



International Journal of Indian Medicine

www.ijim.co.in

ISSN: 2582-7634

Volume - 6, Issue - 10

October 2025



IJIM

INDEXED



International Journal of Indian Medicine



International Category Code (ICC): ICC-1702

International Journal Address (IJA): IJA.ZONE/258276217634

Skin health and Ayurveda : A holistic perspective Nerlekar P.

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ABSTRACT:

Introduction: Our body is made of the five elements of nature and we survive on the food which is also composed of the same five elements. But it cannot be directly assimilated without the process of *paka* or *parinamanon* it. food as always been an important way to treat illness and maintain health and that's why food called as *Mahabhaishyajya*. Certain guidelines of consumption of food have been mentioned by *Acharya charaka* as to how our *Aahara* should be consumed called as *Aaharavidhividhan*. The specific sequence of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* is practically very important and in that *Ushnamashniyat* firstly mention in the sequence of *Aahar Vidhi Vidhana*. *Ayurvedic* classics were reviewed and compiled in this article. In current scenario, altered habits of food consumption may lead to various diseases. At present many new food processing methods are in practice which are harmful for human life. Nature of work, Duty schedule, hourly duty causes less time availability for preparation and consumption of warm and fresh food daily. The prepared food packing in tiffin, freezing, packing in plastic food preparing method (like microwave oven) is more common, So it affects overall health and leads to health problems. traditional method of cooking is best and it helps the food to become more digestible, So consumption of prepared warm and fresh food is essential for maintenance of health. The method and guidelines are explained in *Ayurvedic* texts, which are titled as *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* where the laws of do's and don'ts about diet and drinks are given.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Ahara, Ahara Vidhi Vidhan, Ushnamashniyat , Agni , Doshas , Ama, Ojas

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How to cite this article: Nerlekar P. Skin health and Ayurveda: A holistic perspective. Int J Ind Med 2025;6(10):25-32 DOI: <http://doi.org/10.55552/IJIM.2025.61006>

INTRODUCTION:

Beautiful appearance and skin health are interconnected concepts which play a crucial role in our psychological and physical health. Healthy skin enhance self confidence. Nowadays, modern lifestyle which involves fast food, stressful work culture and poor sleep habit cause negative impact on skin. It is observed that major part of population use various types of chemical based cosmetic products on the skin which eventually cause various skin problems like acne, dry skin, premature aging, skin discolouration, skin irritation etc. For these skin problems, in medical practice various medication and lifestyle remedies are often prescribe. Some of these medicines, sometimes cause side effects on the skin, some medications may interact with another and makes one ineffective or even hyper effective. To avoid all these negative effects, Ayurvedic approach for skin health can become beneficial. According to Avurveda, skin issues arise from imbalance in the Tridoshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha). Ayurveda uses Abhyantar Chikitsa, Bahya Chikitsa and diet modifications to achieve balance in these Doshas and improve the skin health. Even Detoxification and lifestyle modification play important role for healthy skin. According to Ayurveda, following proper Dinacharya , Rutucharya and Pathya Ahara-Vihara is beneficial for healthy skin.

Enhancing skin health with Ayurvedic approach

Ayurveda involves Bahya Chikitsa Abhyantar Chikitsa, and lifestyle modifications for the improvement in the health of the skin.

Bahya Chikitsa**• Abhyanga⁽¹⁾**

Daily practice of Abhyanga helps to balance the Doshas, especially Vaata. It promotes detoxification through the skin and helps to nourishes the skin. Abhyanga removes the dead skin by rubbing action and helps to

enhance cleanliness of the skin. Daily practice of Abhyanga procedure delays ageing process, cures tiredness and gives nourishment and strength to Dhatus. It improves skin texture and makes skin soft, pleasant and attractive. According to Sushrutacharya, Abhyanga produces Mrudutwa on the skin.⁽²⁾

• Pada abhyang

Daily practice of Pada abhyang makes the skin of soles softer. It helps to removes Roughness, dryness, and Numbness of feet. It prevents cracking of feet. It provides strength to the feet.⁽³⁾ According to Vagbhatacharya, daily massage to the feet helps in the functioning of the eyes.⁽⁴⁾

• Shiro abhyanga⁽⁵⁾

The daily practice of Shiro abhyanga (head massage) as in Dinacharya are good for the health of skin and hair. Hectic lifestyle, daily workload causes stress which becomes a main cause for the various skin issues, including, acne, dullness and premature aging. Shiro abhyanga calms the nervous system, and relieves the stress. Shiro abhyanga softens the skin, and nourishes the sense organs. Shiro abhyang in daily practice prevent baldness, headache, premature greying of hair, strengthens the scalp, and makes hair thick. It improves the facial skin texture⁽⁶⁾ and provides Kanti (radiant skin) to the face.

