

THE ROLE OF *MEDO DHATU* IN AYURVEDA - UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF FAT TISSUE: REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Medo Dhatu, or fat tissue, is a vital component of the human body in Ayurveda, playing a crucial role in maintaining overall health and well-being. As the fourth Dhatu in the sequence of seven Dhatus^[2], *Medo Dhatu* is responsible for providing energy, insulation, and protection to the body.^[3] Its functions include energy production, insulation, protection, hormone regulation, and immune function. *Medo Dhatu* is characterized by its soft and oily nature, heavy and stable nature, and slow and steady metabolism. An imbalance of *Medo Dhatu* can lead to various health issues, including obesity, malnutrition, and hormonal imbalances. Ayurvedic strategies for balancing *Medo Dhatu* include a balanced diet, regular exercise, stress management, and herbal remedies. Understanding the importance of *Medo Dhatu* and its functions, characteristics, and relationship with other *Dhatus* can help prevent various health issues and promote overall health and well-being.

KEYWORDS: *Medo Dhatu*, fat tissue, Ayurveda, energy production, insulation, protection.

INTRODUCTION

In the ancient Indian system of medicine, Ayurveda, the human body is composed of seven fundamental tissues, known as *Dhatus*. These *Dhatus* are the building blocks of the body, and

each one plays an unique and vital role in maintaining overall health and well-being. Among these seven *Dhatus*, *Medo Dhatu*, or fat tissue, is a crucial component that is often overlooked, yet it plays a significant role in maintaining the body's energy, insulation, and protection.

Medo Dhatu is the fourth *Dhatu* in the sequence of seven *Dhatus*, and it is formed from the nutrient-rich plasma (*Rasa Dhatu*) and the muscular tissue (*Mamsa Dhatu*). The primary function of *Medo Dhatu* is to provide energy to the body, which is essential for maintaining various bodily functions, such as movement, digestion, and immune function. In addition to its energy-providing function, *Medo Dhatu* also plays a critical role in regulating body temperature, protecting internal organs, and maintaining hormone balance.

Concept of *Dhatu*

Dhatu is focused on the body's two functions *Dharana* and *Poshana*. *Dhatus*, which are in turn constantly generated, destroyed, and reformed by the necessary nutrients provided to them by the *Poshaka Dhatus*, are referred to as *dharana* to describe the structural support of the body provided by each *Dhatu*. It is regarded as a *Sneha* dominating *Drava Dhatu* with *Prithvi*, *Apa*, and *Teja Mahabhoota* dominance as well as *Guru* (heavy) and *Snigdha* (oily) qualities.

***Medo Dhatu*:** The substance known as "*meda*" is a yellowish, greasy, sticky substance; beneath the skin, many fat globules create a thick, spongy layer. There are 2 types of *Medo Dhatu*; The first sort of *Medo Dhatu*, which is immobile by nature and is kept in *Medodharakala*, is *Baddha Meda/Poshya Medo Dhatu*. *Udara* is the location of *Medodharakala*, and *Anuasthi*, *Udara Sphika Stana*, and *Gala* are all sthana of *poshya medodhatu*. The second type of *dhatu* is *Abaddha Meda/Poshaka Medo Dhatu*, which is mobile by nature and distributed throughout the body with *Rasa Rakta Dhatu* to feed *Poshya Medo Dhatu*. It is possible to see how the blood circulates with lipids and cholesterol using a variety of imaging techniques. There are two *Anjali pramana* of *Meda* in all.^[1] *Vasa* is composed of three *Anjali*, though it may vary slightly depending on the individual *Ahararasa's* digestion or bioconversion. In this instance, *agni* is *Dhatvagni*. It works on *Ahararasa* and oversees digesting and splitting into *Sara* and *Kitta* portions. Three hypotheses were put forth in the Ayurveda context to explain this process of nourishment: the *Prasad ansa* of *Rasa* nourishes *Rakta*, *Rakta* nourishes *Mamsa*, *Mamsa* nourishes *Meda*, *Meda* nourishes *Asthi*, *Asthi* nourishes *Majja*, and *Majja* nourishes *Shukra*.^[4] All the

nutritional requirements of *Dhatu* is carried out by *Ksirdadhinyaya*, *Kedarkulyanyaya*, and *Khalekapotanyaya* are Poshana Nyaya i.e. the *Dhatu*.

