



ROLE OF AYURVEDA IN PEDIATRICS CARE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO “NUTRITION”

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ABSTRACT

Kaumar bhritya has special importance in *Ashtanga Ayurveda*. *Kaumar Bhritya* deals with the proper growth and development of a healthy child and knowledge of pediatric diet, nutrition, malnutrition and its causes, diseases of child and their treatment.

In ayurveda, different acharya explained *balak ahar* at different stages of *Balyavastha*. Nutrition plays a central role in the growth and development of the child. Initial 6 months the baby is nourished with exclusive breast feed-

ing, later periods only breast milk is not sufficient to provide the nutritional needs of the growing baby. After 6 months, food supplements are necessary along with breastfeeding to avoid malnutrition in children. Introduce fruits and vegetables, which are a rich source of macro and micronutrients. After two years start a normal diet. So, Ayurveda gives importance to good nutrition at every stage of life, in order to maintain health.

Keywords: *Kaumarbhritya, Balyavastha, Nutrition.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science of life, which aims to promote and preserve the health of individuals¹. In *Asthang Ayurveda*, *Kaumar bhritya* has been considered a special branch. Three basic prerequisites to sustain life are *Vayu, Jala* and *Ahara* first two are available in pure form. *Ahara* is in basic need of a healthy life, hence our *Acharyas* described in *Trayopastambha*. *Acharya Kashyap* said that there is no medicine like *Ahara* and *ahara* alone can make people

healthy called *Mahabhaishajya*². These all show the Importance of *Ahara* in our Life. A healthy and brilliant child is national wealth. Child nutrition begins before birth only Poor nutrition during pregnancy may stunt fetal growth and leads to poor brain development. In the prenatal period and after birth, child nutrition depends on the mother's diet and later on its own diet.

In *Ayurveda* age classification in children is mainly done on the basis of *ahara*³.

Table No 1

SR. NO.	BALYAVASTHA	AGE OF CHILD	AHAR Of child
1.	<i>Ksheerapa vastha</i>	Birth- upto 6 months	Breast milk only
2.	<i>Ksheerannada avastha</i>	Upto 2 years of life	Milk with solid foods
3.	<i>Annada vastha</i>	After 2 years	Solid <i>Ahar</i>

AIM: To enhance the role of ayurveda in pediatric nutrition.

OBJECTIVE:-

1. To study the importance of nutrition in pediatrics.
2. To prevent malnutritional disorders in children.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:-

Kashyap Samhita, Harit samhita, Charak samhita, Sushrut Samhita, Ashtang Hriday/Sangraha read thoroughly, and various research articles related to *Balaroga* or *Kaumarbhritya* studied to understand the role of ayurveda in Pediatric care.

Ahara in *Ksheerapa Avastha*:-

Stanya is *upadhatu* of *Rasadhatu*. When *rasadhatu* is subjected to transformation in *prasootavastha* in a female, its *saara* portion in the breast region is known as *stanya*⁷ *Stanya* is formed from *rasa* (*rasa-prashad bhag* or bodily fluids) as stated by *acharyas*^{8,9} Ayurvedic texts have a description about benefits of breast feeding. *Acharya Kashyapa* described that

good breast-feeding results in good growth, strength, longevity, and good health of the child as well as not causing any troubles or diseases to the child¹⁰. *Acharya Charaka* and *Vagbhata* give similar description⁸. It is widely recognized that breastfeeding is the best nutrition for human infants. Breast feeding should begin, as soon after birth as possible. Both baby and mother gain many benefits from breastfeeding. Breast milk contains all the nutrients that an infant need in the first 6 months of life for normal growth and development including carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, and water.

Acharya Vagbhata advised the arrangement of two wet nurses in conditions of the inability for feeding the baby to the mother¹¹. Examination of wet-nurses (including physical, and physical-psychological qualities) have been described in Ayurvedic literature, so that breast feeding results in proper growth and development in the child. *Acharya Charaka* says that wet-nurse should be *samman-varna* (similar in the

caste), young, modest, non-addict, similar in *desha* and *Jati* (sub-caste), affectionate to the child, free from diseases, *jivitvatsa* (having an alive child), having an adequate amount of breast milk etc⁸. If animal milk is not available and the child is not Taking any kind of milk, then there is another Concept explained which is called "*Lehya Kalpana*". There is some *Lehana* preparation had Been discussed by *Acharya Kashayapa*¹²

Ksheerannada Avastha

Phalaprashana samskara

Phalaprashana samskara is performed at 6 months¹³ and Infants are supplemented with fruits. Fruits juices are rich sources of vitamin C and vitamin D, which are supplementary to mother's milk. Fruit juices help in supplementing extra nutrition along with *Agni vridhi*, relieve constipation, and keep the child hydrated. Freshly prepared juices are always better than packaged juice. After 6 months of age, gradually introduce semisolid mashed foods. Smashed food is fed to the child 3 to 5 times in adequate quantity. This is called *Annaprashana Samskara*.

Annaprashana

Annaprashana (Complimentary food) starts from 6 months child¹⁴. after 6-month the child required concentrated energy-dense foods are essential in order to maintain an adequate velocity of growth for the infant, child's teeth begin to erupt, a biting movement begins and the tendency to push solids out of the mouth decreases and the digestive system is mature enough to digest food. Alone breast milk is no longer sufficient to meet nutrition as birth weight doubles¹⁵. When food is first time introduced, a small amount

and soft food should be given and gradually increase in amount.

