

### Dietary Precautions during *Panchakarma*

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#### Abstract

*Panchakarma* (penta bio purification) is an added advantage of the Ayurvedic system of medicine. Specific diet and regimen is mentioned before, during and after the course of specific *panchakarma* (penta bio purification). Those specific diet patterns should be followed in a sequential manner, starting from light liquid diet to heavy diet to bring the digestive fire to normalcy. These diet and regimen; if not strictly followed, will have an adverse reaction on the body. Hence specific diet pattern and strict regimen is highly essential to maintain the homeostasis of the bodily constituents.

#### Keywords

*Panchakarma, samsarjana karma, Pathya, Vamana, Virechana, Vasti, Nasya, Raktamokshana*



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## INTRODUCTION

*Panchakarma* is the penta biopurificatory measures which includes pre operative, operative and post operative measures. Pre operative measures include *Deepana-Pachana*<sup>1</sup> (Digestive & Carminative), *Snehana* (Oleation - Internal & External) and *Swedana* (Sudation). *Pradhna Karma* (Major operative measures) includes *Vamana* (Emesis), *Virechana* (Purgatives / Laxatives), *Vasthi* (Medicated Enema-Oil and Decoction), *Nasya* (Errhine therapy) and *Raktamokshana* (Blood letting)<sup>2</sup>. There are certain dietary measures and regimens specifically prescribed before, during and after the *pancha karma* (penta biopurification) been highlighted hereafter. The one which is pleasant and gives comfort to the body and mind; to the entire channels of the body, which is responsible for the equilibrium of *doshas* (pillars) of the body is known as *pathya* (wholesome). Those qualities exactly opposite to these factors are considered to be *apathya* (unwholesome)<sup>3</sup>. The word *pathya* (wholesome) is synonymous for the treatment<sup>4</sup>.

## COMMON TO AVOID IN ALL PANCHAKARMAS:

*Uccha bhashana* (Speaking loudly), *Rathakshobha* (travelling in vehicles), *Atichankramana* (excessive walking), *Atyasana* (sitting in one place for long), *Ahitahara* (taking spoiled or un wholesome food), *Ajeernahara* (food may cause indigestion), *Diwaswapna* (day sleep) and *Ati Maithuna* (excess sexual intercourse) should be avoided.<sup>5</sup>

## DIET BEFORE SNEHAPANA (INTERNAL OLEATION)<sup>6</sup>:

Internal oleation is nothing but administration of medicated *sneha dravyas* (fatty material) in increasing order of the dose till the body attains the signs of *samyak snigdha* (adequate oleation). Internal oleation is the measure adopted as pre *panchakarma* (penta biopurification) procedure to bring the *doshas* (morbid matters) from various parts of the body to *koshta* (alimentary tract). The food should be in moderate amount having *ushna* (hot), *drava* (liquid- rasam and rice) in nature. Digestive and carminatives such as *trikatu choorna* or *panchakola yavagu* should be essential prior to the intake of *sneha pana* (fatty material).

## AVOID BEFORE SNEHAPANA (INTERNAL OLEATION)<sup>7</sup>:

*Abhishyandi* (Food which causes obstruction in the circulating channels) like curd, oil cake, articles sweetened by jaggery, *Sankeerna/Viruddha* (contradictory article) and excess fatty food materials should always be avoided prior to the intake of *snehapana* (fatty materials).

**DIET DURING SNEHAPANA (INTERNAL OLEATION)<sup>8</sup>:**

Always should intake hot water frequently till clear belching and good appetite is observed. Hot water should be used for drinking as well as to take bath. Hot liquid rice gruel having pleasant smell or meat soup or green gram soup etc is ideal after digestion of fatty materials.

**AVOID DURING SNEHAPANA (INTERNAL OLEATION)<sup>9</sup>:**

Sleep during day time, suppressing natural urges, anger, grief etc should be avoided.

**ADVICE DURING SWEDANA (SUDATION THERAPY)<sup>10</sup>:**

Sudation therapy is application of steam to the body to bring the morbid matters to the alimentary tract as pre *panchakarma* procedure. Commonly used sudation therapy during *panchakarma* is Bhashpa sweda (Steam box sudation). Person's body should be massaged slightly after the sudation therapy and he is advised to take hot water

bath. It is better to keep his body warm by covering with thick blanket followed by hot liquid rice gruel is advised to replace the lost fluid during sweat therapy.

**AVOID DURING SWEDANA (SUDATION THERAPY):**

Food which causes obstruction to the channels (Curd) and exercise is not advised after sweat therapy.

**ADVICE DURING VAMANA KARMA (EMESIS/TIC THERAPY)<sup>11,12</sup>:**

*Vamana* (Emesis Therapy) is advised in vitiated *kapha* (morbid matter) and *kapha* (morbid matter) associated other *doshas* (morbid matter) from upper gastro intestinal tract. The food and drinks which excite *kapha dosha* (morbid matter) such as meat soup, curd, sweets, milk, sugarcane juice, black gram kheer etc is advised. After the *vamana karma* (Emesis), *peyadi samsarjana* (gradual enhancement of digestive power starting from light liquid diet to heavy diet) karma is advised.

**AVOID DURING VAMANA KARMA (EMESIS/TIC THERAPY)<sup>13</sup>:**

*Ashtamahadoshakara vishayas* (All the eight dreadful morbid factors) such as speaking loudly; travelling in vehicles, excessive walking etc is avoided.

