusing on addressing the root cause of the disease while promoting long-term health and well-being.

**Key Words** *Arsha, Apathya, Ayurveda, Pathya, Piles, Haemorrhoids*

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## INTRODUCTION

Anorectal illnesses encompass a variety of conditions affecting the rectum and anus, including Arsha (hemorrhoids), Gudagata Vidradhi (perianal abscess), Bhagandara (anorectal fistula), Parikartika (anal fissure), and Gudabhramsha (rectal prolapse). These disorders are increasingly prevalent due to unhealthy eating habits and lifestyle choices. Diets rich in fast food, greasy, spicy, and unhygienic items, coupled with low fiber intake, insufficient

hydration, alcohol consumption, and sedentary lifestyles, contribute significantly to these conditions. Prolonged sitting, inactivity, night shifts, daytime sleep, and late-night awakenings further exacerbate the problem. A primary pathological factor in anorectal disorders is **Mandagni** (weakened digestive power), which leads to the formation of **Aam** (undigested toxic metabolites). Aam adheres to and obstructs the channels (Strotasa), causing **Baddhakoshtata** (constipation), which eventually manifests as

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anorectal diseases. Consequently, strengthening Agni (digestive fire) and eliminating Aam are fundamental objectives in the Ayurvedic management of these disorders.

Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of Pathya (wholesome regimen) and Apathya (unwholesome regimen) for preventing and managing such illnesses. Adopting the principles of Ayurveda, including proper dietary habits and lifestyle modifications, promotes healthy digestion, prevents the accumulation of toxins, and enhances overall well-being.

Globally, the prevalence of Arsha ranges from 2.9% to 27.9%, with more than 4% of cases being symptomatic. The incidence follows a Gaussian distribution, peaking between the ages of 45 and 65 years, with a decline thereafter<sup>1</sup>. This article explores the principles of Pathya and Apathya, focusing on their role in preventing and managing anorectal disorders, particularly Arsha, through dietary and lifestyle interventions.

### Arsha in Ayurveda

Arsha, or hemorrhoids, is a common anorectal disorder in Ayurveda characterized by swollen, dilated veins (pile masses) in the anal region, which may or may not bleed<sup>2</sup>. The term "Arsha" reflects the severe discomfort it causes, likened to an enemy. It primarily results from unhealthy dietary and lifestyle habits, such as excessive

intake of heavy, oily, spicy, or junk food, low fiber diets, sedentary lifestyles, and suppression of natural urges, leading to constipation. These factors disturb the balance of Doshas, particularly Vata and Pitta, causing Mandagni (weak digestion) and the formation of Aam (toxic byproducts), which obstruct the channels (Strotasa) and exert pressure on the anal region.

Arsha is classified based on Dosha involvement: Vataja Arsha presents with dry, painful masses and constipation; Pittaja Arsha features bleeding piles with burning sensations; and Kaphaja Arsha manifests as painless, slimy, and large masses.

Ayurvedic management includes detoxification (Panchakarma therapies like Virechana and Basti), herbal remedies (Triphala, Kutaja), local applications (Jatyadi Taila), and surgical interventions like Ksharasutra and Agni Karma. A balanced diet, hydration, and regular exercise (Pathya) are crucial for prevention. Ayurveda addresses both symptoms and root causes, promoting long-term health and quality of life.

### Pathya And Apathya:

Pathya, the Aahar-vihar that supplies nourishment, calms the mind, and is good for the body, and Apathya, the opposite of Pathya<sup>3</sup>. Pathya Ahara in Arsh – Rakta Shali, Maha Shali, kalam ,jungal,Sita, Sharada and Shashtika<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 1** Reference of Arsha in Ayurvedic Texts

SAMHITA	CHAPTER	TYPE
SHUSRUT SAMHITA	1- NIDAN STHAN-2	7 TYPE
	2- CHIKITSA STHAN-6	RAKTAJ, SAHAJ
CHARAK SAMHITA	1- CHIKITSA STHAN-14	7 TYPE
		SHUSKA, SRAVI
ASTHANG SANGHRAH	1- NIDAN STHAN-7	9 TYPE
	2- CHIKITSA STHAN-10	

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ASTHANG HRIDAYA	1- NIDAN STHAN-8 2- CHIKITSA STHAN-8	9 TYPE
MADHAV NIDAN	1- NIDAN-5	7 TYPE
BHAVA PRAKASHA		7 TYPE

Table 2 Pathya and Apathya in Arshsha

PATHYA		APATHYA	
Aahar	Vihar	Aahar	Vihar
<i>Matulunga(Citrus medica linn.),</i>	Vyayam	<i>Sarshap shaka( Brassica</i>	Utkatasana
<i>Jambeer(Citrus limon linn.),</i>	Ashwani mudra	<i>juncea)</i>	Sheetodak
<i>Draksha(Vitis vinifera),</i>	Chankrman	<i>Matasya</i>	Yan savari
<i>Nimbu(Citrus limon),</i>		<i>Jowar(Sorghum vulgare) ,</i>	Striprasnag
<i>Kushmand(Benincasa hispida),</i>		<i>bajra (Pennisetum</i>	Adharniya vega
<i>Alabu(Lagenaria vulgaris),</i>		<i>glaucum)</i>	
<i>Kalinda(Citrullus lanatus),</i>		<i>Dadhi</i>	
<i>Ardarak(Zingiber officinale) ,</i>			
<i>Sauveerak ,</i>			
<i>tushodak</i>			
<i>Sauvarchal ,</i>			
<i>saindhav</i>			
<i>Takra</i>			
<i>Ghrita</i>			
<i>Ushna jala</i>			
<i>Mudga(Vigna radiata)</i>			
<i>Dugha</i>			
<i>Madhu</i>			
<i>Yava ( Hordeum vulgare)</i>			
<i>Kulathya(Macrotyloma uniflorum)</i>			
<i>Trapusha(Cucumis sativus)</i>			
<i>,ervaruk(Cucumis melo var utilisimus)</i>			
<i>, Karkaruka( Cucumis rapallito)</i>			
<i>Baal muli(Raphanus sativus) ,</i>			
<i>Rasona( Allium sativum)</i>			
<i>Chaulai(Amaranthus viridis) ,</i>			
<i>Pooishaka( Basella alba) ,</i>			
<i>Methi(Trigonella foenum-graecum),</i>			
<i>Bathua(Chenopodium album)</i>			
<i>Baigan(Solanum melongena) ,</i>			
<i>Kakhode(</i>			
<i>,karela( Momordica charantia)</i>			
<i>Shurankand(Amorphophallus</i>			
<i>campanulatus)</i>			

