

ROLE OF DIFFERENT MODALITIES OF SWASTHVRITTA FOR THE PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

*1. Dr. Ritesh, Bams, M.D. (kriya Sharir), Ayurveda Expert, Department of kriya sharir, Haryana, (india),

2. M. R. Suthar, Bams, M.D. (kriya Sharir), Assistant Professor, P.G. Department of Kriya Sharir, J. S. Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, & P. D. Patel Ayurvedic Hospital, Nadiad, Gujarat, (India)

Abstract

Children are essential to the future and present scenario of the country. Children having good health are more likely to grow as healthy adults. As we know that the aim of the Ayurvedic system of traditional medicine is “*Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam*” i.e. maintaining the health of the healthy individual.¹ A Systematic review and critical analysis of Ayurvedic literature and related article published on national and international journal have been done to present the importance of Daily regimen (*Dincharya*), seasonal (*Ritucharya*) and *Aahara* (Dietary habits) and *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Sadvritta* (Ideal routines) and *Achara Rasayana* for preventing and promoting the health of school children. As the school age is growing age of children. In this age, children are more vulnerable to many health problems. So for the prevention of diseases & promotion of health, *Aahara* & *Vihara* plays an important role.

Introduction

Children are essential to the future and present scenario of the country. Children having good health are more likely to grow as healthy adults. As we know that the aim of the Ayurvedic system of traditional medicine is “*Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam*” i.e. maintaining the health of the healthy individual.² In Ayurveda health is a state where *dosha*, *agni*, *dhatu*s, waste products, all physiological functions should be in homeostatic state and soul, sense organ and mind should be in a state of total wellbeing.³ A good health is utmost important or the key to achieve happiness, peace, and success in life especially for school going children. The process of educating, inspiring, and assisting individuals in adopting and upholding a healthy lifestyle is known as school health. School-age children are those who fall between the ages of 5 and 17 years. Approximately thirty percent of the population falls within this age bracket. The middle

school age group is 5 to 12 years old. The children are growing and developing quickly during this time. School-age children are more likely to have certain health issues like Worm infestation, Malnutrition, Dental caries, and Disease of eyes and ears. Along with these, Physical as well as mental health should also be taken care. In Ayurveda classics, various rules and regimens have been told for maintaining physical as well as mental health and for the prevention of diseases from the childhood itself. Daily regimen (*dincharya*), seasonal regimen (*ritucharya*), dietetic rules (*ahara vidhi*), and code of conduct (*sadvritta*) are few of them for promoting, and maintaining the health of school children. *Brahmamuhuruta Jagrana* (Waking up 90 min before sunrise), *Ushapana* (Drinking water), *Malatyaga* (Bowel evacuation), *Dantapawana* (Brushing), *Nasya* (Nasal drops) with *Sarsapa tail*, *Kavala* (Gargling), *Abhyanga* (Massage), *Vyayama* (Exercise), *Snana* (Bathing), *Vastradharana* (clothing), *Padtradharana* (wearing shoes), *Nakhadikartana* (cutting of nails), *Ushnishdharnam* (cover the head), are various methods explained under *dincharaya*.⁴ *Dincharaya* plays important role in prevention and promotion of health. Avoiding learning, reading, eating and sleeping during evening time comes under *Sandhyacharya* (Evening regimen). By following this daily regimen, many diseases among the children can be prevented and it will also promote the health of them. *Sandhyacharya* (Evening regimen) - Avoiding learning, reading, eating and sleeping during evening time comes under *Sandhyacharya* (Evening regimen). In current scenario due to faulty lifestyle of both parents and children, they are doing such kind of activities during evening time. By educating about health hazards of such activities, we can prevent many diseases and promote the health of child. Encourage the child to pray the god during evening time. It will improve both physical and mental health. *Ratricharya* (Night regimen)- having early dinner possibly at sunset or 2-3 hr before the bed time, easily digestible food in dinner, 100 steps or slow walking after dinner aids in maintain a good digestion and consuming milk at bed time promotes good sleep among children. Sleeping on a soft, even and clean bed and in left lateral position alleviates acid reflux and enhance the digestion. In this article, A Systematic review and critical analysis of Ayurvedic literature and related article published on national and international journal have been done to present the importance of Daily regimen (*Dincharya*), seasonal (*Ritucharya*) and *Aahara* (Dietary habits) and *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Sadvritta* (Ideal routines) and *Achara Rasayana* for preventing and promoting the health of school children.

VARIOUS FACTORS FOR THE PROMOTION OF PHYSICAL HEALTH

Physical growth is an increase in size. Development is growth in function and capability. Both processes are depends on many factors like genetic, nutritional, and environmental factors.

