

**VARSHA RITUCHARYA- A GUIDE FOR GOOD HEALTH DURING MONSOONS FOR CHILDREN.**Azizahmed I Arbar¹, Puja CN Pathak², Kavita Sangle³

¹Professor and HOD, Department of Kaumarabhritya, Kaher's Shri B M Kankanwadi Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya, Shahpur, Belagavi, Karnataka-590003.

²Assistant Professor, Department of Kaumarabhritya, SRV Ayurvedic Medical College, Chinhat, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226028

³Assistant Professor, Department of Kaumarabhritya, SBG Ayurvedic Medical College, Belagavi, Karnataka-590003

Corresponding Author: dr.pujapathak19@gmail.com<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj2211112023>

(Published Online: November 2023)

Open Access

© International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, India 2023

Article Received: 09/10/2023 - Peer Reviewed: 25/10/2023 - Accepted for Publication: 10/11/2023.

**ABSTRACT**

Ritu, the season, changes with time and potentially influences the earth's biological systems and human health differently. *Ayurveda* has classified these seasons as per their effects, and to habituate to the seasonal variations, specific rules and regimens have been mentioned by the *Acharyas*. These changes in diet and practices help the body transition easily from one season to another. As the pediatric age group with comparatively less immunity is more susceptible to the changes in the season, to prevent this age group from falling prey to seasonal diseases, it is important to practice *Ritucharya*. India is a tropical country. Monsoons here are responsible for many health conditions among the pediatric age group, and various scientific studies are the basis for this. In this review article, the regimens in diet and lifestyle, as mentioned in *Varsha Ritu*, and its importance in preventing health conditions during the rainy season in the pediatric age group have been discussed.

Keywords: *Ritu*, pediatric age-group, *Varsha Ritu*, *ritucharya*, monsoon diseases

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda emphasises 'Swasthasya swasthya rakshanam', that is maintaining the health of the healthy person.¹ With the seasons, changes in environment become evident; in autumn, trees shed their leaves, whereas in spring, it starts flowering similarly, it is observed certain animals hibernate during winters whereas some birds migrate from one place to another during particular season. Human beings do get influenced by these seasonal changes and the concept of *Ritucharya* (Seasonal regimen) has thus come into existence.² The pediatric age-group with low immunity, is more vulnerable to such seasonal changes leading to one or the other disorders.³ India, a tropical country, experiences more rains and many health disorders are observed among pediatric population during this period.^{4,5} So, the proper knowledge and information about these specific adaptations is a must to be known by all. These seasonal dietary and lifestyle regimens have been formulated for the easy acclimatization of the body with respect to the change in season.

As per *Ayurveda*, *Varsha ritu* comprises of two months *Shravana* and *Bhadrapada* (Mid-July to mid-September). This season is classified under the *Visarga Kala*, wherein the sun starts traversing the southern hemisphere (*Dakshinayana*).^{6,7} Thus, it's effect on our country reduces as India lies in northern hemisphere. At this time the moon becomes more dominant and makes the environment cooler. The atmosphere, which was dry until now, starts becoming unctuous with the beginning of the rainy season. The clouds cover the sky, and it starts raining. The rivers, ponds, wells etc fill with water. *Amla* (Sour) rasa becomes dominant.⁸

The flora around is tender and less potent, the earth become moist due to rains, even the water gets collected at places. All these things collectively affect living beings and increase the moisture content in their body. As during *Adanakala* the *agni* is diminished, it is further affected in rainy season due to the vitiation of the three *doshas*.⁹ The vitiation of *Vata* is predominant however due to the clouds covering the sky, the cold breeze it is further aggravated. The *Pitta*

gets vitiated due to the vapours coming out of the earth due to rains and the *amla vipaka* and the *Kapha* vitiation is caused due to *agnimandya* and consumption of the dirty water.¹⁰ All these *doshas* together interact with each other and cause vitiation of all the three *doshas*.

As *Bala-kala* is predominantly *Kapha kala*, the *agni* (digestive power) and *bala* (strength of body) are affected more.¹¹ *Bala* is defined in *Ayurveda*, as one who is has immature body organs, secondary sexual characters are yet to develop, they are *Sukumara* (delicate), *Akleshasaha* (unable to withstand any kind of stress), *Asampoarana balam* (incomplete growth and development of body), with dominance of *shleshma dhatu* (*Kapha*).¹² Thus, the effect of rainy season which is seen in adults is seen more in children.

Therefore, it's necessary to follow the *Ritucharya* mentioned by *Acharyas*, not only to pacify the vitiated *doshas* but also to increase the power of digestion and thus the immunity of the body.

