

PREVENTION OF STRESS RELATED COMPLICATIONS THROUGH AYURVEDA AND YOGA

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ABSTRACT

Stress is body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response physically, mentally, emotionally. It is affecting a big part of world population and triggered by increased work load, unhealthy life style and food habits, addiction, increased education related pressure for students, increased dis-satisfaction in the nature of human being, greediness etc. Stress can cause a higher risk of life-threatening heart diseases, metabolic disorders and mental illness etc and can be a major cause in hampering the Longevity of life. Almost 82% of India's population are affected / suffering from stress and those in the sandwich generation (aged 35-49) are most affected with around 89% reporting some level of stress, reveals the Cigna's 360 well-being survey 2019. Ayurveda is not only a pathy to treat disease, it is more of

a way how we should live to stay healthy. *Aahara* and *Vihara* explained in different *Samhitas* show the greatness of *ayurveda* science. Ayurveda explains *Achaar Rasayana*, *Sadvritta*,

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pathya -sevan etc to stay physically and mentally sound along with Yoga which contains *Yama* (social Ethics), *Niyama* (personal ethics), *Dhyana* (Meditation) etc are the factors important in stress management.

KEYWORDS: Stress, *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Sadvritta*, *Acharaaa* *Rasayana*, *Pathya Sevana*, *Yama*, *Niyama* etc.

INTRODUCTION

Stress is the body's reaction to any change that requires an adjustment or response. The body reacts to these changes with physical, mental, and emotional responses. In other words, Stress is a condition come across when body works beyond its limits physically, Mentally, Emotionally. Sometime stress in small amount is good for individual as it can improve the performance in some pressure situations. In controlled amount it helps you to stay focused, energetic and alert. For example: students memorize very quickly in exam days as compare to normal days. Although, stress isn't a psychiatric diagnosis, but it's closely linked to your mental health in two important ways: Stress can cause mental health problems, and make existing problems worse. For example, if you often struggle to manage feelings of stress, you might develop a mental health problem like anxiety or depression.

Everyone experiences stress and anxiety at one time or another. The difference between them is that stress is a response to a threat in a situation. Anxiety is a reaction to the stress. In short, stress is your body's reaction to a trigger and is generally a short-term experience. Stress can be positive or negative. Stress is a response to a threat in any given situation. Anxiety, on the other hand, is a sustained mental health disorder that can be triggered by stress. Feeling this overwhelming stress for a long period of time is often called chronic, or long-term stress, and it can impact on both physical and mental health. Stress is a response to a threat in a situation, whereas anxiety is a reaction to the stress.

Stress can be divided into two types

1. **Acute stress:** This is short-term stress that goes away quickly. You feel it when you slam on the brakes, have a fight with your partner, or ski down a steep slope. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another.
2. **Chronic stress:** This is stress that lasts for a longer period of time. You may have chronic stress if you have money problems, an unhappy marriage, or trouble at work. Any type of

stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress. You can become so used to chronic stress that you don't realize it is a problem. If you don't find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems. It leads to anxiety.

While having chronic stress, your body stays alert, even though there is no danger. Over time, this puts you at risk for health problems, including: High blood pressure, Heart disease, Diabetes, Obesity, Depression or anxiety, Skin problems, such as acne or eczema, Menstrual problems, Depression, Anxiety, Irritability, Low sex drive, Memory and concentration problems, Compulsive behavior, Mood swings.

Prevention of stress related complications through ayurveda

The health is supreme foundation for the four achievements of life including *Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha*. If these four are our destination city, then a healthy body and mind are the vehicle to travel there. Mind, Soul and body are three main pillars of Life. They hold the life like three pillars holding a stool by balancing and cooperating with each other. If any pillar breakdown the stool can not remain constant. Two of these namely Body and mind are a place for disease and deformity. Stress affects both body and mind or we can say physical and mental health of a person.

Stress can be related to *Sahasa*. The word *Sahasa* as described in ayurveda also means that the condition when an individual pushes its limits for any work. Beyond a certain point when stress increases to abnormal level Whether physical, mental, emotional it affects the work performance, health and quality of life in a negative way. This can be described as *Atisahasajanya karya*, which adversely effects physical and mental health.

Ayurveda is not only a pathy to treat disease, it is more of a way how we should live to stay healthy. *Aahara* and *Vihara* explained in different Samhitas show the greatness of ayurveda science. Ayurveda explains *Achaar Rasayana, Sadvritta, pathya -sevan* etc to stay physically and mentally sound along with *Yoga* which contains *Yama* (social Ethics), *Niyama* (personal ethics), *Dhyana* (Meditation) etc are the factors important in stress management.

