

# Mukhapaka in Paediatric Age Group: An Ayurvedic Perspective and Therapeutic Approach

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## ABSTRACT

*Mukhapaka* is a painful condition of the oral cavity (*Mukha*), commonly seen in children, caused by the vitiation of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha doshas*. This condition results in inflammation and ulceration in the mouth, often triggered by poor oral hygiene, digestive disturbances like gastritis and constipation, vitamin B-complex deficiency, teething, trauma, infections, and the intake of spicy or oily foods. Since the mouth is the entry point of the gastrointestinal tract, maintaining oral hygiene is essential. Though not life-threatening, *Mukhapaka* significantly impacts a child's quality of life due to the discomfort it causes during eating. Ayurveda describes various effective treatments including *Gandusha*, *Kavala*, *Pratisarana* (application of herbal pastes), along with internal medications such as *Pitta shamak* drugs. These treatments aim to balance the *doshas*, support digestion (*Deepana-Pachana*), and boost immunity. Proper diet, feeding habits, and regular oral care (*Dantadhavana*) are also emphasized. Thus, Ayurveda offers a holistic, safe, and natural approach to managing and preventing *Mukhapaka* in children, addressing both local symptoms and overall health.

**Key Words** *Mukhapaka*, *Gandusha*, *Kavala*

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## INTRODUCTION

Childhood represents a vital stage of human development, marked by rapid physical growth and the gradual maturation of the immune and digestive systems. During this sensitive period, children are particularly vulnerable to a range of illnesses, with oral health issues being among the most common. One such condition is *Mukhapaka*, a term from Ayurveda that refers to inflammatory disorders of the oral mucosa, which closely

corresponds to stomatitis or mouth ulcers in modern medicine. According to *Acharya Dalhan* on his commentary on *Sushruta Samhita* mentions *Mukhapaka* is purely *pittajavikara*<sup>1</sup> but *Acharya Sushruta* has classified *Sarvasar Mukharogas* as *vataj*, *pittaj* and *kaphaj*<sup>2</sup>. Ayurveda attributes a child's susceptibility to *Mukhapaka* to their still-developing *agni* (digestive fire), immature immune response, and general tendency toward *doshic vitiation*, particularly when exposed to improper diet, poor oral hygiene, teething issues,

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or infections. The holistic Ayurvedic approach to managing *Mukhapaka* focuses on restoring *doshic* balance, strengthening *bala* (immunity), and promoting tissue healing. Treatment includes the use of age-appropriate herbal formulations, medicated mouth rinses, topical applications, internal medicines, and careful dietary adjustments. By integrating traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with modern clinical understanding, a safe and comprehensive management strategy for paediatric *Mukhapaka* can be effectively implemented. This article aims to delve into the classical Ayurvedic view of *Mukhapaka* in children, outlining its causes, clinical manifestations, and therapeutic interventions grounded in Ayurvedic principles.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVE

### AIM:

To conduct a detailed review of *Mukhapaka* (stomatitis) in children from an Ayurvedic perspective, examining its causes, symptoms, and holistic treatment approaches, while emphasizing the effectiveness of Ayurvedic therapies in supporting healing and preventing recurrence.

### OBJECTIVES:

- To examine traditional Ayurvedic literature on *Mukhapaka*, focusing on its classification, disease mechanism, and the role of *Dosha* imbalances, especially in the paediatric age group.
- To investigate and evaluate the causative factors responsible for the development of *Mukhapaka* in children, including inadequate oral

hygiene, improper dietary practices, teething-related issues, infections, and disturbances in digestion.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review was carried out by gathering information from classical Ayurvedic scriptures such as the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, Sharangadhara Samhita, Bhavaprakasha, and Kashyapa Samhita, as well as from contemporary medical literature, pharmacological references, research journals, magazines, PubMed, and other scientific databases. The compiled data were critically evaluated to understand the therapeutic effectiveness and underlying mechanisms of *kavala*, *gandusha*, and various herbal and herbo-mineral formulations used in the Ayurvedic management of *Mukhapaka*.