• Nasya

In Nasya karma, medicine is administered through nostril. The Nasya karma helps to eliminate the vitiated doshas. Nasya is of two types Shirovirechan and Snehana.⁽⁷⁾ One or two drops of Anu tail in Nasya karma strengthen the sense organ and improve the health of the shin. In Ashtang Hridaya, Nasya with Kapha and Pitta shamak dravyas are beneficial for Vyanga. Acharya Vagbhata has indicated Nasya in yuvanpidika. Major cosmetic disorders can be effectively cured

by introducing Nasya. The skin treatments in the Ayurveda, especially Nasya karma is easy to administer on regular basis and It is cost effective.

• **Mukha prakshalan**

(Washing of Face)

Nowadays, various chemical based face wash for the daily use causes irritation, dryness on the skin but daily Mukha prakshalan with clean Shital jal removes all the dirt from the skin and this will not cause irritation and dryness to the skin. Mukha Prakshalan make skin fresh and clean. Mukha Prakshalan cures Shram, Sweda, Daurgandhya and impurities from the skin. Vagbhattacharya has mentioned (Akshi Sinchana) sprinkling of eyes with water. Acharya Sushruta has mentioned Mukha Prakshalan with Kshirivruksha Kashaya added with milk, Amalaki Kwath or Shita Jala. It removes Nilika⁽⁸⁾, Pidaka, Vyanga and Mukha Shosha (Dryness of the face).⁽⁹⁾

• **Snap**⁽¹⁰⁾

Daily bathing as a part of Dinacharya removes all the dirt of the skin, hydrates the skin and enhance skin appearance. Daily bathing improves blood circulation and keeps body Fresh, fit and healthy. Taking a bath cures Shram (tiredness), Daurgandhya (bad smell), Sweda (sweat), Kandu (Itching) and impurities of the body.

• **Udvartan**⁽¹¹⁾

Udvartana involves specific massage technique which promote the skin health. Massage with different herbal powders, helps to improve texture of the skin, detoxify the skin, and treat conditions related to Kapha, like a oily skin. This process helps decrease the Kapha and Meda Dhatu.⁽¹²⁾ It makes the body strong and improves clear complexion of skin (Twak Prasadkara). This procedure removes Tandra (drowsiness), Sharira Dauragandhya (body odor), Gurutva (heaviness), Arochaka (anorexia), Kandu

(itching), and Sweda (sweating).⁽¹³⁾ Acharya Susruta very clearly mentioned that Udvartana reduces aggravated Vaata, Kapha Dosha. Udvartana reduce excessive sweating and cures itching sensation. It activates the nerves and increases the blood flow and preserve the skin texture and natural elasticity.

• **Samvahana**

(Gentle Massage Without any Powder/ Oil):

Samvahana is a important procedure in Ayurveda which involves gentle massage with hand. This improves skin tone and texture. It helps to promote good skin, Rakta and Mamsa Dhatu.⁽¹⁴⁾ Samvahana procedure removes tiredness. Acharya Dalhana defines it as a pleasant touch (sukhakara sparsha). It helps to pacify Vaata and Kapha Dosha. Sushrutacharya has mentioned “Mridu Samvahana” for the treatment of Vatarakta.⁽¹⁵⁾ The effects of Samvahana as per Sushrutacharya are Preeti, Nidrakara, Vrushya, Kapha-Vatahar, Shramahar, Mamsa Rakta Twaka Prasadakaram, Daurgandhahar.

• **Udgharshana**⁽¹⁶⁾

(Massage with Dry Powder)

Udgharshana procedure done with help of powder, which is Ruksha in nature. Ruksha dravyas are applied in Pratilom Gati, which eventually produce heat due to friction. In Udghardhana, lubrication should be avoided to improve stretch. Due to mechanism of Udagharshan, the dirty particles removes from the skin. Udgharshana improve blood circulation which eventually helps to improve glow of the skin. It removes dirt, Kandu (Itching), Kotha (rashes).

• **Utsadana**

(Massage with Oily Paste):

It is done with the application of Sneha kalkas or oils.⁽¹⁷⁾ Utsadana especially in women promotes texture of skin and improve cleanliness. Utsadana and Udgharshana helps to maintain skin health.

• Mukha lepan⁽¹⁸⁾

Nowadays, daily use of various chemical based sheet mask for face causes irritation, dryness on the skin. In Ayurveda, Mukha lepan involves application of various herbal pastes or masks. Lepam is used to treat various skin conditions such as dullness of the skin, acne and pigmentation. Mukha lepana helps to improve texture of the skin. It removes Vali and Pidika (boils) and prevents wrinkles. It makes cheeks and face attractive like lotus.