Dietary modifications during rainy season-

Indications:

During rainy season to protect the *agni* (digestive fire) from getting diminished, *Acharyas* have advised to have old cereals and grains like *yava*, *godhuma* and *Sali rice*, processed *jangala Mamsa* or *mamsa rasa* or *yusha*. *Dadhimastu*, mixed with *sourvachala lavana* and *panchkola* (*pippali*, *pippalimoola*, *Chavya*, *chitraka*, *nagara*) *churna* is good for improving digestion during rains.^{13,14,15}

For the purpose of drinking, it is advised to use *Mahendra jala* (rainwater), *Kaup jala* (well water) and *Saaras jala* (water from pond) should be consumed as *Taptasheeta jala* (boiled water). *Madhvika* or *Arishta* (alcoholic preparation along with honey and water) should be used.

Kshaudranvita (honey added to food and drinks) *ahara* is mentioned by *Acharyas*. Using old honey is good.¹⁶

During heavy rains when the days are cooler and also when the sun is completely hidden in the clouds, to pacify *Vata* disorders, *amla* (sour), *lavana*(salty) *rasa*

dominant food prepared in *ghrita* or *taila* should be taken.¹⁷

Contraindications:

Drinking river water is contraindicated. Avoid *Udamanth* (*Sattu drink*)¹⁸

Lifestyle modifications:

Indications: *Pragharshana* (massaging body with *kalka* or *churna*) Use scents and wear light and clean clothes after bath. Clothes should be fumigated (*Dhoopitambar*) regularly. Live in a place which is warm. Use vehicles to commute or travel.^{19,20.}

Contraindications: Avoid residing in damp places.

Avoid walking bare feet. One should not sleep during daytime, avoid getting exposed to sun. One should restrict sex and exercise. Avoid exposure to mist and dew.²¹

DISCUSSION

Parents usually do not know or ignore the regimens to be followed during particular season which leads to *Dosha vaishamya* (disturbance in the homeostasis) and causes various diseases in children. Since the article focuses on *Varsha Ritucharya* for children in India, it is important to know the health problems children face during *Varsha Ritu* or the rainy season. Monsoons in India start from mid-May and continue up to the month of September.²² During these months the climate variates between hot and humid to rains all the time. This season has been associated with various health problems like wasting, diarrhea, respiratory and other infectious diseases.

Wasting develops over a short period and can be reversed with short- term interventions. The prevalence of wasting typically varies from season to season — becoming higher during the monsoon (June to September) season as compared to the winter (October to January) and summer (February to May) seasons every year in a cyclical fashion.²³

The analysis was based on data on 51,555, 259,627, and 232,920 children under 5 years included in NFHS-3, NFHS-4, and NFHS-5 respectively. The peaking of waste levels during certain periods of a year is a well-documented phenomenon.²⁴⁻²⁶ In countries of the tropical and subtropical zones, seasonal

climatic changes determine the agricultural cropping patterns. Hence, the production and availability of locally produced foodstuffs affect the levels of waste.²⁴⁻²⁸ Furthermore, the incidence of certain infections, including acute diarrheal diseases, often follows a seasonal pattern. In many geographical areas, diarrhoea occurs in definite seasonal patterns. Thus, seasonal fluctuations in children's nutritional status have been reported from various countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Seasonal diarrhoea is typically more prevalent around the end of the summer and in the early rainy season.^{29,30.}

A study carried out by Jangid *et al.* on the concept of *Ritus* and their effect on *Bala* reported that the overall effect of *Hemanta ritu* on *Bala* of healthy volunteers was maximum, effect of *Vasanta ritu* was moderate and the effect of the *Varsha ritu* minimum and concluded that *Hemanta* is the *Ritu* of *Pravara Bala*, *Vasanta* is the *Ritu* of *Madhyama Bala* and *Varsha* is the *Ritu* of *Avara Bala*. Results of the study support the principles of *Ayurveda*. Children being *Sukumar* there *Bala* is affected even more.³¹

As the strength of *Agni* and *Body* both are diminished during the *Varsha ritu*. Thus, children should be given old cereals, *jangala mamsa* (meat of animals found in arid region), *mamsa rasa* and *yusha*, which are easy to digest and helps maintain the *agni* and also helps to give *Bala* to body. *Dadhimastu* with *sourvachala lavana* and *panchkola churna* after meals is helpful in boosting the *agni*. As there is rise in water-borne diseases during rainy season due to contamination, it is safe to give children boiled water. Drinks like *Udmantha* (*sattu drink*), should be avoided as its cold and can lead to *agnimandya* in children which can further lead to *Kapha* vitiation followed by nutritional disorders. Honey added in food and drinks can check on the aggravation of *kapha Dosha* in children, as children already have *Kapha* dominance and are easily prone to *Kapha* accumulation.