**ADVICE DURING VIRECHANAKARMA (PURGATION/LAXATIVE)<sup>14</sup>:**

*Virechana* (Purgation Therapy) is advised in vitiated *Pitta* (morbid matter) and *Pitta* (morbid matter) associated other *doshas* (morbid matter) from lower gastro intestinal tract. Hot, liquid, unctuous diet, meat soup, sour fruits, tamrind rice, lemon rice etc is ideal diet prior to the administration of *virechana karma* (Purgation Therapy). After the *virechana karma* (Purgation Therapy) *peyadi samsarjana karma* (gradual enhancement of digestive power starting from light liquid diet to heavy diet) is advised.

**AVOID DURING VIRECHANA KARMA (PURGATION/LAXATIVE):**

*Ashta maha doshakara vishayas* (All the eight dreadful morbid factors) such as speaking loudly; travelling in vehicles, excessive walking etc is avoided.

**ADVICE DURING NIROOHA B(V)ASTI (DECOCTION ENEMA)<sup>15</sup>:**

*Nirooha Vasti* (Decoction enema) is one of the major procedures of *Panchakarma* (penta biopurification) indicated to curb the morbid *Vata* (morbid matter) and *vata* (morbid matter) associated other *doshas* (morbid matter). After the expulsion of the

decoction enema in person having vatic constitution or suffering from vatic disorders meat soup, *pitta* constitution or suffering from *pitta* based disorders milk and in *kapha* constitution person or suffering from *kapha* based diseases green gram soup is ideal. Always *anuvāsana vasti* (oil enema) should be given prior to the decoction enema. Diet and regimen should be followed double the time (*Parihara kala*) of treatment of enema therapy.

**AVOID DURING NIROOHA B(V)ASTI (DECOCTION ENEMA):**

*Ashta maha doshakara vishayas* (All the eight dreadful morbid factors) such as speaking loudly; travelling in vehicles, excessive walking etc is avoided.

**ADVICE DURING ANUVASANA B(V)ASTI (OIL/FAT ENEMA)<sup>16</sup>:**

*Sneha Vasti/Anuvāsana Vasti* (Oil enema) is one of the major procedures of *Panchakarma* (penta biopurification) indicated to curb the morbid *Vata* and *vata* associated other *doshas*. *Anuvāsana vasti* should be given only after the intake of food. Person should take 1/4<sup>th</sup> of the normal quantity of the food. Food must be, in person having vatic constitution or suffering from vatic disorders meat soup, *pitta* constitution or suffering from *pitta* based

disorders milk and in *kapha* constitution person or suffering from *kapha* based diseases green gram soup is ideal. Walking hundred steps after the intake of food and elimination of natural urges prior to the administration of *anuvāsana vasti* (Oil enema) is ideal. Water boiled with coriander or ginger or hot water alone is ideal after *basti pratyagamana* (evacuation of enema material). All other diet and regimen advised during *snehapana* (internal oleation) is to be followed.

**AVOID DURING ANUVASANA B(V)ASTI: (OIL/FAT ENEMA)**

All the eight dreadful morbid factors (*Ashtamahadoshakara vishayas*) such as speaking loudly; travelling in vehicles, excessive walking etc is avoided.

**ADVICE DURING NASYA KARMA (ERRHINE THERAPY)<sup>17</sup>:**

Light Diet, hot water intake, should stay in a room devoid of breeze and follow the diet and regimen prescribed under *snehapana vidhi* (internal oleation).

**AVOID DURING NASYA KARMA (ERRHINE THERAPY):**

Person should avoid fatty food materials, should not expose to dust, cold breeze, hot sun etc. One should not resort to head bath

during *Nasyakarma* (Errhine therapy / Nasal medication).

**ADVICE DURING SIRAVYADHANA (VENESECTION/BLOOD LETTING):**

*Raaktamokshana* (Blood letting) is one of the *Panchakarma* (Penta bio purification) procedure where in blood is let out of the body by means of *Jaloukavacharana* (leech application), *Pracchana* (incision / puncturing), *Siravyadhana* (Venesection / puncturing of veins) etc. Hot liquid gruel prepared of sesame and rice is ideal before *siravyadhana* (Venesection / puncturing of veins). Light, carminative, slightly unctuous soup (*Panchakola yavagu with mild ghee*); which increases the blood is ideal after the *siravyadhana* (Venesection/ puncturing of veins).

**AVOID DURING SIRAVYADHANA (VENESECTION/BLOOD LETTING):**

The person who underwent bloodletting therapy should avoid incompatible diet like milk and salt, milk and sour foods, milk and fish, honey and ghee in equal quantity etc, should not expose oneself to hot sun, cold breeze, sexual intercourse, exercise, day sleep etc.

## DISCUSSION

Ayurveda laid special emphasis on various specific diets during these *Panchakarmas* (penta biopurification). One must strictly follow these rules and regulations to achieve success in *Panchakarma* (penta biopurification). In several context of *Panchakarma* (penta biopurification) importance of use of hot water internally as well as externally is highlighted. Vaidya Lolimbaraja mentioned in his work titled *Vaidyajeevana* that, one who resorts food which is congenial to the body & mind will not require any medicine and vice versa.

## CONCLUSION

Diet and regimen plays an important role in the success of *panchakarma* (penta biopurification) treatment modalities. If one resorts these dietary precautions prior, during and after *panchakarma* (penta biopurification), will get rid of the diseases without any complications. *Panchakarma* acts curative as well as preventive in many conditions. *Panchakarma* not only helps in postponement of ageing process but also in maintenance of health in the healthy being if employed in respective season.

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