1. *Aahara* (Diet)

Our classical text books explain *Aahara*, *Aahara Vidhi Vidhana*, and *Ritus*, all of which are crucial to a child's growth and development. Early childhood is the ideal time to evaluate a child's *prakriti*. A child's food needs to be in line with *Prakriti* and the *Ritus* (seasons).

It should include-

- A variety of dairy products, which are a rich source of calcium and strengthen bones. Whole flour, or Dalia, is high in fiber and vitamins B.
- Rich in iron, vitamins, and minerals are green leafy vegetables and fruits, Legumes are high in protein.
- Sprouted foods, or those high in vitamins and minerals.
- Ghee: stimulates hunger.

2. *Vyayama* (Exercise)

From an early age in school, encourage the child to exercise on a regular basis.

- Improves circulation throughout the body to build muscle.
- Having a massaging effect on the important organs and improves the oxygen flow to distant tissue.
- Promotes physical strength.

3. *Yogasana* and their benefits

- *Suksham Vyayama* - Improve circulation, remove stiffness and tension, relax the nervous system, and are accessible to anyone.
- *Tadasana* - help increase height gradually. The posture helps keep the spine straight and erect helping the child walk taller.
- *Tiryaka Tadasana* - stretches the spinal joints and muscles. Make your children practice this pose regularly for their linear growth.
- *Ardha Chakarasana* - stretches the front upper torso, Tones the arms, neck, and shoulder muscles, relieving tension.Opens the chest and improves lung capacity.Increases flexibility in the spine.Reduces stress.

- *Vrikshasana* - Improves balance, strengthens legs and feet, and promotes concentration and focus.
- *Surya Namaskara* - Among the many benefits of regular practice of *Surya Namaskar* here are a few prominent advantages for children: Improve concentration, Enhance memory power, increase energy levels, Physical strength, calm and focused mind, happy state of being, Better immune system, and Higher efficiency.

VARIOUS FACTORS FOR THE PROMOTION OF MENTAL HEALTH

Both physical and mental health are inter-related. To promote the mental health, various methods are described.

1. ***Brahmamuhuruta Jagrana*** – It's not same for the elders and the children. The child needs to get enough sleep. Middle school age group (5–12 years old) sleeps for 10–11 hours. Group from secondary school (ages 13 to 17) sleeps 7 to 10 hours. Children who are not deprived of sleep are taught to go to bed and wake up early. In a study assessing the relationship between physical activity and daily lifestyle habits it was observed that early waking time has significant positive correlations with children's physical activity level.⁵
2. ***Nidra (Sleep)*** – Lack of sleep causes moodiness, irritability, and other memory-related issues, While getting enough sleep will support overall mental health as well as attention, learning, behavior, and memory among children.
3. ***Aahara (Diet)*** - As in *Chandogyo upnishad*: "*Aahara Sudho Satva Sudho*". *Satvikka* and *Hitkara Aahara* uphold mental well-being. Children of school age must consume milk, *ghritta*, *yava* (barley), *godhoom* (wheat), green leafy vegetables, fruits, chickpeas, nuts, coconut, etc. As mentioned in *Bhavprakash*, different preparations like *Shikharini* (which primarily consists of curd), *Mudga Yusha* (a green gram soup), *Lapshika* (which consists of semolina wheat, besan, and green gram), *Krishra* (which consists of mudga), etc. are very healthy and easy for kids to digest.
5. ***Medhya Rasayana***- "*Rasayana*" denotes the capacity for healing or rejuvenation, while "*Medhya*" refers to intellect or cognitive ability. Strong *Medhya Rasayana* herbs are essential for enhancing the brain's capacity for information processing, storage, and retrieval. The Intelligence Quotient (IQ) rises as a result. A few *Medhya Rasayanas* that are good for children are:
 - Regular intake of the 10 ml juice of ***Mandukparni*** i.e *Centalla asiatica* together with honey extensively promotes brain growth in the children.

- Giving kids 10 ml of Mandukparni, or *Centalla asiatica*, juice on a regular basis along with honey greatly stimulates brain development in kids.
- Regular intake of the 3 grams powdered root of *Yasthimadhu (Mulethi)* i.e. *Glycyrrhiza glabra* along with a glass of milk enhances memory and learning capabilities in children and also reduce the risk of neural disorders.
- Giving children 3 grams of powdered Yasthimadhu (Mulethi), or *Glycyrrhiza glabra*, on a regular basis with a glass of milk improves memory and learning skills and lowers the risk of neurological disorders.
- Regular intake of *Sankhpushpi* i.e. *Convolvulus pluricaulis* paste infused in lukewarm milk & can be ingested in morning preferably after meals, extremely beneficial to boost memory. It improves memory capacity, concentration, creativity, alertness and calmness in children.
- Consistent consumption of *Sankhpushpi*, or *Convolvulus pluricaulis* paste infused in lukewarm milk, which is very beneficial for enhancing memory and can be consumed in the morning, preferably after meals. It enhances children's capacity for memory, focus, creativity, alertness, and calmness.⁶

6. Aachara Rasayana: Children are educated to always speak the truth, be non- violent, & obey the elders and intake of Milk and *Ghritta* regularly.⁷

7. Yogic and Meditation practices

Regular practice of yoga and meditation helps in improving concentration and memory, reduce anxiety, improves communication, and listening skills, increase functioning of brain, reduce negative behavior, and Calms the mind.

