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Oral Health through Ayurveda

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ABSTRACT

Ayurvedic medicine is a medical specialty that focuses primarily on preventive and curative medicine. It is a system of healing that is based on being in accordance with the laws of nature and has its origins in India around 5000 years earlier. *Ayurveda* offers guidelines to be followed daily right from the time of waking up in the morning till going to bed at night in terms of brushing, bathing, sleeping habits, exercise, massage and so on. Though we are following a routine daily regimen and seasonal regimen, we unknowingly do some mistakes. And this is where Ayurveda helps us and brings us back to track. As there is increase of oral disease even at an early age and becoming a greater concern, here in this article the maintenance of oral health is dealt with. Simple modifications in our habits can help us enjoy our lives much better.

KEYWORDS

Danta Dhavana, Gandusha, Jihvanirlekhana, Dinacarya



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INTRODUCTION

For a more balanced, harmonious, healthy and satisfying living the *Ayurvedic* regimen is a great solution. Following *Ayurvedic* principles is neither difficult nor time taking. More and more individuals are moving towards nature, for a better and healthier life. When it comes to health, there should be no wait and watch period. *Acharyas* have mentioned in detail regarding *Dantadhavana* (cleaning of teeth), Tongue scraping, Chewing and Gargles. It has been mentioned specifically by them on material with which we should brush our teeth, paste to be applied on teeth and oral cavity, material with which tongue should be cleaned and materials to be used for gargling. Since, the daily regimens are not taken seriously there is occurrence of many diseases. In this fast food culture it is our oral health which is being spoilt and thus this article emphasizes more on maintenance of oral health and curative aspect of certain small diseases.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. A Literary study was done with the *Ayurvedic* texts as the base.
2. Review of literature from authentic research journals, websites, and digital publications etc.

3. The subject and data, which were obtained by the literary study were logically analysed.

DANTA DHAVANA (TEETH BRUSHING)

Acharyas have mentioned the twigs of *Vata* (Banyan tree- *Ficus bengalensis*), *Khadira* (*Acacia catechu*), *Sarja* (*Vateria indica*), *Apamarga* (*Achyranthes aspera*), *Karanja* (*Pongamia pinnata*), *Karavira* (*Nerium indicum*), *Arka* (*Calotropis gigantea*), *Malati* (*Aganosma dichotoma*), *Arjuna* (*Terminalia arjuna*), *Asan* (*Terminalia tomentosa*) which have to be used as Tooth brush by chewing one end of it. Generally the twigs mentioned are of plants having astringent, bitter or pungent taste. It removes, foul smell and tastelessness, removes the dirt of the tongue, teeth and mouth thereby increases the taste for food¹.

Out of the drugs mentioned for *Danta dhavana* the best in bitter taste is *Nimba* (neem), astringent taste is *Khadira* (*Acacia catechu*) and pungent taste is *Karanja* (*Pongamia pinnata*)²

Lower row of teeth should be brushed first. After cleaning the teeth with brush, the gums are to be cleaned without hurting them, by rubbing with powder of *Trikatu*, *Triphala*, and *Trijataka* mixed with honey³.



JIHVA NIRLEKHANA (TONGUE SCRAPING):

As the dirt deposited at the root of the tongue obstructs expiration and gives foul smell the tongue should be scraped regularly with tongue scrapper made of metal like gold, silver, copper, tin and brass⁴. The centre vein in a coconut leaflet³ or a part of the twig used for brushing can also be used for scrapping the tongue. A cross over study to evaluate the effect of tongue scrapping in combating bad breath revealed that tongue scrapping appears to be the most important hygienic procedure to reduce morning bad breath in periodontally healthy subjects⁵

TAMBULA SEVAN (PAAN CHEWING):

Chewing of *Kapoor* (Edible Camphor), *Jatiphala* (Myristi capragans), *Kankola* (Shital cini Piper cubitum), *Lavanga* (Caryophyllus aromaticus), Lime, *Katuka* (Musk mallow, *Latakasturi phal*, (Hibiscus ahelmoschus), *Supari* (Arecha catechu), *Tambula patra* (Beetle leaf, Piper beetle) cleanses the mouth, produces good aroma, luster of the face, removes dirt from jaw, teeth, tongue and stops excess secretion of saliva, increases taste sensation, prevents and cures diseases of mouth and throat, helps proper functioning of sense organs³.

It is recommended to be done after sleep, food, bathing and vomiting therapy². 2

Beetle leaves, 1 areca nut, little lime and *katuka* are advised to be chewed together and called as *tamboola*. During morning areca nut, in the noon *Katuka* and at night lime should be a little excess³. The first and second juice / extract formed after chewing the *Tambula* should not be swallowed. The next extracts can be swallowed. But the last remaining portion or the waste should not be swallowed⁶.

GARGLING PROCEDURE AND BENEFIT:

The person should be made to sit in a place without excess flow of air and properly ventilated; the face should be slightly lifted up and should be made to hold the liquid in the mouth till mouth gets filled with *kapha* or till secretion appears from nose and eyes. Gargling with Sesame oil (*Til Taila*), is indicated for daily purpose. It produces strength of the jaws, depth of the voice, excellent gustatory sensation and good taste for food. Person who practices it regularly never gets dryness of throat, never gets crack in the lips, will never get teeth caries, and teeth will be deep rooted, will have no teeth pain nor will have tingling sensation on eating sour taste. The person can chew even the hardest eatables⁴.

