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Enlighten the Role of Diet and Lifestyle in Prevention of *Amlapitta*

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ABSTRACT

Amlapitta is the burning issue in present era, commonly occurs due to change in dietary habits, intake of spicy and oily foods, alcohol consumption, irregular sleeping habits, and persistent mental stress and strain. Hurry, Worry and Curry are the three major reasons for this disease. It can be cured with simple medications but the condition may relapse by observing faulty lifestyle. For prevention and control of *Amlapitta* not only the physiological functions of the body should be in balanced state but the mental function should also be well functioning. Hence the holistic approach must be applied to grab this problem, by the intake of wholesome diet, healthy daily routine, practice of Yoga like *kunjla kriya*, *asana* and *pranayama*, and avoidance of unwholesome diet, tobacco chewing, and alcohol consumption etc. Hence as the saying goes "Prevention is better than cure", *Amlapitta* could be prevented by the avoidance of causative factors along with observance of wholesome diet and lifestyle.

KEYWORDS

Amlapitta, *Hyperacidity*, *Yogic Practices*, *Kunjla kriya*



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INTRODUCTION

Amlapitta is a common disease, occurs due to faulty dietary habits and lifestyle, mental stress and strain. In Ayurveda *Amlapitta* is defined as the condition in which *pitta* becomes *vidagdha* and causes *amlata*. Normally *pitta* has *katu rasa* but when converted to *amla rasa* causes *Amlapitta*. *Acharya Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata* do not describe *Amlapitta* (Hyperacidity) though *Amlapitta* has been referred at certain places such as in *Charaka Samhita* milk is said to be beneficial in *Amlapitta*¹, *Kulattha* is mentioned as best amongst *Amlapitta janya dravya*², *Amlapitta* is considered as a symptom of *ajirna* (indigestion)³. In *Madhava Nidana* it has been described in a separate chapter⁴. In *Kashyapa Samhita* it has been described as *shuktaka*⁵.

ETYMOLOGY

“*Amlapitta*” is the combination of two words i.e. *Amla* and *Pitta*. *Amla* means sour in taste and *Pitta* is the chemical constituent of body, responsible for digestion and metabolism. *Maharishi Sushruta* described that *Pitta* has two *rasa* one is *katu* and another is *amla*⁶. When *Pitta* becomes *vidagdha* its *katu rasa* change to *amla rasa* and causes *Amlapitta*.

ETIOPATHOGENESIS OF AMLAPITTA⁷

Due to consumption of incompatible, contaminated, too sour, burning-sensation producing food items or *pitta* aggravating food or drinks by the person in whom *pitta* has already aggravated by its own factors, the *pitta* gets improperly burnt, this condition is called *Amlapitta*.

Nidan Sevan

(*Pitta* vitiating *Ahara* and *Vihara*,
Rainy season, *Anupa Desha* etc.)



Vitiated *Pitta dosha* becomes *vidgdha*



Vidgdha pitta converts into *Amla*
form



Sour eructation



Amlapitta

SAMPRAPTI GHATAKA OF AMLAPITTA⁸

<i>Dosha</i>	<i>Pitta Pradhanatridoshaja</i>
<i>Dushya</i>	<i>Rasa, Rakta</i>
<i>Agni</i>	<i>Mandagni</i>
<i>Srotas</i>	<i>Rasavaha, Annavahasrotas</i>
<i>Srotasdusti</i>	<i>Vimargagamana</i>
<i>Adhithana</i>	<i>Amashaya</i>
<i>Udhhavasthana</i>	<i>Amashayottha</i>
<i>Vyaktasthana</i>	<i>Amashaya, Kantha, Hridaya</i>
<i>Svabhava</i>	<i>Chirkari, Ashukari</i>
<i>Sadhyata-Asadhyata</i>	<i>Sadhya</i>

CLINICAL FEATURES OF AMLAPITTA⁹

The main clinical features of *Amlapitta* are
- *Avipaka* (Indigestion), *Klama*



(Tiredness), *Utklesha* (Nausea), *Amlodgara* (Sour eructation), *Gaurava* (Heaviness of the body), *Hrit-Kantha daha* (burning sensation in the chest region and throat) and *Aruchi* (Anorexia).