MAJOR HEALTH PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THEIR PREVENTION

Problems Related to Eyes: The eyes are very sensitive organ. Various poor lifestyle choices, such as staying late in class, binge-watching television, and constantly using their phones for homework or games, children are weakening their eyes. There have been reports of varying prevalence rates of myopia in children in India.

- Encourage the child to play games outside to help prevent these diseases.
- The phone's brightness should be set to read mode.
- Steer clear of dark phone themes, especially those that are blue in hue.

Various methods described in *Dicharaya* for healthy eyes :

1. **Anjana (Corrylium):** Owing to Souviranjana's Mridu property, it is regularly used during the day. In children, pain, itching, and burning sensations are common. These disappear when *Anjana* is used. *Anjana* maintains the integrity of *Netrasrotas*, dilates blood vessels, and increases blood flow. Additionally, it enhances vision and guards against eye disorders.
2. **Netraprakshalna (Eyewash):** To keep clear vision throughout the year, wash your eyes with cold water in the *Grishma* and *Sharda Ritu* and slightly warm water in the winter.
3. **Nasya (Nasal drops):** You can use *Pratimarsh Nasya* every day. There is a *Kapha Dosha* dominance in children. Thus, in the morning, one or two drops of *Sarshapa taila* are applied to each nostril. Owing to anatomical communication, medication administered via the nasal cavity reaches the cavernous sinus (*Shringataka Marma*), which houses the centers of taste, smell, hearing, and vision.
4. **Ushapana (Drinking water):** Water consumption in the morning also improves vision and guards against eye disorders.
5. **Shiroabhyanga (Head massage):** Oil applied to the head region on a daily basis serves as *Drishti prasadaka* and strengthens the eyes.
6. **Padaabhyanga (Foot massage):** The center of the foot contains two veins that lead to the eyes. This transfers the benefits of oil massage to the soles, promoting eye health and warding off illnesses.
7. **Snana (Bathing):** Bathing in cold water or water that is slightly below body temperature during the summer months is always beneficial to the health of your eyes. The eyes should not be bathed in hot water. Thus, it is always preferable to use cold water or Luke warm water. Applying hot water to the head area should be avoided as it can lead to visual impairments.⁸
8. **Chatradharana (Umbrella):** It is recommended that children bring an umbrella to school. They won't be exposed to dust or sunlight thanks to this.
9. **Padprakshalana (Foot wash):** Foot dirt causes abnormalities in the eyes. The eyes are connected to two veins on the feet. Anomalies are caused by dirt accumulations, or *malas*. Clear vision while cleaning the feet with clean water.
10. **Padtradharana (Foot wearing) - Improves eye sight.**

11. **Yogic Practices for Eye Health** - Children who are in school can avoid refractive errors and other eye problems by shifting their eyes and palming their eyes. **Trataka:** It promotes clear vision and prevents eye disorders. **Neti:** For kids in the 13–17 age range who attend secondary school. It prevents eye disorders and encourages clear vision.

Problems Related to Dental or Oral Health

Children frequently experience dental issues because of a variety of factors, including overindulging in chocolate, candies, and other sweetened foods, brushing incorrectly, and more. *Swasthavritta* mentions a number of techniques for preserving dental health. Teach the child to sip water before brushing their teeth to avoid any accidents. As the dental problems are common in children due to various reasons like eating more chocolates, toffees and sweetened food items, improper brushing etc. Various methods are mentioned in *Swasthavritta* to maintain the oral health.

Before the tooth brushing, teach the child to take a sip of water to prevent any injury.

1. Dantapawana (Tooth Brushing): Instruct the youngster to brush their teeth in the morning and the evening. *Dantapawana* has the advantage of eliminating bad breath, and because it cleans the teeth, tongue, and mouth of debris, it also stimulates appetite. Teeth become stronger through chewing on *neem*, *tejobatti*, *kaidrya*, and *nigundi* twigs. Possessing antimicrobial properties as well as preventing dental cavities.

2. Jihva Nirlekhna (Tongue scrapping): It ought to be curved and blunt. Eliminates the unpleasant odor (halitosis) and activates the tongue's reflex points. It enhances taste perception and increases the release of digestive enzymes.