Certain lifestyle modifications like wearing light and clean clothes during rain can protect children from being exposed to allergies and infections. And it is easy for light clothes to get dried up in the humid rainy season, where perspiration is more common.

This can help prevent various skin diseases.^{32,33} Clothes fumigated regularly help maintain personal hygiene. *Pragharshana* and *Udwartana* with *Churnas* help balance the *Vata* and the *Kapha doshas*. Allowing children out with proper footwear protects them against various insects, worm infestations and other infections³⁴. Children should be kept busy during the afternoon, and daytime sleep should be avoided. Sleeping during the day is associated with an increase in *Kapha* and *Ama* in the body. This would further deteriorate the *Agni*, leading to improper nourishment of the child.

CONCLUSION

India, being a tropical country, we all experience rain for about two to three months. Most diseases occurring during the rainy season easily affect the kids because of their lower immunity. *Varsha Ritucharya*, followed religiously, can help prevent the various paediatric diseases prevalent during the rainy season and help keep children healthy. With global warming, the seasons exhibit changes in their pattern; even then, modifications in diet and lifestyle can always be adjusted as per the regimens mentioned in *Ayurveda*.

REFERENCES

1. Kushwaha HC, editor. Acharya Charak's Charak Samhita. Pratham Bhag, Varanasi: Chowkhamba Orientalia; 2009.
2. Tripathi B, editor. Acharya Charaka's Charak Samhita. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Surbharati Prakashan; 2007.
3. Simon AK, Hollander GA, McMichael A. Evolution of the immune system in humans from infancy to old age. Proc Biol Sci. 2015 Dec 22;82(1821):20143085. Doi: 10.1098/rspb.2014.3085. PMID:26702035; PMCID: PMC4707740.
4. Dimitrova A, Bora JK(2020) Monsoon weather and early childhood health in India. PLoS ONE 15(4): e0231479.
5. Kamath SS. Monsoon maladies. Indian Pediatr. 2015 Aug;52(8): 655-6. doi:10.1007/s13312-015-0691-1. PMID:26388619
6. Srikanthamoorthy K R. Ashtanga Sangraha of Vagbhata, Sutra Sthana. Ch. 21, Ver. 3. 9th ed. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2005. P. 386.
7. Sharma PV (editor), Charak Samhita (textbook with English translation), Vol I, reprint edition, Sutra Sthana Ch. 6, Ver.
8. Thakkar J, Chaudhari S, Sarkar PK. Ritucharya: Answer to lifestyle disorders. Ayu. 2011 Oct;32(4):466-71. doi: 10.4103/0974-8520.96117. PMID: 22661838; PMCID: PMC3361919.
9. Upadhyaya Y (editor), Gupta A (commentator); Ash-tang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sutra sthana, Ch-3, Ver-42, 3rd ed; Chaukhamba Prakashan Varanasi. P-39.
10. Upadhyaya Y(editor), Gupta A (commentator); Ash-tang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sutra sthana, Ch-3, Ver-43-44, 3rd ed; Chaukhamba Prakashan Varanasi. P-40.
11. Upadhyaya Y (editor), Gupta A (commentator); Ash-tang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sutra sthana, Ch-1, Ver-8, 3rd ed; Chaukhamba Prakashan Varanasi. P-05.
12. Shukla V, Tripathi R D (editors); Charak Samhita of Agnivesha by Charak and Drdhabala, Vol I, Vimana Sthana, Ch-8, Ver-122; Chaukhamba Sanskrit Prat-ishthan, Delhi;2017, P-654.
13. Upadhyaya Y (editor), Gupta A (commentator); Ash-tang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sutra sthana, Ch-3, Ver-45-46, 3rd ed; Chaukhamba Prakashan Varanasi. P-40.
14. Shukla V, Tripathi R D (editors); Charak Samhita of Agnivesha by Charak and Drdhabala, Vol I, Vimana Sthana, Ch-6, Ver-37,38; Chaukhamba Sanskrit Prat-ishthan, Delhi;2017, P-115.
15. Srikanthamurthy KR (editor), Sushruta Samhita; Sutra Sthana Ch-6, Ver-34-38, 1st ed, Vol-I, Chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2008.
16. Shukla V, Tripathi R D (editors); Charak Samhita of Agnivesha by Charak and Drdhabala, Vol I, Vimana Sthana, Ch-6, Ver-37,39; Chaukhamba Sanskrit Prat-ishthan, Delhi;2017, P-115.
17. Upadhyaya Y (editor), Gupta A (commentator); Ash-tang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sutra sthana, Ch-3, Ver-46,47, 3rd ed; Chaukhamba Prakashan Varanasi. P-40.
18. Upadhyaya Y (editor), Gupta A (commentator); Ash-tang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sutra sthana, Ch-3, Ver-48, 3rd ed; Chaukhamba Prakashan Varanasi. P-40.
19. Upadhyaya Y (editor), Gupta A (commentator); Ash-tang Hridayam of Vagbhata, Sutra sthana, Ch-3, Ver-45-46, 3rd ed; Chaukhamba Prakashan Varanasi. P-40.
20. Shukla V, Tripathi R D (editors); Charak Samhita of Agnivesha by Charak and Drdhabala, Vol I, Vimana Sthana, Ch-6, Ver-40; Chaukhamba Sanskrit Prat-ishthan, Delhi;2017, P-115,116.
21. Shukla V, Tripathi R D (editors); Charak Samhita of Agnivesha by Charak and Drdhabala, Vol I, Vimana Sthana, Ch-6, Ver-36,37; Chaukhamba Sanskrit Prat-ishthan, Delhi;2017, P-115