CLASSIFICATION OF AMLAPITTA

According to *Madhava*- On the basis of *Gati Bheda* it is of two types¹⁰:

- 1) *Urdhvaga Amlapitta*
- 2) *Adhoga Amlapitta*

On the basis of **Dosha - Samasarga Avastha**, *Madhava* has further described its 4 types¹¹:

- 1) *Vatapradhana Amlapitta*
- 2) *Kaphapradhana Amlapitta*
- 3) *Vata-Kaphapradhana Amlapitta*
- 4) *Kapha-Pittapradhana Amlapitta*

According to *Kashyapa*- On the basis of *Dosha pradhanta* it is of three types¹²:

- 1) *Vatika Amlapitta*
- 2) *Paittika Amlapitta*
- 3) *Kaphaja Amlapitta*

PROGNOSIS OF AMLAPITTA¹³

The acute or *navin amlapitta* is *sadhya*, whereas the chronic or *chirakari Amlapitta* is *yapya*. However if the person follows proper *Ahara-vihara* the *Kashtasadhya Amlapitta* may also become *sadhya*.

UPASHAYA AND ANUPASHAYA¹⁴

Upashaya and *Anupashaya* have been described only by *Acharya Kashyapa* while describing the types of *Amlapitta*:

1. In *Vatika Amlapitta* - *Snigdha Upashaya*
2. In *Pittika Amlapitta* - *Swadu* and *Shita Upashaya*
3. In *Kaphaja Amlapitta* - *Ruksha* and *Ushna Upashaya*

COMPLICATIONS OF AMLAPITTA¹⁵

Acharya Kashyapa described eight complications of *Amlapitta*: *Jvara* (Fever), *Atisara* (Diarrhoea), *Panduta* (Anemic look), *Shula* (Pain), *Shotha* (edema), *Aruchi* (Anorexia), *Bhrama* (Giddiness) and depletion of *Dhatu*.

MODERN PERSPECTIVE OF AMLAPITTA (HYPERACIDITY)

In modern perspective *Amalpitta* can be correlated with Hyperacidity. The term hyperacidity simply means an increased level of acid in the stomach. The stomach secretes hydrochloric acid, a digestive juice that breaks down the food particles into their smallest form to aid digestion. Where there is an excessive amount of hydrochloric acid in the stomach, the condition is known as hyperacidity. Hyperacidity known by several names: Heartburn, GORD, and Acid Reflux disease. These are all essentially the same but reflect the difference between occasional hyperacidity or a chronic and long term problem. Gastro-oesophageal reflux resulting in heartburn affects about 30% of the general population. Gastro-



oesophageal reflux disease (GORD) develops when the oesophageal mucosa is exposed to gastric contents for prolonged period, resulting in symptoms and in a proportion of cases oesophagitis. Reflux may occur if there is reduced oesophageal sphincter tone or frequent inappropriate sphincter relaxation. Gastric acid is the most important oesophageal irritant and there is a close relationship between acid exposure time and symptoms. Gastric emptying is delayed in patients with GORD¹⁶. Increased intra-abdominal pressure due to pregnancy and obesity may provoke the symptoms of Hyperacidity. Use of dietary fats, chocolate, alcohol and coffee relax the lower oesophageal sphincter and may also aggravate symptoms.

Clinical Features

The major symptoms are heartburn and regurgitation, often provoked by bending, straining or lying down. ‘Waterbrash’ is often present, which is salivation due to reflux salivary gland stimulation as acid enters the gullet. Recent weight gain is common. Some patients are woken at night by choking due to irritation of larynx by refluxed fluid. Others may develop

odynophagia, dysphagia, chronic cough or atypical chest pain that mimic angina which is probably due to reflux-induced oesophageal spasm¹⁷.

Correlation between Hyperacidity and Amlapitta¹⁸

S. No.	Hyperacidity	Amlapitta
1	Heart burn	Hritdaha
2	Chest pain	Hritshoola
3	Abdominal distension	Udaradhmana
4	Sour belching	Amlodgara
5	Acid refluxes of the food taken	Amlotklesha
6	Loss of appetite	Aruchi

PRINCIPLES FOR PREVENTION OF AMLAPITTA

The major principles are:

- *Nidana parivarjana*
- *Pathya Ahara-Vihara*
- Yogic Practices

Nidana parivarjana is the foremost principles for treatment of any disease. Ayurveda emphasizes more on the importance of Diet and Lifestyle in the maintenance of health and prevention of lifestyle diseases. The main Do’s and Don’ts are as follows:

Dietary Regimen (Ahara)¹⁹

S.No.	Classes of Ahara	Pathya (Do’s)	Apathya (Don’ts)
1	Cereals	Rice of Old <i>Shali</i> variety, Barley (<i>Yava</i>), Wheat (<i>Godhuma</i>)	<i>Naveen Anna</i> , Fried food
2	Pulses	<i>Mudga</i> (Green gram), Lentil	<i>Kulatha</i> (horse gram), <i>Urad</i> (black gram)
3	Vegetables	Parval, Bathua, Mint, Spinach, Bitter gourd, Cabbage, Pumpkin	Mustard leaves, Fenugreek, Brinjal, Jackfruit, Lemon,



4	Fruits	Pomegranate, Wood apple, Indian gooseberry, Coconut, Banana, Apple, Sweet Orange, Mango, Dates	Watermelon, Pineapple, Plum
5	Milk and milk products	<i>Goghrita</i> , <i>Godugdha</i> , Butter milk	Curd, Paneer, Sour Butter milk
6	Drinks	Water	Liquor, <i>Kanji</i>
7	Adjuvants of food	All products of <i>Madhura</i> and <i>Tikta rasa</i> , <i>gulkanda</i> and sweets	Excessive Salt, <i>Amla</i> and <i>Katu dravya</i> , Pickles, <i>Chatani</i>
8	Spices	Garlic, Dry Ginger, Clove, Turmeric, Saffron, Cumin	Asafoetida, Chilli, Cinnamon, Mustard Seeds, Pepper, Tamarind
9	Roots and Tubers	Beet root, Sweet Potato, Carrot	Potato
10	Nuts	<i>Kishmish</i> (raisin), <i>Munakka</i> (currant)	Peanut, Groundnut, Cashew
11	Oils	Sunflower oil, Coconut oil	Mustard oil

Physical Regimen (Vihara)²⁰

Pathya– *Brahamuhurta Jagarana, Ushapaan, Nitya Bhramana, Sheetupchara,*

Apathya-*Adharniya Vegadharana, Atapa Sevan, Divaswapna, Anupa Desha*

Mental Regimen²⁰

Pathya–*Mana and indriya prsannata*

Apathya– *Chinta, Shoka, Krodha*

Yogic Practices beneficial in Amlapitta

Shatkarma

• ***Kunjla Kriya (Vaman Dhauti)***²¹ - It is the cleansing process of stomach with water. This technique tones and stimulates all the abdominal organs by inducing strong muscular contractions in the stomach walls. Hence it removes indigestion, hyperacidity, and excessive gas formation. *Kunjla kriya* should not be performed by the people suffering from hernia, high blood pressure, heart diseases, acute peptic ulcer and pregnant women.

Asana

• **Joint Movements** – Flexion, Extension and rotation of body joints.

• ***Vajrasana***- It improves digestive power, increases the efficiency of the entire digestive system and relieves stomach complaints such as hyperacidity and peptic ulcer.

• ***Pawanmuktasana***-This posture reduces excessive flatus accumulation in the abdomen. It strengthens the digestive system and removes flatus, belching and reduces abdominal fat.

• ***Shavasana***²²- This asana relaxes the whole psycho-physiological system. It should ideally be practiced before sleep; before and after asana practices; and when the practitioner feels physically and mentally tired. By practicing this asana whole body and mind relax to remove hyperacidity.

Pranayama

• ***Anuloma-Viloma***- It clears the body channels to improve digestion and metabolism

• ***Bhramari Pranayama***²³- In *Bhramari* the vibration of humming sound relieves stress and cerebral tension, so helps in alleviating anger, anxiety and



insomnia to increase the healing capacity of the body.

- **Sheetali Pranayama**²⁴-This practice cools the body and affects important brain centers associated with biological drives and temperature regulation. By regular practice of this *Pranayama* diseases like *Gulma*, *Pliharoga*, *Pitta-janya rogas*, *Trishna roga* and *Visha-janya* diseases are completely destroyed.

- **Seetkari Pranayama**²⁵-It also cools the body, affects brain centers, regulate the body temperature and reduce the mental and emotional excitation.

Dhayan (Meditation)

Regular practice of meditation leads to reduction in multiple negative thoughts and emotions, reduces stress and maintain peristaltic movements to remove hyperacidity.

CONCLUSION

Amlapitta is the most common disease now a day. It is seen in the all ages, classes and all community where lifestyle is disturbed. One has to follow proper Diet and Yogic practices for better health. In the patients of *Amlapitta* various do's and don'ts and Yogic practices help to produce soothing effect on inner layer of stomach, thereby reverse the inflammatory changes and control the excessive digestive

secretions. One should take food according to one's capacity of digestion and his own constitution. Appropriate quantity and quality of food should be consumed to prevent and control *Amlapitta*.



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