3. Pratisarana (Massaging of gums and teeth): Along with honey, *Kustha*, *Trifla*, *Trikatu*, and *Trijat*. It helps to preserve the health of the periodontal tissues by removing food particles and plaque.

4. Kavala and Gandusha (Gargling and oil pulling): takes out the smell fortifies teeth and gums. has a massaging effect on the oral mucosa and enhances oral cavity circulation.

CARE OF EARS – Ear issues in schoolchildren interfere with their ability to learn and perform well in class. The best way to avoid ear issues is to practice *karnapoorna*. *Karnapoorna* is the administration of warm oil into the ear canal. It enhances the quality and capacity of hearing. It strengthens the acoustic nerve and improves the brain's hearing center's ability to interpret sounds. Lowers the frequency of ear infections, lessens ear pain and inflammation.

INTESTINAL PARASITES – A major contributing factor to this issue is poor or nonexistent hygiene. To stop this issue in school-aged children, practice good hygiene.

1. *Maltyaga* (daily bowel evacuation)- Ought not to be in public areas since contact with tainted excrement leads to infestation.

2. *Hastapadprakshalna* (hand and foot washing) – Frequent hand washing of children and proper hand and foot washing following bowel evacuation prevent infection and infestation.

3. *Snana* (Bathing) – Help kids form the habit of taking a daily bath. Skin conditions and other infectious diseases are prevented by it. It offers chastity. It is not recommended to use hot water on the head. Depending on the season, it is best to use cold or Luke warm water.

4. *Vastradharna* (Clothing) – Put on tidy garments. School attire needs to be tidy. Don't dress in other people's or ugly clothes.

5. Wear red wool clothing during the winter. It is *Vata-kaphanasaka* and shields the child from the cold).

6. During the summer, dress in light-colored cotton clothing and *kshaya*. It is *Pittanashaka* and shields the child from the heat.

7. Wear white clothing during the rainy season as it won't be as hot or cold. Clothing ought to be cozy and spotless.

8. *Nakhadikartana* (Cutting of Nails): Children frequently bite their nails. One common site of infection is the long nail. Children's nails should be filed once a week or every 15 days. It brings purity and stops infection.

9. *Padtradharana* (wearing shoes): Worm infestation results from barefoot walking. Children's shoes shouldn't be extremely tight or have a hard sole.

DISCUSSION

By educating about health hazards of such activities, we can prevent many diseases and promote the health of child. In this article, An attempt has been made for improving the physical as well as mental health by elaborating the importance of Daily regimen (*Dincharya*), seasonal (*Ritucharya*) and *Aahara* (Dietary habits) and *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Sadvritta* (Ideal routines) and *Achara Rasayana* for preventing and promoting the health of school children. An attempt has also been made for the prevention of commonly occurring problems in the school age children like diseases related to ears, eyes, and the most common intestinal parasites.

CONCLUSION

As the school age is growing age of children. In this age, children are more vulnerable to many health problems. So for the prevention of diseases & promotion of health, *Aahara & Vihara* plays an important role. Balanced diet should be given to school age children. Children are educated to follow the daily regimen (*Dincharya*), seasonal regimen (*Ritucharya*) & *Sadvritta* (Ideal routines).

¹ Kushwaha HC, editor. Pratham Bhag. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Orientalia; 2009. Acharya Charaks' Charak Samhita.

² Kushwaha HC, editor. Pratham Bhag. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Orientalia; 2009. Acharya Charaks' Charak Samhita.

³ Ritesh D, Roushan DR. A Critical Appraisal on Digestive System (Avastha Paka) of Ayurveda in the Modern Physiological Perspective. Sch Int J Anat Physiol. 2020;3(8):72–6.

⁴ Pandey, K., Chaturvedi, G. (2015). Eds Matrashitiya adhyaya, Charak samhita. Varansi, India: Chaukambha bharati academy, 113-132.

⁵ Kohyama J. Early rising children are more active than late risers. Neuropsychiatr Dis Treat. 2007;3(6):959-963. doi:10.2147/ndt.s2087

⁶ Charak Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana, Pranakamiyam Rasayana Pada, 2/30-31. Available from: <http://niimh.nic.in/ebooks/echaraka>. [Last accessed on 2023 Oct 28].

⁷ Charak Samhita, Chikitsa Sthana, Ayurvedasamuthaniyam Rasayana Pada, 4/30-31. Available from: <http://niimh.nic.in/ebooks/echaraka>. [Last accessed on 2023 Nov 2].

⁸ Charak Samhita, Sutra Sthana, Matrasheteeya Adhyaya, 5/93-94. Available from: <http://niimh.nic.in/ebooks/echaraka>. [Last accessed on 2023 Nov 2]