

Hair Care in Ayurveda w.s.r. to *Pratimarsha Nasya*- A *Panchakarma* Procedure

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Abstract

Hair has played an important role in our society-it is associated with beauty and youthfulness in women and masculinity and virility in men;so it's no surprise that hair related problems whether hair loss,greying of hair etc can make anyone feel self-conscious.*Moordha taila, snana, dhoomapana,Kshaurkarma,ushnisha dharana* and *nasya* are some important modalities mentioned in ayurvedic texts.Above mentioned things are done by us in day to day life but *nasya* (nasal insufflations) one among the 5 *panchkarma* holds the outmost importance in respect to hair care. *Nasya* enhances mental and sensory acuity, promotes mental clarity and emotional happiness, clears the nose and sinuses of obstruction, promotes cleansing and flow of lymphatic fluid, bestows a clear voice, promotes lightness of the body, soothes dryness in the nose, and eliminates the symptoms of disease. *Pratimarsha nasya*(daily nasal insufflations);a type of *nasya*,prevents from hairfall and greying of hairs.This article deals with the various procedures and medicines mentioned in ayurvedic texts for hair care especially *pratimarsha nasya*.

Keywords

Hair, Haircare, *Nasya*, *Pratimarsha nasya*, *Ayurvedic principles*



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INTRODUCTION

Hair is a protein filament that grows from follicles found in the dermis, or skin¹. The living parts of hair-hair follicle, hair root, root sheath and sebaceous gland; are beneath the skin, while the actual hair shaft which emerges i.e. the cuticle (which covers the cortex and medulla) has no living processes. No biological process can repair damages or changes made to the visible hair shaft, though much can be done to maintain hair and ensure that the cuticle remains intact. Care of the hair and care of the scalp skin may appear separate but are actually related as hair grows from beneath the skin. Genetics and health are factors in healthy hair. The speed of hair growth varies upon genetics, gender, age, hormones and may be reduced by nutrient deficiency (i.e. anorexia, anaemia, zinc deficiency) and hormonal fluctuations (i.e. menopause, polycystic ovaries, thyroid disease)².

Hair disorders can be mainly divided into- Loss of hair (alopecia) or excess hair (hirsutism or Hypertrichosis)³. Other disorders include- split ends (trichoptilosis) where the protective cuticle has been stripped away from the ends of hair fibers and Grey hair (achromotrichia) which can be caused by chronic stress or thyroid

deficiencies, Waardenburg syndrome or vitamin B12 deficiency⁴.

Nasya is especially described for the treatment of diseases of the parts above the shoulder⁵. *Nasya* in proper time with proper method keeps eyes, ears and nose of the person healthy. The hair of that person does not turn gray (*khalitya*) and he does not suffer from hair falling (*palitya*). His hair growth is also accelerated⁶. Here an effort has been made to compile and represent for a better and easy understanding of hair care according to Ayurveda.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim: To study the concept of haircare mentioned in Ayurvedic texts.

Objectives: 1. To study the concept of *Nasya* especially *pratimarsha nasya* in respect to haircare.

2. To study various other methods for hair care mentioned in Ayurvedic science.

METHODOLOGY

Compilation and tabulation of information in various Ayurvedic literature (Ayurvedic classical texts) related with eating disorders are included and even the information from different sources like journals, articles, internet and other books are

also included. The data so collected is then analysed.

HAIR CARE IN AYURVEDA

In ayurvedic classics, hair care is discussed. Ayurvedic texts suggest some procedures which keep hair healthy and attractive :

1. *Moordha Taila* (Application of oil regularly on head-scalp): Adoption of this procedure in routine makes the scalp revitalized, keeps hair healthy, black and firm rooted, induces sleep and keeps away *khalitya* (grey hair) and *palitya* (hairfall)⁷.

2. *Snana* (Bath) : Bathing should be done according to season and geographical distribution, but the overhead bath with hot water should be avoided always⁸. Pouring warm water over the body bestows strength but the same over the head, makes for loss of strength of the hair and eyes⁹.

3. *Dhoomapana* (Medicated smoking) : Inhalation of medicinal smoke daily cures *khalitya* and *palitya*, further it also improves the strength of the hair¹⁰. It improves the firmness of hair on the head, beard and teeth¹¹.

4. *Kshaurkarma* (Hair dressing) : *Kalpana* (trimming) and *Samprasadhana* (proper tying) of hair of scalp and beard should be

done regularly¹². *Kesha Prasadhana* (combing the hair) should be done with *Keshaprasadhani* (combs and brushes), daily is good for the hair, it removes dust, lice and wastes¹³.

5. *Ushnisha Dharana* (Wearing turban) : It protects the hair from wind, heat, dust etc. and is said to be beneficial for hair¹⁴. *Acharya Sushruta* says that the hair should not be stretched with finger, nails nor should be rubbed with force or shaken wildly in wind¹⁵.

6. Medicine:

- For Alopecia Areata- 1) *Aragvadhariishtam/Khadirariishtam/Nimbamritasavam*-25 ml+25 ml water morning and night after food 2) External-*Malatyadi keram, Japakusumadi keram, Nilibhringadi Tailam*¹⁶.

- For Hair loss and Premature Grey hairs- a) *Mahatiktam ghritam*-20 gm at bed time with warm water/milk.