Abhyantar Chikitsa

• Rasayana

In Ayurveda, Rasayana therapy consist of therapeutic properties and preventive properties. Acharya Dalhana has mentioned that the Rasayana helps to enhance youthfulness and improves quality of Rasaadi sapta Dhatu.⁽¹⁹⁾ Rasayana therapy involves the use of specific herbs, dietary regimens, and lifestyle practices which enhance the quality of Rasadi Sapta Dhātu. and improve Ojas. It works at a cellular level to rejuvenate the body, and delays the aging process. Rasayana treatments focus on rejuvenation and nourishment of the skin. These therapies helps to removes fine lines and wrinkles, and improve skin elasticity. Rasayana therapy helps maintain a youthful appearance of skin and promotes long-term skin health. This therapy is also beneficial for chronic skin conditions like eczema, psoriasis, acne, etc. by promoting skin health, and restoring balance of doshas. In Ayurveda various Rasayanas therapies has been mentioned like Haridra, Guduchi, Amalaki for Vicharchika,⁽²⁰⁾ Neem, Haridra, Sariva, Triphala for Yauvana Pidika⁽²¹⁾ Bakuchi, Amalaki, Ashwagandha for Shwitra⁽²²⁾ Ashwagandha, Bala, Manjishtha for Kitibha.⁽²³⁾

• Diet modification⁽²⁴⁾

According to Ayurveda, our body system is controlled by Tridoshas (Vata, Pitta, Kapha).

The balance of Doshas are depends on Ahar-Vihar. According to Ayurveda, Modified diet plan based on Doshas are important for maintenance of skin health and overall health. According to Ayurveda, dry, warm, light food, Katu, Tikta, Kashaya Ras helps to reduce Kapha Dosha. Sheeta , Madhura, Tikta, Kashay Ras reduces Pitta Dosha. Vaat dosha can be balanced by consumption of warm, moist food and Lavan, Amla, Madhura Ras. Balanced Dosha helps to prevent and manage the chronic skin conditions. Skin condition like Acne vulgaris, occurs due to Vrudhhi of Pitta, Kapha Dosha, and Rakta dhatu dushti. Consumption of sugar, oily , spicy food will trigger acne causing factors. Consumption of light, warm food will be beneficial for this skin condition. Triphala , shatavari will help to balance the kapha and pitta Dosha. Sariva, Manjishta will help to purify blood (Rakta shodhana).

• Panchakarma

Panchakarma therapy helps in detoxification and purification of the body. It eliminate toxins or Ama from the body and helps to balance the Tridoshas.⁽²⁵⁾

It involves five procedures:

1. Vamana (emesis)
2. Virechana (purgation)
3. Basti (enema)
4. Nasya (nasal administration)
5. Raktamokshana (bloodletting)

For skin health, these Panchakarma procedures are used to cleanse the systemic toxins. This detoxification and purification therapies not only removes all the toxins from the skin but also improves skin texture. These treatments improve blood flow throughout the body and this enhanced circulation deliver essential nutrients and oxygen to skin cells. Nowadays, Stress has become a major factor which causes various skin problems, including premature aging, dullness and tired

skin. Panchakarma therapy like Shirodhara, which contains a continuous stream of warm oil on the forehead helps to calm the nervous system, relieve stress, thereby reduce skin problems. Panchakarma has shown excellent results in management of skin conditions like vitiligo, eczema, and psoriasis. Panchakarma not only removes the fundamental cause of disease but also prevents recurrence of disease. In Ayurveda, seasonal Panchakarma treatments are the most effective method for preventing the diseases. For example, Vaman is often recommended in Vasant Ritu when Kapha prakopa is seen.⁽²⁶⁾

Lifestyle modification

• Dinacharya⁽²⁷⁾

Daily Lifestyle modification includes regular exercise, maintaining a regular sleep schedule and stress management techniques (e.g., Yoga and meditation). This supports overall health and improves skin health.⁽²⁸⁾ Regular exercise helps to boost skin health by improving blood circulation. This delivers oxygen and nutrients to the cellular level, which supports skin cells to regenerate and give more youthful appearance. Exercise is a stress reliever, and by managing stress, you can minimize its negative impact on skin conditions like acne and eczema. Regular exercise improves the skin's capacity to retain moisture, which can help prevent dryness. Maintaining a regular sleep schedule is essential for healthy skin because the body needs this time to repair and rejuvenate the cells. Improper sleep schedule can cause dark circles under the eyes, dryness, dullness on the skin, premature aging etc. For the improvement in skin health, quality sleep per night and maintaining a consistent sleep schedule is necessary. Meditation shows positive impacts on skin health by reducing stress. The relaxation during meditation enhances blood flow, it improves oxygen

