

**ROLE OF *RITU SHODHANA KARMA* TO PROMOTE GENERAL  
HEALTH WITH PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT OF DISEASES:  
REVIEW ARTICLE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Ritu Shodhana* is elimination of seasonwise accumulated *dosha's* by purificatory measures during specific season. The aim of Ayurveda is to maintain health of a healthy person and treating ailments of the diseased. *Shodhana* (purification therapy) is designed to eliminate excess Doshas from the body, effectively detoxifying and reestablishing *Dosha* equilibrium. Among the various *Shodhana* therapies, *Shodhana* holds significant importance in Ayurvedic treatment, as it not only promotes general health but also aids in the prevention and management of various diseases. Ayurveda outlines specific methodologies for conducting *Shodhana*, highlighting the necessity of aligning these procedures with the appropriate season. Certain *Shodhana* techniques are recommended for specific *Ritus*, while others should be avoided during particular seasonal conditions. This article underscores the significance of *Shodhana* and its tailored application according to seasonal variations.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, *Ritushodhana*, Panchakarma, *Doshas*,

Prevention.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda provides detailed information on the balance of *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Agni*, and *Mala*, all of which play a crucial role in health. *Atma*, *Indraya*, and *Manas* synchronization enhanced both physical and emotional well-being.<sup>[1]</sup> *Shodhana*, an Ayurvedic purifying process, is recommended for maintaining good health both physically and mentally. To reap the health benefits of *Shodhana*, it must be performed according to the *Ritu*. If *Shodhana* is not conducted in line with *Ritucharya*, harmful repercussions may arise. *Shodhana* is most effective at removing *Malas* or morbid *Doshas* when the time and length of therapy are tailored to the patient's ailment and physical condition.

*Shodhana* performed in three stages *Purva Karma*, *Pradhana Karma* and *Pashchat Karma* (Figure no 1). *Purva Karma* resembles preparatory purification which generally performed prior to the main procedures; *Snehana* & *Swedana* are major procedures of *Purva Karma*. *Pradhana Karma* is main purification method of *Shodhana* therapy which involves major conducts such as *Vaman*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, *Nasya* and *Raktamokshana*.<sup>[2]</sup> *Pashchat Karma* means post purification measure. Panchakarmas offers several health benefits along with other *Upkramas* like; *Udvaartana*, *Abhyanga*, *Swedana* and *Mardana*, etc.



Figure no.1.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

To review and to assess the role of *shodhana karma* to promote general health with prevention and management of various diseases.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This review was done by compiling the Classical Ayurvedic literature, Modern literature, Magazines and research journals as well as PUBMED, MEDLINE database. Based on the collected information, logical interpretation was done to review efficacy and action of *shodhana* i.e *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *basti* as per *ritu*.

The general pharmacokinetic property of *Shodhana dravya* depicted, these property helps in the expulsion of toxins from the body. *Tikshana Guna* breaks or loosens toxins, *Vikasi* and

*Vyavayi Guna* facilitate movement of *Doshas* and *Urdhavabhagha* action causes their expulsion from the body.

Health benefits of specific *Shodhana* procedure.<sup>[3]</sup>

- Improves digestive power
- Pacifies diseases
- Maintains homeostasis of the body
- Improves functions of sense organs, mind, intellect
- Improves complexion, strength and nourishment
- Improves quality of progeny
- Delays aging
- Provides long life without affliction of diseases
- *Vamana* relieves aggravated *Kapha* and clears channels.
- *Nasya Karma* removes aggravated *Doshas* from *Urdhva jatru pradesha* and helps to maintain circulation of body.
- *Basti Karma* facilitate expulsion of feces, flatus and urine thus improves appetite.
- *Virechana* removes aggravated *Pitta* thus improves *Jatharagni*.
- *Raktamokshana* purify skin and alleviates skin ailments.

*Shodhana* procedure according to *Ritucharya*<sup>[4]</sup>

Seasonal changes have a significant impact on *Doshas* and can alter an individual's health. Therefore, it's essential to perform purification procedures that align with the current weather conditions. When the *Shodhana* technique is applied in harmony with *Ritucharya*, it effectively removes harmful *Doshas*. Conducting *Shodhana* in sync with seasonal shifts aids in restoring the body's balance.

- During *Vasant ritu*, there is an increase in *Kapha*, making *Vamana* a recommended treatment to relieve *Kaphaja roga*.
- In the *Vasanta Ritu*, both *Teekshna Vamana* and *Nasya* are advised.
- *Ritu Nasya* with *Anutaila* can be beneficial in *Varsha* and *Sharada Ritu* to clear nasal passages and alleviate respiratory issues.
- *Taila abhyanga*, along with *Avagaha sweda* in warm water, enhances circulation throughout the body, especially during the *Shishira* and *Hemanta ritu*.
- It's best to avoid extensive *Shodhana* procedures in the summer months.
- *Shodhana* is not recommended when *Vatadi doshas* are in their *Sanchaya* phase.