- *Acharya Kashyap* mentioned food preparation below¹⁶ :
 - *Vidang sidha jala* are given is also used as deworming for the child.
 - Prepare a *Payasa* with old, husk-free, and well-washed rice mixed with *ghee* and *wheat*. barley also should be given according to congeniality. The one knowing *Desh*, *Agni*, and *Bala*, observes the child as hungry and should be given food according to congeniality with a gap of one or two periods¹⁷.
 - Rice is considered to be a very low-allergen food and Ideal for the child. Rice is rich in carbohydrates and a good source of Vit B complex, Easy to digest, and rejuvenates the body when used with milk. Wheat is a good supply of carbohydrates for energy.
- *Acharya Vagbhata* mentioned some specific types of food preparations called *Modaka*. Mentioned *Madoka* preparations are as follows¹⁸.
 - *Modaka* is prepared by using powder of *Priyal Yastimadhu*, *Madhu*, *Laja*, and *Sita*. It is a combination of protein, and carbohydrates and is mentioned in general for improving the infant's nutritional status.
 - *Modaka* prepared by *Bilva*, *Ela*, *Sita*, *Laja*. This preparation is indicated in infants with weak digestive capacity.
 - Prepared by *Dhataki*, *Pushpa*, *Sharkara*, and *Laja*. This preparation is indicated in indigestion and who repeatedly suffer from *Atisara*.

ANNADA:-

Food components taken orally can be divided into four varieties:

Table No 2

Sr. Number	Type of food	Example of food
1	<i>Ashit</i>	Soft food, ex. Rice
2	<i>Pit</i>	Fluids, ex. Milk, water
3	<i>Leedh</i>	Semi-solid, ex. <i>Khichari</i>
4	<i>Khadit</i>	Coarse food, ex. Salad, Nuts.

Children considered in *Annada Avastha* from after the age of 2 years.⁶. In *Annada Avastha* children

should be shifted on the cereals as a whole. All types of food with all forms Le. *Lehya*, *Peya*, *Bhojya*, etc can be given in this Avastha of children's life. Young children below 5 years should be given bulky foods, rich in energy and proteins such as legumes, pulses, nuts, edible oil/ghee, sugar, milk, and eggs. Vegetables including green leafy vegetables and locally

available seasonal fruits should be part of their daily menu. Older children and adolescents should consume plenty of milk to fulfil the high calcium requirement, and oil/ghee should be consumed Food should be taken in the proper place, without talking with full concentration.

***Pathya apathya* food items for dosha balance in children:**

Table No 3

Sr. No.	Dosha dominance	Pathya	Apathya
1.	For <i>Vat dosha</i> balance	Cow's milk Cereal Sugarcane Mungdal Wheat Rice Nuts Potatoes	Hard to digest food. Irregular diet Incompatible diet Dry vegetables Constant eating Yoghurt Spicy food
2.	For <i>Pitta dosha</i> Balance	Sweet fruits Beetroot Carrot Spinach Green vegetables	Sour, spicy, fatty meat Yoghurt Ice-cream Sauce Fermented foods
3.	For <i>Kapha dosha</i> Balance	Ginger Honey Cinnamon Cardamom Cereal	Sugar Fermented foods Yoghurt Cheese Ice-cream Tomatoes

GHEE

Ghrita (ghee) is the foremost substance of Indian cuisine for centuries. Any region might be spotted where Ghrita is not used as a daily routine diet article. Regardless of warnings from modern medical science, the Indian population uses Ghrita in their regular diet. Ghrita can be made from the milk of different animals. Ayurvedic classical texts described eight kinds of ghee from eight different animal milk and ghee made from cow milk is said to be superior among them¹⁹.

FRESH FRUITS

Fruit and vegetables are very important for children. They are an excellent source of vitamins, and many

contain important minerals such as potassium, calcium, and iron. They also contain fiber to keep the digestive system healthy.

VEGETABLES

Vegetables give energy to children, vitamins, antioxidants, fiber, and water. They help protect the child against chronic diseases later in life, including heart disease, stroke, and some cancers. A healthy diet means eating plenty of vegetables, plus a wide variety of foods from the other main food groups.

Nutrient Rich Food For children's:²⁰

1. **Protein:** Egg, cheese, peanut butter, fish, nuts, seeds, etc.
2. **Carbohydrates:** Cereals, milk, beans, potatoes, brown rice, fruits, etc.

3. **Vitamins:** Fish, Milk, Carrot, Tomatoes, Oranges, Whole grains, Dark green leafy vegetables, etc.
4. **Minerals:** Milk, Cheese, Egg, Small fish, Green leafy vegetables, Dried fruits, Banana, Legumes, Nuts, etc.

CONCLUSION

Holistic nutrition uses food as healing for a person's emotional, Physical, and spiritual health. Healthy childhood is the foundation for a healthy life. Good nutrition and diet promote not only better physical health but also reduce susceptibility to disease. Hence, Ayurveda gives the importance of good nutrition at every stage of life for maintaining a healthy life. Food is not only important for physical well-being and functionality but is also essential for mental well-being and functionality. Healthy eating has a positive effect on cognitive functions and memory. Provision of extra food and health care during pregnancy is necessary. Exclusive breast feeding up to 6 months and encourage breast feeding till 2 years. After 6 months feed, homemade semisolid food to avoid malnutrition, provide plenty of fruits and vegetables. After two years start a normal diet. Add fresh fruits and dry fruits, vegetables, and ghee to their routine diet for proper growth and development.

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