I. Ahara (Diet) – It is often said that good food is the foundation for genuine happiness. Food is the most important thing for every living being in this world. Many researches have proved that the quality/ type of food we eat, affects our mind. According to *Chandogya Upanishada*, a small part of what you eat, affects and nurishes your mind also. Lord Krishna said in Geeta that the 'yoga which destroys all sorrows,' i.e., unties

bondages, is successfully practised by him who is temperate in eating and recreation, temperate in exertion, and temperate in sleep and vigil. Acharaaya Charaka mention that *dhatu* and *roga* both depends on Good and bad food and food habits respectively. If a human eats healthy food lives a good social life of 36000 night (100 years). This explains the importance of good food in life. Now the question arises that what is good food? The good food is the food which becomes the pillar for your health, not the one you like most.

In geeta lord krishna describes three types of food

- I. **Satvik food:** Foods in the mode of goodness increase the duration of life, purify one's existence and give strength, health, happiness and satisfaction. Such nourishing foods are sweet, juicy, fatty and palatable. These foods increase *Satva Guna* in body hence are called *satvik* food.
- II. **Rajsik food:** Foods that are too bitter, too sour, salty, pungent, dry and hot, are liked by people in the modes of passion. Such foods cause pain, distress, and disease. I These foods increase the *rajas guna* in body hence called *Rajasik* Food.
- III. **Tamasik food:** Food cooked more than three hours before being eaten, which is tasteless, stale, putrid, decomposed and unclean, is food liked by people in the mode of ignorance. These foods increase the *tamas guna* in body hence called *tamasik* Food.

Rajas and Tamas are two *Dosha* for mind which cause mental illness. In current era, most of us are eating *rajsika* and *tamasik* food which are affecting mind of people which is causing increase of *rajas* and *tamas* in human leads to greed, laziness, anger etc.

- II. **Vihara (Code of conducts)-** *Vihar* can be considered as the work one do physically and mentally. There are several code of conduct are described in both Ayurveda and yoga.
- I. **Sadvritta:-** Ayurveda describes health as a balance of body, mind, social and spiritual well-being. In order to achieve this, Ayurveda prescribes certain codes of conduct and this is known as *Sadvritta*. The root '*Sad*' means good and '*vritta*' means regimen. *Sadvrittas* are applicable to people of all age groups, at all times and at all places. Practicing the codes constantly brings inner peace and happiness, and violating them makes a person angry and agitated. The codes of conduct can be divided as - Ethical or *Vyavaharika sadvritta*, Social or *Samajika sadvritta*, Mental or *Manasika sadvritta*, Moral or *Dharmika sadvritta*, and Physical or *Sharirika sadvritta*. Ayurveda covers the physical and mental codes of conduct to be followed under the aegis of *Acharaa Rasayana*.

- Let us try and understand the principles of each of the sadvrittas
- **Ethical conduct:** One must always be truthful, should have control over his/her emotions, should have self-control, do no harm to anyone, behave according to time and place where you are residing, be virtuous, courageous, positive, and free from anger, jealousy and anxiety.
- **Social conduct:** This reflects behaviour and social mannerisms. One must speak a few words, listen carefully, talk in soft pleasing tone, put up a smile even in tough situations, respect parents, elders, teachers and other learned intelligent people, and learn to be tolerant.
- **Mental conduct:** This involves keeping a check on one-self, trying to understand who you are, what is the purpose of your existence, being self-aware, learning the art of detached attachment, and attaining inner peace.
- **Moral conduct:** This means doing good social deeds, helping the poor and needy, being with a friend or relative in their difficult times, attending to social duties, donating blood or organs, and following the path of righteousness or dharma.
- **Physical conduct:** Personal hygiene and cleanliness is part of this regimen. It includes brushing everyday both times, having a bath, wearing clean clothes, smelling good, cutting hair and nails regularly (3 times in a fortnight), avoiding sexual intercourse during periods, washing hand and mouth after eating, offering prayers to God every day, eating on time and in right quantity, and avoiding sleeping during the day, etc.

II. Acharaaa rasayana:- *Rasayana* therapy which is among eight branches of *Ayurveda* deals with measures for rejuvenation in the body even at a molecular level including the mind. There are various types of *Rasayanalike Naimittikarasayana, Aajsrikarasayan, Kutipravesnik, AAcharaarasayana*, etc. which are to be used in a specific condition as per the constitution, disease, age, Kala. And expect a desirable effect. Present advance techniques also prove that *Rasayana* therapy is effective in immunomodulation and restoration of immune haemostasis. Out of these various types of *Rasayana*, *Acharaaa Rasayana* (Behavioral conducts to be followed) is a unique non-pharmacological therapy which comprises of wholesome diet, ideal lifestyle, etiquettes to be followed by a person at a personal and social level with all the benefits described for the *Rasayana*. *Acharaaya Charaka* in *Chikitsa Sthana* first chapter described *Acharaaa Rasayana*, which indicates its importance in those days to keep away diseases away from humanity. It is said that one who follows all codes of conduct very cheerfully need not require to take other *Rasayanas* or medicine and those who take other *Rasayanas*

without following code of conduct (*Aacharaa Rasayana*) do not get the desirable results of Rejuvenation therapy.

