

SWASTHAVRITTA: BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS FOR CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

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ABSTRACT

In the fast-paced modern world, children face numerous challenges that impact their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As society becomes increasingly reliant on technology and sedentary lifestyles, it is crucial to introduce children to holistic practices that promote their overall health and development. Ayurveda indicate prevention and health promotion, and provides treatment for disease. Its main objective is to achieve desirable health and well-being through a comprehensive approach that addresses mind, body, behavior, and environment. It is the science of preventing diseases, prolonging life, and promoting health under the Swasthavritta. Children are prone to

get specific health problems. To prevent the disease and promote the health of children, Swasthavritta plays an important role. Various regimens i.e. Daily regimen (Dincharya), Seasonal regimen (Ritucharya), Ratricharya (Night regimen), and Aahara (Dietary habits) and Vihara (lifestyle), Sadvritta (Ideal routines) and Achara Rasayana etc. is given which are very helpful to an individual for healthy life and prevention of diseases. So an attempt has been taken to prevent the diseases among the children and promote their health by intervening the Swasthavritta in their life. This article highlights the significance of incorporating Swasthvritta, an Ayurvedic lifestyle, into children's lives to foster a balanced and thriving state of being.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Swasthavritta, Children, health.

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and technology-driven world, children often face various physical and mental health challenges. It is becoming increasingly vital to introduce them to holistic practices that promote their overall well-being. Among these practices, *Swasthavritta*, an Ayurvedic lifestyle, have gained significant recognition for their numerous benefits. This article explores the importance of *Swasthavritta* in children, highlighting their positive impact on physical health, mental well-being, and overall development.^[1]

Children are vital to the nation's present and its future. Healthy children are more likely to become healthy adults. As we know that "Health is Wealth". There is nothing in our life that is more valuable than good health. Without health there is no happiness, no peace and no success. Health is a state of complete physical, mental & social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Children are prone to get specific health problems. The major health problems of school children are Malnutrition, Worm infestation, Disease of eyes and ears and Dental caries. There are many procedures are mentioned in our text like daily regimen (*Dincharya*), Seasonal (*Ritucharya*) and *Aahara* (Dietary habits) and *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Sadvritta* (Ideal routines) and *Achara Rasayana* etc., which are very helpful to promote, protect and maintain health of children.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

AIM

To promote, protect and maintain health of school children and reduce morbidity and mortality in them.

OBJECTIVES

1. The promotion of positive health.
2. The prevention of diseases.
3. Awakening health consciousness in children.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Dincharaya (Daily regimen), *Ratricharya* (Night regimen) and *Ritucharya* (Seasonal Regimen) are very important regimens for overall development of an individual. Various methods are described under the *Dincharaya*. It includes *Brahmamuhuruta Jagrana*, *Ushapana* (Drinking water), *Malatyaga* (Bowel evacuation), *Dantapawana* (Brushing), *Nasya* (Nasal drops) with *Sarsapa tail*, *Kavala* (Gargling), *Abhyanga* (Massage), *Vyayama* (Exercise), *Snana* (Bathing), *Vastradharana* (clothing), *Padtradharana* (wearing shoes), *Nakhadikartana*

(cutting of nails), Ushnishdharnam (cover the head), in present scenario we can cover the head with cap. By following this daily regimen, many diseases among the children can be prevented and it will also promote the health of them. Sandhyacharya (Evening regimen) - Avoid learning, reading, eating and sleeping during evening time. In current scenario due to faulty lifestyle of both parents and children, they are doing such kind of activities during evening time. By educating about health hazards of such activities, we can prevent many diseases and promote the health of child. Encourage the child to pray the god during evening time. It will improve both physical and mental health. Ratricharya (Night regimen)- In current scenario due to unhealthy lifestyle, faulty habit of taking late dinner has been developed which causes late sleep and disturbed the biological clock of a person and leads to many diseases. To prevent health hazards, try to take meal at sunset if possible. Otherwise one should complete their dinner before 9 p.m. Diet should be light i.e. easily digestible. Child should be encouraged for slow walking for about 100 feet after meal. For sleeping, Bed of the child should be soft, even and clean. It is best to sleep in left lateral position .It alleviates acid reflux and boost the digestion.

To promote the physical & mental health, various methods are described.

1. **Brahmamuhuruta Jagrana** – It is not like the elders. Child must be taken adequate sleep. Sleeping hours for Middle school age group (5-12 years) - 10-11 hours Secondary school group (13-17 years) - 7- 10 hours. Without deprivation in sleep of child, children are educated to “early to bed early to rise”.

Effect: Increase concentration process of the pupil. Serotonin is released which makes the child active and alert.

1. **Nidra (Sleep)** – Deprivation of sleep lead to Moody & Irritability & other memory related problems. While adequate sleep will help in improved attention, learning, behavior, memory & overall mental health.
2. **Aahara (Diet)** – As in Chandogyo upnishad: “Aahara Sudho Satva Sudho”. Hitkara Aahara and Satvikka Aahara maintain the mental health. Milk, Ghritta, Yava (Barley), Godhoom (Wheat), Green leafy vegetables, fruits, chickpea, nuts coconut etc. must be included in children of school age.various preparations like Shikharini(main ingredient is curd) Mudga Yusha (soup of green gram), Lapshika (made up of Semolina Wheat, Besan, Green Gram) Krishra (Made up of Mudga) etc as mentioned in Bhavprakash are very beneficial for children because these are easy to digest and wholesome to children.