## DISEASE REVIEW OF MUKHAPAKA

*Mukhapaka* refers to a group of inflammatory conditions affecting the oral cavity, commonly presenting with symptoms such as painful ulcers, a burning sensation, redness, swelling, and occasionally pus formation. *The aggravated vatadi doshas afflict the Mukha to produce paka and vana. Acharya Sushruta classified 65 Mukha roga are austha roga 8, dantamula roga 15, jihva roga 5, talu roga 9, kantha roga 17 and Sarvasar Mukharoga 3<sup>3</sup>. In the context of modern medicine, Mukhapaka closely aligns with stomatitis, a condition marked by inflammation of oral mucosa.*

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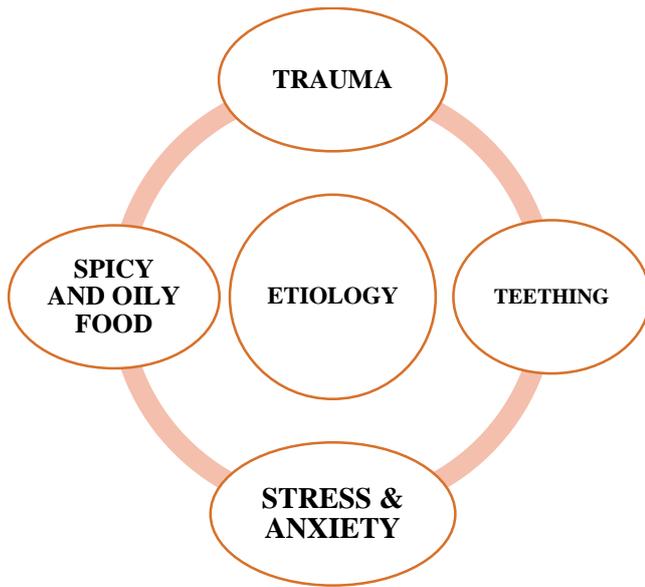


Figure 1 Etiology of Mukhapaka

Mukhapaka can occur due to number of possible causes are hot & spicy food, trauma, stress, anxiety, nutritional deficiencies and poor oral hygiene etc. Hot and spicy food can aggravate *pitta dosha*, which govern heat and metabolism in the body. When *pitta* is out of balance, it can lead to excessive heat in the mouth, resulting in Mukhapaka. Trauma can also produce Mukhapaka can result not only from internal factors like aggravated *pitta dosha*, but also from external causes such as biting the inside of the cheek, dental appliances like braces, rough brushing etc. From an Ayurvedic prospective stress and anxiety is often linked to an imbalance in *vata dosha*. When *vata* is aggravated, it can disturb the other *doshas* especially *pitta dosha* which govern heat and metabolism, this disturbance can manifest inflammation or ulcer in mouth. Deficiency of iron, vitamin-b complex may all manifest as mouth ulcer. Iron is necessary for the upregulation of transcriptional elements for cell replication and

repair. Lack of iron can cause genetic down regulation of these elements, leading to ineffective repair and regeneration of epithelial cells, especially in the mouth and lips. Many disorders which cause malabsorption can cause deficiencies, which in turn causes stomatitis. It can also reflect underlying systemic or digestive issues. According to Ayurveda, *Mukhapaka* occurs due to the vitiation of *pitta dosha*, often associated with *kapha* and *rakta*. These vitiated *doshas* localize in the *mukha pradesha* (oral cavity) and cause inflammation, ulceration, and pain.

Table 1 Lakshan of Mukhapaka

Types of mukhapaka	Lakshan of Mukhapaka
1.Vataj mukhapaka	Severe pain, dryness, blackish discoloration, rough ulcers <sup>4</sup> .
2.Pittaj mukhapaka	Burning sensation, redness, foul smell, bleeding <sup>4</sup> .
3.Kaphaj mukhapaka	Iching, swelling, white thick coating or patches, less pain <sup>4</sup> .