- Literature indicates that if *Doshas* accumulate during winter, they should be detoxified in *Vasanta Ritu*.
- *Doshas* present in *Grishma Ritu* should be addressed through *Shodhana* during *Abharaala*.
- For *Varsha Ritu*, *Doshas* should be eliminated during *Ghanaatyaya Kala*.

*Ritu Shodhana* Ayurveda highlights the concepts of *Sadharan Ritu* and *Asadharan Ritu*, which refer to the favorable and unfavorable conditions for performing *Shodhana* treatments.<sup>[7]</sup> During the summer season, known as *Grishma*, *Shodhana* is not recommended for healthy individuals due to the extreme heat. Similarly, the rainy season is not suitable for these procedures, and practices like *Vamana* and *Virechana* should be avoided in winter. The harsh weather conditions during these times hinder the completion of *Snehapana* and *Shodhana*, which is why therapy is generally avoided. The intense heat, rain, and cold during *Grishma*, *Varsha*, and *Hemant Ritu* create unfavorable circumstances for *Shodhana*, categorizing these three seasons as *Asadharan Ritus*. In contrast, the other three seasons provide a more favorable climate, allowing for *Snehapana* and *Shodhana*, thus being classified as *Sadharan Ritus*.

#### Stages of *doshas* in different *ritu* (figure no 2)<sup>[6]</sup>

<i>Ritu</i>	<i>Sanchaya</i>	<i>Prakopa</i>	<i>Prashama</i>
<i>Hemanta</i>	-	-	<i>Pitta</i>
<i>Shishira</i>	<i>Kapha</i>	-	-
<i>Vasanta</i>	-	<i>Kapha</i>	-
<i>Grishma</i>	<i>Vata</i>	-	<i>Kapha</i>
<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Vata</i>	-
<i>Sharada</i>	-	<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Vata</i>

<i>Ritu</i>	<i>Dosha Avastha</i>	<i>Shodhana procedure</i>
<i>Shishir</i>	<i>Chaya of kapha</i>	-
<i>Vasanta</i>	<i>Prakop of kapha</i>	<i>Vaman</i>
<i>Grishma</i>	<i>Chaya of vata</i>	-
<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Prakop of vata</i> <i>Chaya of pitta</i>	<i>Basti</i>
<i>Sharada</i>	<i>Prakop of pitta</i>	<i>Virechan</i>
<i>Hemant</i>	-	-

*Ritu and shodhana* indications (figure no 3)<sup>[5]</sup>

#### Clinical significance of *ritu shodhana*

The crucial balance and homeostasis of *Tridosha* determine an individual's health. *Chaya*, *Prakopa*, and *Prashama* (figure no 2) are the three stages of *Dosha* propagation that occur

naturally. *Prakopa* means to spread from one's own position, *Chaya* means to increase in one's own site, and *Prashama* means to pacify. Seasonal variations may have an impact on *Dosha* aggravation, which might result in clinical signs. *Ritu Shodhana* (figure no 3) offers benefits for mitigating the negative effects of aggravated *Doshas* and aids in disease prevention, health promotion, and the neutralization of vitiated *Dosha* impacts. Regardless of *Swastha Ritu Shodhana* can be performed to obtain general health advantages.

During *Varsha*, *doshas* from the summer should be eliminated, those from *Varsha* should be eliminated during *Sharada Ritu*, and *doshas* that have collected during the cold season should be quickly and efficiently ejected during *Vasanta*. In different seasons, these heightened *Doshas* should be successfully countered. The practice of *Ritushodhana* supports the body's natural functioning and helps prevent ailments brought on by the changing of the seasons. *Shodhana* enhances organ vigour and aids in the removal of vitiated *Doshas* at the appropriate seasons.

Accumulated *kapha dosha* because of cold and unctuous weather of winter season, will liquefy in the spring because of harsh rays of sun. This will affect digestive fire and if not tackled will lead to many disease<sup>[8]</sup> Hence *Vamana* is indicated in *Vasanta*.

In summer, even though the weather is very dry, because of hot nature of the season, only accumulation of *Vata dosha* happens and not aggravation. Because of cold nature of rainy season, it will undergo aggravation and hence for tackling it, *Basti* is advised in *varsha*.<sup>[9]</sup>

Because of reduced digestive fire, amlapaka, polluted water and cold nature of rainy season, *Pitta* accumulation occurs and this will undergo aggravation in *autumn* season because of hot nature of the season. Hence *Tiktasarpipana*, *Virechana* and *Raktamokshana* are indicated in *Sharada*.<sup>[10]</sup>

#### Specific Indication of *Shodhana*

- *Ritu shodhana* helps in prevention of *Praakrithajwara* in *Varsha* and *Sharadaa Ritu*.
- *Virechana* & *Raktamokshana* in *Sharadaa ritu* helps in the prevention of *Rakta dushti* (*Raktajavyadhi*).
- *Vamana* helps to relives symptoms of *Kushta* It can be done in cold season.
- *Abhyanga* & *Mardana* provides relief in *Udarda*.