DISCUSSION

**Pathya** and **Apathya** are terms used in Ayurveda to refer to dietary and lifestyle guidelines that contribute to health and wellness. **Pathya** promotes health and healing, while **Apathya** leads to imbalance and disease. Ayurvedic principles encourage following Pathya and avoiding Apathya to maintain optimal health.

The discussion on Pathya and Apathya related to Arsha is described below:

- Mode of action of drug in constipation : *Hareetaki- anuloman , Katuki – bhedan, Trivrat – rechan, Kritmal – srtansan*
- *Matulunga, jambeer = vatasleshmavibandhaghan*
- *Draksha = virechak* <sup>5</sup>

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- *Kushmanda*, *alabu*, *kalindak*= *mal-mutra janan*<sup>6</sup>
- *Ardraka swarasha*= *vibandh nashak*<sup>7</sup>
- *Shaoveerak*, *tushodak*= *virechak Arshavikaraghan*
- *Sauvarchal*= *supachya*<sup>8</sup>
- *Takar*<sup>9</sup>, *ghrita*, *usna jal* = *agnideepak*
- *Mudaga* = *laghu*, *vata anulomak*<sup>10</sup>
- *Shaindhav* = *tridosha samya*<sup>11</sup>
- *Dugdha*= complete food, *Jatisatyama*
- *Yava*= *pureesha jananam*<sup>12</sup>
- *Baal mooli*= *aganideepak*
- *Rashon*= *vibandh*, *aruchi*, *arsha*, *agnimandh nashak*<sup>13</sup>
- *Chaulai*, *poishak*, *methi*, *bathua* (chilli), *vashtuka* (bathua)= *mal-mutra pravartak*, *raktapitta nashak*<sup>14</sup>
- *Baigan*= *Rochak agnideepak*<sup>15</sup>
- *Kakode*, *karela*= *Rochak*, *agnideepak*
- *Suran kanda*= *arshaoghana Gudakeelaha*
- *Kulathi*= *arsha (gudakeela)hittakar*<sup>16</sup>
- **Anna (Grains):** *Godhooma* (wheat), *Yava* (barley), *Raktashali* (red rice), *Sashtek* (a type of rice), *Kulathya* (horse gram), and *Priyangu* (*Callicarpa macrophylla*).
- **Shaka (Vegetables):** *Suran* (yam), *Nimba* (neem), *Patola* (pointed gourd), *Vartak* (brinjal), *Punarnava* (*Boerhavia diffusa*), *Sigru* (drumstick), *Baal mooli* (Radish leaves), *Palandu* (onion), and *Nagar* (ginger).
- **Kheer (Milk and its products):** *Aja Ksheera* (goat's milk) and *Takra* (buttermilk).

- **Phala (Fruits):** *Amalaka* (gooseberry) and *Kapithya* (wood apple).
- **Mansa (Meat):** *Mriga Maansa* (deer meat).

### Excessive Use of Rasa in Arsha and Its Effects:

- **Madhura (Sweet):** Causes *Abhisayandi* (obstruction of channels).
- **Amla (Sour):** Leads to *Shotha* (inflammation), *Paaka* (suppuration), and *Vidahi* (burning sensation).
- **Lavana (Salty):** Results in *Tapa* (heat), *Daran* (cracking), *Shopha* (swelling), and *Sphota* (blisters).
- **Katu (Pungent):** Causes *Daaha* (burning), *Tooda* (pricking pain), and *Bheda* (piercing pain).
- **Tikta (Bitter):** Leads to *Raokshata* (dryness) and *Kharata* (roughness).
- **Kashaya (Astringent):** Causes *Vishtambha* (obstruction or constipation).

## CONCLUSION

This study mainly focuses on importance of diet and various physical activities in case of prevention of anorectal diseases. It is said that "When diet is wrong medicine is of no use. When diet is correct medicine is of no need." Without use of healthy diet and healthy lifestyle, prevention of these Anorectal diseases is very difficult. So there is big role of the Ayurveda in the prevention of these diseases with help of healthy lifestyle and healthy diet. Pathya foods, such as light and easily digestible grains, along

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with cooling foods, support digestive health, improve bowel movements, and prevent constipation—key factors in the prevention of Arsha. Regular exercise, adequate hydration, and timely bowel movements also enhance digestion and reduce the risk of hemorrhoid formation. On the other hand, Apathya foods and behaviors—such as heavy, spicy foods, sedentary lifestyles, and ignoring natural urges—worsen digestion and lead to the accumulation of toxins (Aam), contributing to anorectal disorders.

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**Conflict of interest:** None

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