and nutrients supply to the skin. Meditation also improves quality of the sleep which eventually helps the skin cells to regenerate. Yoga in daily life improves skin health through stress reduction. It improves circulation, hormonal balance. Various yoga poses, breathing exercises can give clearer and more radiant skin. Sweating during Yoga helps to detoxify from the skin. Asanas like Adho mukha svanasana increase blood flow to the face and helps to rejuvenate facial skin. Sarvangasana, Halasana, Paschimottasana improve supply of blood and oxygen of the face and it nourishes the skin. It helps to bring natural glow on the face. Bhujangasana improves blood circulation and helps to remove toxins from the skin, which helps to reduce acne and premature aging process. Trikonasana improves oxygen supply to the skin and making it feel more radiant. Shishuasana is a stress-reducing pose that increases blood circulation of the head and it will calm the skin and mind.

• Rutucharya

In Ayurveda, seasonal Panchakarma treatments are the most effective method for preventing the diseases. For example, Virechan is often recommended in Sharad Ritu when Pitta prakopa is seen. Basti karma in Varsha Ritu for Vata Dosha Prakopa, Vaman karma in Vasant Ritu for Kapha Prakopa.⁽²⁹⁾ This seasonal Panchakarma procedure helps to prevent seasonal skin problems. During Hemant Ritu and Shishir Ritu, cold weather/winds block Swedavaha Srotas. Blocking of sweat from leaving the body will prevent the escape of the body heat. During this period, the sunlight and cold winds absorb the moisture from the skin and it aggravates the Vata Dosha in the body. This can result in roughness, dullness on the skin, cracked heels, and moisture-less skin. For these skin conditions, Abhyanga is a good remedy.

Regular oil massage improve skin complexion and removes dryness, dullness from the skin. In this cold weather, feet also get cracked becomes dry . Pada abhyanga or foot massage using medicated oils can help in skin treatment as well as improve the blood circulation of the feet. During Grishma Rutu, extreme heat causes imbalance of Pitta Dosha which eventually results in skin problems like skin rashes, blisters, sunburn etc. For this skin problems, Ayurveda recommends Pitta pacifying diet. Avoiding the consumption of spicy food, sour, fried food will help to prevent these skin problems . In Varsha Rutu, most commonly seen skin problems are fungal infection, acne and allergies. For this problems, keeping skin clean and dry is necessary. By following proper Rutucharya, skin issues during seasonal changes can be avoided.

DISCUSSION:

Beautiful and healthy skin is everyone wish for. Healthy skin cause positive impact on mental health by enhancing self confidence and by giving a sense of pride, self worth. In present time, due to hectic lifestyle it is challenging to maintain a proper healthy lifestyle and eventually it affects the skin. Wide range of skin problems such as acne, dry skin, premature aging, dull skin occur due to imbalanced lifestyle. Ayurveda has described Dinacharya, Rutucharya, Panchakarma therapies, Rasayana therapies and other lifestyle modifications which helps to cure skin problems and maintain healthy skin. Following a proper Dinacharya, and Rutucharya as described in Ayurveda, can give flawless skin without applying any type of chemical cosmetics. Healthy skin is a result of the properly maintained health lifestyle and this can be achieve by proper Dinacharya. Involvement of Abhyanga, Snan, Mukhaprakshalan, padabhyanga in daily routine can enhance skin health and

maintains skin texture. Panchakarma treatments for skin health problems play major role as they detoxify the whole body. According to Avurveda, skin issues arise from imbalances in the Tridoshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha). These imbalanced doshas can be controlled by Panchakarma procedures. In Ayurveda, Rasayana therapy offers a holistic approach for managing chronic skin conditions by restoring balance of dosha, rejuvenating the body, enhancing strength and immunity. Effective Ayurvedic approach helps in managing skin problems and maintaining the skin health.

CONCLUSION:

Ayurvedic treatment for the skin health focus on the balancing Tridoshas of the body, making their effects to be long-lasting without causing any adverse effects on the skin. Ayurvedic skincare is more than just symptomatic treatments. Ayurvedic approach for the skin health do not cause any adverse effects. Ayurveda work on the treatment of root cause of disease and prevent recurrence of disease. Proper diet, healthy lifestyle, detoxification enhance overall quality of the skin and heals to achieve healthy and radiant skin. Ayurveda not only works on skin health but also improves overall physical health . According to Ayurveda, healthy and radiant skin comes from within, and consistent proper diet and lifestyle can significantly improve skin's health.

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Dr. Ganesha krushna Garde, Sarth vagbhata, Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan, edition 2023, Sutrasthan 3/15

Source of Support: None declared

Conflict of interest: Nil

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An Official Publication of ARCA- AYURVEDA RESEARCH & CAREER ACADEMY

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