On reviewing the article on buccal mucosa as route for systemic drug delivery it is clear



that the oral mucous membrane has the capacity to absorb lipid soluble drugs, especially the buccal mucosal cell membrane which is lipophilic in nature permitting considerable absorption of lipid substances across the mucosa⁷. Hence the Til Tail indicated by *acharyas* for health serves the purpose.

DISCUSSION ON THE DRUGS USED FOR ORAL HEALTH

TOOTH BRUSH:

Under the twigs mentioned for brushing the teeth, Neem is easily available and can be used without any difficulty. Use of *Neem* twigs as tooth brush has been endorsed by the dentists to prevent caries⁸. Anyway, if not comfortable of brushing with twig the powder which is told to be massaged on the gums after brushing can be used as tooth paste itself mixed with honey. The powder consists of *Triphala*, *Trikatu* and *Trijataka*. In some conditions they have contraindicated the use of brush. It means that the teeth and gums can be cleaned with the soft powder and only brushing with twig is contraindicated.

Triphala:Haritaki(*Terminalia chebula*, *Terminalia reticulata*) popularly known as: Black myrobalan, Chebulic myrobalan

- *Vibhitaki* (*Terminalia bellirica*) popularly known as Beleric myrobalan, *Bibhitaki*, *Bahera*
- *Amalaki* (*Embllica Officinalis*) popularly known as *Phyllanthus emblica*, *Embllica*, *Amla*

The fruit of the above three drugs in a paste form is very useful in reducing swelling, fastens the healing process of wounds and ulcers, gingivitis, stomatitis and sour throat. It serves as a good astringent for loose gums, bleeding and ulceration in gums. It is anti-inflammatory. *Amalaki* fruits powder is used to dress wounds to arrest the bleeding. Indian gooseberry is one of the richest known sources of vitamin 'C'. As such, it proves to be an effective medicine against scurvy¹¹.

Terminalia chebula is a proven best anti caries agent by using salivary parameters⁹. A clinical study on evaluation of *Triphaladi gandusha* in high risk dental caries patients concluded that *gandusha* has got better benefits in subjective symptoms compared to mouth wash¹⁰.

Trikatu :

- Shunti (*Zingiber officinale*) popularly known as *sunth* (Dried rhizomes)



- *Marica* (Piper nigrum) or Black pepper seeds
- *Pippalli* (Piper longum) popularly known as Indian long pepper, *Tippli* (Inflorescence)

They serve as a stimulant and carminative and are used in dyspepsia and colic. It is a remedy for nausea caused due to seasickness, morning sickness and chemotherapy. They are Anti inflammatory, Anti oxidant, Anti microbial, Antispasmodic, Analgesic, Antipyretic and Improves salivation. Long pepper helps in suppressing pain and reducing inflammation. It benefits in anorexia, indigestion, flatulence, abdominal pain, hyperacidity, paralysis of the tongue, diarrhea. The herb is mixed with honey to control hiccups¹¹.

Trijataka:

- *Ela* (Elettaria cardamomum) popularly known as Cardamom, Malabar cardamom, *Elachi* (seeds)
- *Lavanga* (Syzygium aromaticum) known as cloves
- *Tvak* (Cinnamomum verum) known as *Tvak*, *Dalchini* (bark)

Ela when taken orally cures indigestion (*Ajirna*), nausea (*Hrillas*), vomiting (*chardi*) and lung diseases with productive cough. Seeds of Cardamom when chewed removes

foul smell from mouth and also detoxifies caffeine, in persons who takes more coffee. Clove is a carminative, and increase digestive secretions of stomach and hence enhances intestinal peristalsis. Cloves are also said to be a natural anthelmintic, cures cavity in a decayed tooth, it also relieves toothache. It is a local anesthetic used in oral ulceration and inflammation. Chewing and swallowing a small pinch of powdered cinnamon is helpful in treating cough accompanied by spitting of whitish phlegm. Cinnamon helps in relieving vomiting, due to its mild astringency. Smell of cinnamon boosts cognitive function and memory¹¹

GARGLES:

Til taila and its benefits as a mouth gargle have already been mentioned for maintenance of health but in certain diseased condition ghee, milk, honey water, fermented gruel, wine, juice of eat, urine of animals, wash of grains fermented by keeping overnight, mixed with some paste of drugs and comfortable to be held in mouth are also mentioned¹

Table 1 Materials used for *Gandusha* and their indication

SR.NO.	Liquids Used	Indications
1	Paste of <i>tila</i> (sesame) mixed with water (lukewarm/cold)	Tingling teeth, shaky teeth
2	<i>Ghee</i> /Milk	Local/general burning sensation, ulceration,



		wounds caused by foreign body, burns by alkali and fire
3	Honey	Removes sliminess in mouth, heals ulcers quickly, relieves burning sensation and thirst
4	<i>Dhanyamla</i> (fermented grain wash) with salt	Removes distaste, dirt and bad smell
5	<i>Dhanyamla</i> (fermented grain wash) without salt and cold	Removes dryness of mouth
6	<i>Ksarambu</i> (water with alkali)	Reduces kapha accumulation in the mouth
7	Warm water	Lightness of mouth (cleansing)

CONCLUSION

Though we regularly do our daily regimens, missing small details and methods makes a big difference. *Danta Dhavana, Jihva Nirlekhana*, followed by *Gandusha* (famously known as oil pulling nowadays) and *tambula sevan*, if done as guided by *acharyas* proves to maintain the health and prevent most of the oral disease. This study is based on the preventive aspect of the *dinacharya* mentioned by *acharyas*, which can be curative also to some extent.



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