- These therapeutic measures help in the *Samprapti vighatana* of *Udarda* and can be performed in *Shishira Ritu*.
- *Vamana* in *Vasanta ritu* helps to treat allergic condition.
- *Vamana* done in *vasanta* helps to reduce allergic effects of pollen grains which are found more in *Vasanta ritu*.
- *Ritushodhana* also helps to prevent condition like *Asmari*.
- *Shodhana* in *Shishira Ritu* helps to relieve symptoms of *Vatarakta*.

## DISSUSION

Doshas are in a state of constant fluctuation. The human body is structured in such a manner that a significant portion of metabolic waste accumulates in the *koshtha*, which is aptly referred to as *Mahanimna*<sup>[11]</sup> (the great or large pit/depression). A substantial amount of this waste is expelled through urine and feces. Despite the body's daily efforts to eliminate these *doshas*, and the implementation of *dinacharya* practices aimed at reducing excess *doshas*, there remains a tendency for accumulation, making periodic cleansing essential. Therefore, the timely removal of *doshas* through *ritu shodhana* is of considerable significance. Additionally, it is crucial to examine whether all the *shodhanas* prescribed for the *ritu* are necessary and to assess their practical feasibility. Numerous medical systems have recognized the impact of seasonal changes on both the physical and mental well-being of individuals. Hippocrates stated that anyone seeking to thoroughly understand medicine should first examine the seasons of the year and their respective effects.

Environmental factors such as wind, rain, cloud cover, land characteristics, water quality, and various atmospheric conditions—including temperature, humidity, and atmospheric pressure—are subject to constant fluctuations. These factors exhibit both daily and seasonal variations, collectively referred to as seasons. The study noted the activation of *Tridoshas*, particularly highlighting the predominance of *Vata* and *Kapha*. However, the changes in biochemical parameters were not significant. Symptoms such as *Jwara*, *Pratishyaya*, and *Alasya lakshanas* were frequently observed during *Ritusandhi*. The findings indicated that *Hemanta* corresponds to *Pravara bala*, *Vasanta* to *Madhyama bala*, and *Varsha* to *Avara bala*. Seasonal patterns have been linked to various health issues, such as increased instances of dry skin in winter, flu and heat strokes in summer, pollen allergies in spring, and a higher prevalence of air and waterborne diseases during the rainy season, along with skin disorders in autumn. This evidence supports the physiological rationale behind the concept of



*Ritucharya*. Modern science also provides insights into seasonal affective disorder. In Ayurveda, the *Kriyakala* concept elucidates the stages of disease development, with *Ritu* serving as a *Vyanjaka* or *Nimittakarana* in the exacerbation of *doshas*. Through consistent practice of *Ritu Shodhana*, individuals can avert the onset of diseases by preserving the balance of *doshas*. Lifestyle-related disorders arise from an improper way of living and a detrimental interaction between individuals and their environment. Dietary habits have evolved significantly, influencing the prevalence of cancer and various lifestyle-related conditions, including diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular diseases. The emergence of these lifestyle diseases is often gradual and subtle, making them challenging to treat. In this era of pollution and adulterated toxic food consumption, bioaccumulation of pesticides, consumption of *apathya ahara* like refrigerated items (*rooksha*, *shushka guna*), *paryushita ahara*, daily consumption of *masha* in form of dosa and idli; all these lead to unimaginable *dosha sanchaya* and *aama* formation. These factors are the causes for India becoming a capital of Diabetes and many such lifestyle disorders. So *Ritu shodhana* is one method of preventing lifestyle disorders.

As *Ritushodhana* is not an emergency management, *kramatah Shodhana* is to be done rather than *Sadyoshodhana*. Practically, for persons suffering from seasonal diseases like bronchial asthma, urticaria etc. a good improvement has been observed in terms of reoccurrence and intensity.

## CONCLUSION

*Shodhana* therapy should be tailored based on the *Dosha*, *Prakriti*, *Kala*, and *Desha* status. When conducting *Shodhana*, it's important to consider the *Vaya* and *Koshtha*. This form of *Shodhana* therapy provides numerous health benefits, especially when performed during the appropriate season. The need for *Shodhana* therapy according to *Ritu* arises from the fact that *Dosha* dominance shifts with changing climatic conditions. For instance, *Vasanta Ritu* encourages *Vamana* and *Nasya*, while *Sharada Ritu* highlights *Virechana*. *Ritu Shodhana* is effective in treating skin issues, managing immune system disturbances, reducing disease prevalence, preventing lifestyle-related problems, and maintaining hormonal balance. It plays a vital role in promoting overall health and alleviating ailments. Additionally, *Ritu Shodhana* can help mitigate the effects of environmental pollutants, restore physical vitality, and slow down the signs of premature aging. Ultimately, *Ritu Shodhana* not only aids in disease prevention and treatment but also enhances overall well-being.

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