Formation and Function of *Medo Dhatu*

Medo Dhatu is the fourth tissue in the sequence of *dhatu* formation^[2], evolving from *Mamsa Dhatu* (muscle tissue) and nourishing *Asthi Dhatu* (bone tissue). This transformation occurs through *Dhatvagni* (tissue-specific metabolic fire), which determines the quality and quantity of *Medo Dhatu* in the body.

- **Lubrication and Protection** – Fat tissue surrounds vital organs, acting as a cushion to prevent mechanical damage. It also lubricates joints and maintains the suppleness of the body.
- **Energy Storage** – *Medo Dhatu* stores energy in the form of adipose tissue, which is used when needed, ensuring endurance and strength.
- **Thermoregulation** – Fat tissue helps in maintaining body temperature, preventing excessive heat loss.
- **Structural Support** – It provides firmness and maintains the body's shape, particularly in regions like the hips, abdomen, and thighs.
- **Influence on Mind and Emotions** – Ayurveda links *Medo Dhatu* to stability, patience, and mental endurance. A balanced *Medo Dhatu* promotes calmness, whereas excess can lead to lethargy and emotional dullness.

Medo Dhatu and Dosha Influence^[5]

The development and balance of *Medo Dhatu* are influenced by the three doshas—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*.

Vata Prakriti individuals generally have less *Medo Dhatu*, leading to a leaner body type with dry skin and low stamina.

Pitta Prakriti individuals tend to have a moderate amount of fat tissue, maintaining a balanced metabolism.

Kapha Prakriti individuals naturally accumulate more *Medo Dhatu*, making them prone to weight gain but also providing them with strength and endurance.

Imbalances in *Medo Dhatu*^[6]

When *Medo Dhatu* is excessive, it can lead to *Medoroga* (obesity-related disorders) such as diabetes, high cholesterol, and joint problems. An underdeveloped *Medo Dhatu* can cause

emaciation, fatigue, and reduced immunity. Ayurveda recommends maintaining an optimal balance to prevent such disorders.

Maintaining a Healthy *Medo Dhatu*

To keep *Medo Dhatu* balanced, Ayurveda suggests:

1. Dietary Regulation

- Favor light and warm foods like barley, green leafy vegetables, and spices (ginger, turmeric) to prevent excess *Medo* accumulation.
- Avoid heavy, oily, and excessively sweet foods, as they increase *Kapha* and lead to obesity.
- Incorporate *medo-shamana* herbs like *Guggulu*, *Triphala*, and *Musta* to regulate fat metabolism.

2. Physical Activity

- Regular exercise, especially brisk walking, yoga, and strength training, helps maintain a balanced *Medo Dhatu*.
- *Udvardana* (herbal powder massage) is beneficial for breaking down excess fat and improving circulation.

3. Lifestyle Adjustments

- Following *Dinacharya* (daily routine) with timely meals and sleep helps regulate metabolism.
- Meditation and stress management prevent emotional eating, which can lead to excessive *Medo Dhatu* formation.

4. Panchakarma Therapies

- *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis) and *Virechana* (purgation therapy) help in detoxifying and decrease of excess *Medo Dhatu*.
- *Basti* (medicated enema) with specific herbs aids in fat metabolism and removing toxins.

CONCLUSION

When comparing *Ayurveda* and modern texts, it becomes clear that lipids and *Medo Dhatu* are closely related. *Medo Dhatu* plays a significant role in *Dharana* and *Poshana*, which are key functions of the body tissue. Both lipids and *Medo Dhatu* share the characteristic of *snehatva* (oiliness). High levels of lipids and imbalances in stable and unstable *Medo Dhatu*

are often caused by excessive consumption of sweet and fatty foods. Ayurveda suggests that overeating foods that increase *shleshma* can lead to an excessive buildup of both stable and unstable *Medo Dhatu*. The primary source of nourishment for all *Dhatus* is *Rasa*, which transports essential nutrients. Just as *Rasa* carries nutrients to the stable and unstable *Medo Dhatu*, an increase in these *Dhatus* correlates with higher serum lipid levels. Obesity and elevated lipid levels are commonly linked, and the pathophysiology of *Medoroga* (fat-related diseases) is influenced by the imbalance and excess accumulation of *Medo Dhatu*. Based on these insights, we can conclude that *Medo Dhatu* and lipids share significant similarities.

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