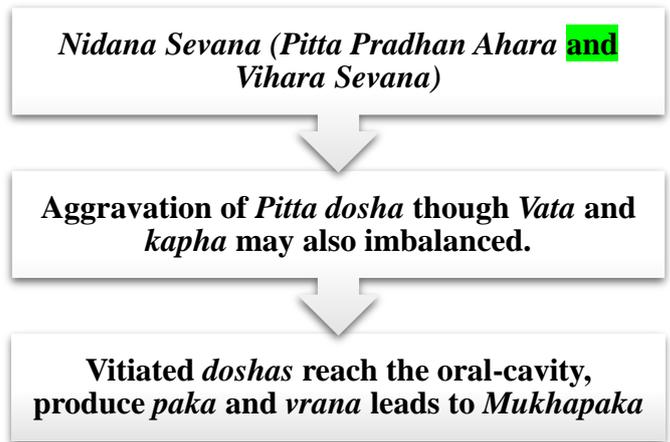


Figure 2 Samprapti Chakra of Mukhapaka

Table 2 Samprapti Ghatak of Mukhapaka

Dosha	Mainly <i>pitta dosha</i> , sometimes <i>vata</i> and <i>kapha</i> can also be involved
Dushya	Rasa dhatu, Mansa dhatu and Rakta dhatu
Agni	jatharagni, dhatvagni
Srotas	Rasa vaha, Rakta vaha, Mamsa vaha srotas

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<i>Srotodusthi</i>	<i>Sanga, atipravrutti, vimarga gamana</i>
<i>Udbhava sthana</i>	<i>Amashaya</i>
<i>Sthana Samshraya</i>	<i>Mukha pradesha</i>
<i>Roga marga</i>	<i>Bahya roga marga</i>
<i>Roga avastha</i>	<i>Sama or Niram Sadhya or Krichra sadhya</i>

## MANAGEMENT OF MUKHAPAKA

The Ayurvedic treatment strategy for *Mukhapaka* primarily centres around pacifying aggravated *Pitta Dosha*, improving digestion, purifying the blood, and managing local symptoms. To balance *Pitta*, herbs such as *Guduchi*<sup>5</sup>, *Amalaki*<sup>6</sup>, *Chandana*<sup>7</sup>, and *Turmeric*<sup>8</sup> are commonly used for their *pitta shamaka*, cooling and anti-inflammatory properties. Digestive enhancement (*Deepana and Pachana*) is also crucial in preventing the formation of *Ama* (toxins), with formulations like *Triphala Churna*<sup>9</sup>, *Avipattikar Churna*<sup>10</sup>, and *Hingvastak Churna*<sup>11</sup> often prescribed to strengthen the digestive fire (*Agni*). For blood purification (*Rakta Shodhana*), detoxifying therapies, including mild *Panchakarma* procedures, are employed alongside herbal formulations such as *Raktashodhak Syrup*, *Manjishtadi Kwatha*<sup>12</sup>, and

*Chandanasava*<sup>13</sup>, which help eliminate vitiated blood and reduce systemic inflammation. Local treatment plays an essential role in relieving symptoms and promoting healing. Herbal gargles with decoctions of *Triphala*, *Turmeric*, *Amalaki*, and *Chandana* are beneficial in soothing inflamed mucosa and accelerating wound healing. Dietary recommendations include a *Pitta*-pacifying diet comprising coconut water, milk, ghee, non-spicy foods, and adequate hydration to support the healing process. *Khadiradi Vati*<sup>14</sup> is indicated not only for *Mukhapaka* under *Balrogadhikar*. It contains ingredients like *Khadira*, *Javitri*, *Karpura*, *Sitalchini*, *Puga*, and *Jatiphala*, known for their antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties. Similarly, *Darvyadi Churna Lepam*<sup>15</sup>—which includes *Daruharidra*, *Mulethi*, *Jatipatra*, and *Haritaki*—is used topically for its *Pitta-shamaka* (*Pitta*-pacifying) and *Vrana-ropaka* (wound-healing) effects. Together, these therapies form a comprehensive and effective Ayurvedic approach to managing *Mukhapaka*, especially in paediatric care.