- b) *Yashtimadhu Churna*-3gm with warm water morning and night after food.

- c) *Kalyanaka guda* -25 gm with hot water at night once in 15 days.

- d) *Saptamrita loha*-1 gm Morning and night.

e) Externally-*Malatyadi*

*keram, Japakusumadi keram, Nilibhringadi Tailam*¹⁷

- *Lepa-Loha maladi lepa, Dhatri phaladi Lepa*¹⁸.

- *Keshya* drugs-*Narikel* (Cocos Nucifera Linn.), *Tila* (Sesamum indicum Linn.), *Bhringaraj* (Eclipta alba Hassk.), *Nilini* (Indigofera tinctoria Linn.)¹⁹

Pathya (do's in haircare)-

a) Use clean comb and change pillow cover frequently²⁰.

b) Take green leafy vegetables, dried grapes, dates, milk etc

c) *Fenugreek, amlaki* (Emblica officinalis), diluted vinegar, egg white, lemon extract, mehendi, coffee and tea decoction acts as conditioner to hair.

d) Maintain scalp hygiene; rinse and dry hair thoroughly.

e) If needed can take iron supplements²¹.

f) A full diet that contains protein, fruits, vegetables, fat and carbohydrates. B group of vitamins are the most important for healthy hair, especially biotin²².

Apathya (don't's in haircare)-

a) Do not use shampoos frequently.

b) Avoid stress and food like junk foods, fried foods²³, guda (molasses)²⁴ etc.

Nasya-

Nasya is one of the 5 panchakarma (ayurvedic detoxification therapies). Administration of medicines (herbal substances) through nostrils is called as *Nasya*²⁵. *Nasya* is also known as *nastahkarma* and *navana*. Nose is the gateway for the head, spreading through this, the nasal medicines reaches all the parts of the head and neck and cures the diseases²⁶. *Marsha* and *Pratimarsha* are the two subdivisions of *Sneha Nasya* (Nasal medication with fat material) based on the quantity of fat used²⁷.

- **Pratimarsha Nasya-** In Ayurveda *nasya* is indicated as a daily regimen (*dincharya*). It can be administered to the wounded, emaciated, children (more than 7 years old), the aged (not more than 80 years old), and those who lead a happy life. It can be given even during unsuitable time and rainy season. It is not suitable in rhinitis, to those who have drunk wine, whose hearing is weak, suffering from worms (*krumi*), in whom *doshas* (*vata, pitta and kapha*) are in abundant²⁸.

- Medicines commonly used: *Anu taila, Ksheera bala taila, Shad bindu taila*²⁹.

- Dose of *pratimarsha nasya*: 2 drops
- Time of *Pratimarsha nasya* administration:

1. In the night 2. In the day 3. After food 4. After *Vamana* (emesis) 5. After day sleep 6. After traveling 7. After Exhaustion 8. After sexual intercourse 9. After head massage 10. After gargles 11. After urination 12. After *anjana* (colyrium) 13. After defecation 14. After teeth cleaning 15. After laughing³⁰.

- *Nasya* Procedure-

1. The person (subject) should sit or lie down in a comfortable posture.
2. He has to undergo gentle massage over the head, forehead and face followed by mild *swedana* (sudation). Slightly warm oil should be instilled in the prescribed dose in each nostril.
3. Gentle massage is to be performed to shoulder and back.
4. The subject is allowed to spit if he/she feels discomfort due to oil in the throat.
5. After this, oil is to be wiped off and complete rest is advised.
6. Lastly Gargling with warm water followed by *dhooman* through mouth may be given³¹.

***Nasya* Therapy benefits-**

By nasal medication, diseases of organs above the shoulders of human beings get relieved, sense organs become clean, mouth emits good smell, bestows strength to the lower jaw, teeth, head, neck, upper back, arms and chest and non-appearance of wrinkles of the skin, grey hairs and baldness³². It cleanses, clears the channels, relieves fatigue, improves eyesight, bestows sturdiness to the teeth and mitigates *vata*³³. The sense organs become strong and disappearance of grey hairs will be obtained by person who become habituated to *nasya*³⁴.

DISCUSSION

Nasya eliminates excess *doshas* (metabolic waste products) from the head region and when done with oil or ghee it nourishes as well. Oil is deeply nurturing, it gently clears and softens as it passes through the tissue. This process allows for a smooth flow of oxygen and *prana vayu*, eliminating any stagnation or blockages causing symptoms or discomfort.

Moreover a balanced diet is required for healthy hair.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER STUDY

A detailed analysis of the various formulations i.e external or internal, should be done on a molecular level with regards to its absorption, assimilation duration and its bioavailability. The pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics of the formulations needs to be understood and judged.

RESULTS

With continuous usage of *nasya* it improves skin texture and complexion, stops or delays graying hair and alopecia, increases the flow of *prana* through *Ida* and *Pingala nadis*, and strengthens the neck, shoulders and arms. Early aging process is effectively prevented by it.

CONCLUSION

Pratimarsha nasya is one among the simplest procedure in *ayurveda* and a boon to the mankind. Its benefits are endless. In this way there is a proper guideline in *ayurvedic* texts to keep the hair in healthy status. All these small advises have long lasting effects on hair and if we don't pay attention to them we are bound to pay the penalty.

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