22. Thakkar J, Chaudhari S, Sarkar PK. Ritucharya: Answer to lifestyle disorders. *Ayu*. 2011 Oct;32(4):466-71. doi: 10.4103/0974-8520.96117. PMID: 22661838; PMCID: PMC3361919.
23. Dimitrova A, Bora JK(2020) Monsoon weather and early childhood health in India. *PLoS ONE* 15(4): e0231479.
24. Black RE, Allen LH, Bhutta ZA, Caulfield LE, de Onis M, Ezzati M, et al. Maternal and child undernutrition: global and regional exposures and health consequences. *Lancet* (London, England). 2008 Jan 19; 371(9608):243–60.
25. The Emergency Events Database—Universite´ catholique de Louvain (UCL)—CRED. EM-DAT [Internet]. Brussels, Belgium: School of Public Health, Universite´ Catholique de Louvain; 2019. Available from: <http://www.em-dat.net/>
26. Roxy MK, Ghosh S, Pathak A, Athulya R, Mujumdar M, Murtugudde R, et al. A threefold rise in widespread extreme rain events over central India. *Nat Commun*. 2017 Dec 3; 8(1):708. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-017-00744-9> PMID: 28974680
27. Adair LS, Fall CH, Osmond C, Stein AD, Martorell R, Ramirez-Zea M, et al. Associations of linear growth and relative weight gain during early life with adult health and human capital in low and middle-income countries: findings from five birth cohort studies. *Lancet*. 2013 Aug; 382(9891):525–34. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(13\)60103-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(13)60103-8) PMID: 23541370
28. Hirabayashi Y, Mahendran R, Koirala S, Konoshima L, Yamazaki D, Watanabe S, et al. Global flood risk under climate change. *Nat Clim Chang*. 2013 Sep 9; 3(9):816–21.
29. Johnston R, Dhamija G, Kapoor M, Agrawal PK, Wagt A. Methods for assessing seasonal and annual trends in wasting in Indian surveys (NFHS-3, 4, RSOC & CNNS). *PLoS One*. 2021;16(11 November):0260301. 10.1371/journal.pone.0260301
30. Patwari AK. Diarrhoea and malnutrition interaction. *Indian J Pediatr*. 1999;66(suppl 1):124-134.
31. Jangid C, Vyas HA, Dwivedi RR. Concept of Ritus and their effect on Bala. *AYU Int Res J Ayurveda*. 2009;30:11–5.
32. Creech CB, Al-Zubeidi DN, Fritz SA. Prevention of recurrent Staphylococcal Skin Infections. *Infect Dis Clin North Am*. 2015 Sep;29(3):429-64. Doi:10.1016/j.idc.2015.05.007.PMID:26311356; PMCID: PMC4552962.
33. Program for Appropriate Technology in Health PATH. Skin diseases. *Health Technol Dir*. 1988;8(3):1-10. PMID: 122882068
34. Paige SB, Friant S, Clech L, Malave C, Kemigabo C, Obeti R, Goldberg TL. Combining Footwear with Public Health Iconography to Prevent Soil-Transmitted Helminth Infections. *Am J Trop Med Hyg*. 2017 Jan 11;96(1):205-213. Doi:10.4269/ajtmh.15-0910. Epub 2016Nov7. PMID: 227821692; PMCID: PMC5239695.

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Azizahmed I Arbar et al: Varsha ritucharya- a guide for good health during monsoons for children. *International Ayurvedic Medical Journal* {online} 2023 {cited November 2023} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/2803_2807.pdf