**Table 3 Pathya and Apathya for Mukhapaka**

PATHYA	APATHYA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink warm water and incorporate ghee into the diet for its soothing and healing properties.</li> <li>• Prefer <i>Mudga</i> and substances that predominantly possess sweet, bitter, and astringent tastes, as these are beneficial for healing and dosha balance<sup>16</sup>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid foods that are sour, salty, and pungent in taste.</li> <li>• Stay away from curd and dry, rough-textured foods.</li> <li>• Eliminate heavy and <i>abhisyandhi ahara</i> from the diet, as they can hinder digestion and worsen symptoms<sup>16</sup>.</li> </ul>

## DISCUSSION

*Mukhapaka*, as described in classical Ayurvedic literature, is a common oral inflammatory

condition primarily caused by the vitiation of *Pitta Dosha*, often in combination with *Vata*, *Kapha*, or *Rakta*. In paediatric populations, this condition is

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particularly concerning due to the immature immune system, delicate nature of the oral mucosa, and the child's dependence on oral feeding for nutrition and growth. If not addressed promptly, *Mukhapaka* can result in significant discomfort, feeding difficulties, irritability, and impaired development.

Ayurveda classifies *Mukhapaka* as a manifestation of *dosha-dushya sammurchana* a pathological interaction between vitiated *doshas* and affected tissues localized in the *mukha pradesha*. The prominent involvement of *Pitta* and *Rakta* dhatu explains the characteristic symptoms such as redness, heat, ulceration, and burning pain. From a modern biomedical perspective, *Mukhapaka* can be correlated with conditions like stomatitis, particularly aphthous ulcers, viral infections, or oral candidiasis, all of which involve inflammation, microbial invasion, and mucosal breakdown. While contemporary medicine typically attributes these conditions to factors like microbial infection, nutritional deficiencies, or autoimmune responses, the Ayurvedic perspective views them as outcomes of systemic imbalances particularly *Agnimandya* and *Ama* accumulation. These differing frameworks offer complementary insights into disease aetiology and progression. This understanding aligns with the Ayurvedic concept that both *bala* and *Agnibala* (digestive/metabolic strength) are naturally lower in children, rendering them more susceptible to disorders like *Mukhapaka*. Ayurvedic management, therefore, emphasizes a holistic and gentle approach, particularly suited to the

paediatric constitution. Treatment aims to correct both local symptoms and underlying systemic disturbances.

Therapeutic strategies include *pratisarana* (topical application) with agents like *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*), and *Madhu* (honey), which exhibit wound-healing, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial properties. *Gandusha* and *Kavala* (medicated gargling or oil pulling) with formulations such as *Triphala* decoction, *Yashtimadhu kwath*, or medicated ghee help soothe mucosal irritation and promote healing.

Moreover, Ayurvedic interventions such as *Gandusha* and *Kavala* are found to be beneficial in treating *Mukhapaka*. These methods activate parasympathetic stimulation in the oral cavity, leading to increased salivary secretion, which plays a critical role in maintaining oral hygiene due to its antimicrobial and antiviral functions.

From an Ayurvedic standpoint, *Pitta dosha* is considered the primary factor in the pathogenesis of *Mukhapaka*. Consequently, the therapeutic strategy emphasizes the use of drugs with *madhura*, *tikta*, and *kashaya rasa*, which help in *Pitta-shamana*. The treatment approach also includes *Vedana-sthapana* and *Rakta-prasadana* to support comprehensive healing.

Overall, the Ayurvedic approach offers a holistic and well-tolerated alternative to conventional treatment methods for mouth ulcers, with the advantage of minimal adverse effects commonly associated with allopathic medications.

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**CONCLUSION**

*Mukhapaka* in children, though a minor ailment, has significant implications for health and development. Ayurvedic management offers a comprehensive and child-friendly approach by restoring *doshic* balance, accelerating mucosal healing, and boosting natural immunity. This underscores the enduring relevance of Ayurvedic principles in managing paediatric oral conditions and highlights the importance of integrating traditional practices with modern evidence-based research to ensure wider acceptance and clinical application.

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