Aacharaa Rasayana includes following procedures: One should always speak truth, refrain from anger, alcohol, sexual act and violence. One should be peaceful, avoid exertion, speak sweetly, practice japa (chanting names of god) and cleanliness. One should be courageous, generous, perform penance, respect god, preceptors and elders, be away from cruelty and always kind to all. One should sleep and get up at proper time, take milk and ghee every day, have knowledge about place, time, should have proper planning with intelligence, not egoistic, have good conduct, to be devoid of wrong thoughts, inclined towards philosophy, have belief in god, serve elders, read religious books. He always will be endowed with qualities of rejuvenation. If person having above said qualities consumes rejuvenating drugs, he will be endowed with all qualities of rejuvenation.

III. Dharaniya Vegas (Suppressible Urges): One desirous of his well being has to suppress certain urges like doing work, which is more to his capacity, which will lead to unwanted effect on the body and bad deeds mentally, orally or physically.

These are of three types

- **Manasik (Mental):** Lobha (Greed), Shoka (Grief), Bhaya (Fear), Krodha (Anger), Mana (Ego), Nairajya (Shamelessness), Irshya (Jealousy), Atiraga (Excessive Attachment), Abhidhya (Desire for the things possessed by others).
- **Vachik (Words):** Parusha (Harsh Words), Suchakasya (Back Biting), Anrita (Lying), Akalayukta (Untimely words).
- **Kayika (Physical):** Para peedaya (Violence against others), Para Stree Bhoga (Desire for other woman), Asteya (Stealing), Hinsa (Violence).
- By suppressing these suppressible urges, the human mind, words, deeds become sinless, by which he happily acquires Dharma, Artha and Kama.

Prevention of stress related complications through yoga

1. Yama (Social Ethics)

- **Ahimsa:** Nonviolence
- **Satya:** Truth
- **Asteya:** Nonstealing
- **Aparigraha:** No Desire for others wealth

- **Bramh Acharaaya:** Celibacy

2. **Niyama (Personal ethics)**

- **Shoucha:** Cleanliness\
- **Santosh:** Contentment
- **Tapa:** Penance
- **Swadhyay:** Self Study
- **Ishwara pranidhana:** Dedicating to God

3. **Dharana:** *Dharana* is the sixth stage of Ashtanga Yoga. The word *dharana* is made *Dhri Dhatu*, which means to handle, hold or support. According to the Yoga philosophy - *Deshbandhaschittasya dharana*. (Yogasutra 3/1) ie- To stabilize the mind at a particular place (inside or outside the mind). The intention is that by *Yama*, *Niyam*, *Asana*, *Pranayama* and *Pratyahara*, the senses are removed from their subjects and stabilized in the mind. The idea of *Dharana* is to stop/ hold the mind at one place.

4. **Dhyan (Meditation):** Meditation is an action in which a person tries to bring his mind to a particular state of consciousness. The purpose of meditation can be to get some benefit or meditation can be a goal in itself. 'Meditation' gives a sense of many types of actions. It includes everything from simple techniques of relaxing the mind to the creation of inner energy or life-force (ki, prana etc.) and the development of qualities like compassion, love, patience, generosity, forgiveness etc.

CONCLUSION

Stress in controlled amount helps to increase work ability of a person. On the other hand, when the amount of stress increases to uncontrolled amount leads to Mental disorder like anxiety and life-threatening disease like heart disease and metabolic illness etc. Stress isn't a psychiatric diagnosis, but it's closely linked to your mental health.

Ayurveda is a health science which covers all the dimensions of health i.e. Physical, Mental and Social health etc of a person. Practising of some code of conducts like *Sadavritta*, *Acharaaa rasayana*, *Dharan of Dharniya vega* completely related to individual's mental health. As stress is not a disorder but a disturbed mental state due to some external and internal conflictions, yoga (*Yama*, *Niyama*, *Dharana*, *Dhyan*) helps a lot to conquer all these states. As mentioned above, how Yoga and Ayurvedic code of conducts works, so they will

be surely helpful in prevention of stress related complication by balancing all the physical and mental doshas.

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