3. Medhya Rasayana

Medhya means intellect or cognitive power and “Rasayana” means curative or rejuvenative ability. The potent Medhya Rasayana herbs play a key role in improving the processing, storing and information retrieving abilities of the brain. This improves the Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Some Medhya Rasayana that are beneficial to children are.

- Regular intake of the 10 ml juice of Mandukparni i.e. *Centalla asiatica* together with honey extensively promotes brain growth in the children.
- Regular intake of the 3 grams powdered root of *Yasthimadhu* (Mulethi) i.e. *Glycyrrhiza glabra* along with a glass of milk enhances memory and learning capabilities in children and also reduce the risk of neural disorders.
- Regular intake of *Sankhpushpi* i.e. *Convolvulus pluricaulis* paste infused in lukewarm milk & can be ingested in morning preferably after meals, extremely beneficial to boost memory. It improves memory capacity, concentration, creativity, alertness and calmness in children.

4. Aachara Rasayana: Children are educated to always speak the truth, be non-violent, & obey the elders and intake of Milk and *Ghritha* regularly.

Mental Well-being: *Swasthavritta* significantly contribute to children's mental well-being, fostering emotional stability and resilience. The practice of yoga incorporates mindful breathing techniques, meditation, and relaxation exercises that help children manage stress and anxiety. Yoga encourages self-awareness and introspection, allowing children to connect with their thoughts, emotions, and bodies. By promoting a calm and focused state of mind, yoga equips children with coping mechanisms to deal with everyday challenges and develop a positive attitude towards life.^[3]

Enhanced Concentration and Academic Performance: *Swasthavritta* can have a profound impact on children's cognitive abilities, leading to improved concentration and academic performance. Yoga helps children develop mental clarity, memory retention, and enhanced cognitive function. Regular practice of yoga has been shown to increase attention span and improve the ability to concentrate for longer durations. As a result, children who engage in yoga often exhibit better academic performance, creativity, and problem-solving skills.

Emotional Intelligence and Self-esteem: *Swasthavritta* facilitate the development of emotional intelligence in children. Through mindfulness practices and self-reflection, children learn to identify and regulate their emotions effectively. This awareness leads to

improved emotional resilience, empathy, and understanding of others. Furthermore, yoga fosters a sense of self-acceptance and self-esteem in children, enabling them to build a positive self-image and navigate social interactions with confidence.^[4]

Holistic Development: One of the greatest advantages of introducing yoga and Swasthavritta to children is their holistic development. These practices nurture physical, mental, and emotional well-being simultaneously, leading to balanced growth. By engaging in yoga, children cultivate discipline, patience, and perseverance. They learn to respect their bodies, listen to their inner voice, and embrace a healthy lifestyle. The integration of Swasthavritta principles such as a balanced diet, regular sleep patterns, and a harmonious routine further supports their overall development, ensuring a well-rounded and thriving child.^[5]

Swasthavritta for children^[8-10]

For children, Swasthavritta offers a valuable framework to promote optimal growth, physical health, mental well-being, and overall vitality.

Balanced Diet: Encourage children to consume a balanced and nutritious diet that includes a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, proteins, and healthy fats. Minimize processed and sugary foods to support their physical development and boost their immune systems.

Hygiene Practices: Teach children the importance of regular personal hygiene, such as washing hands before meals and after using the restroom. Proper hygiene habits help prevent the spread of infections and keep them healthy.

Daily Routine: Establishing a consistent daily routine is essential for children's well-being. Ensure they have sufficient time for play, study, rest, and sleep. Regularity in their daily activities helps create a sense of stability and balance.

Physical Activity: Encourage children to engage in regular physical activity and play outdoors. Physical exercise supports their overall health, strengthens muscles and bones, and contributes to their emotional well-being.

Adequate Sleep: Ensure that children get sufficient sleep according to their age. A proper sleep routine supports growth and development and aids in the body's natural healing and repair processes.

Mindfulness and Meditation: Introduce simple mindfulness and meditation practices suitable for children. These practices can help them develop emotional resilience, manage stress, and improve focus and concentration.

Screen Time Management: Limit screen time for children, including television, computers, tablets, and smartphones. Excessive screen time can negatively impact their physical health and cognitive development.

Nature Connection: Encourage children to spend time in nature regularly. Nature has a calming and grounding effect on children's minds, promoting a sense of well-being.

Emotional Well-being: Foster open communication and emotional expression. Encourage children to talk about their feelings and emotions, helping them build emotional intelligence and cope with life's challenges.

Limiting Exposure to Toxins: Be mindful of the environment children are exposed to. Minimize exposure to environmental toxins and chemicals that may adversely affect their health.

Cultural and Moral Values: Instill cultural and moral values in children to promote a sense of ethics, empathy, and compassion.

CONCLUSION

Swasthavritta offer a multitude of benefits to children, positively influencing their physical health, mental well-being, and overall development. By incorporating these practices into their lives, children can experience improved physical strength, emotional stability, enhanced cognitive abilities, and increased self-esteem. Encouraging children to embrace Swasthavritta fosters habits that will lead to a healthier and more balanced adulthood. As parents, educators, and caregivers, let us empower our children to embark on this transformative journey towards well-being and self-discovery.

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