

**GRISHMA RITUCHARYA AND HYDRATION: AN AYURVEDIC
REVIEW**

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Article Received on 15 May 2026,
Article Revised on 05 June 2026,
Article Published on 16 June 2026,

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.2067873>

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How to cite this Article: Dr. Preeti Chauhan^{1*},
Dr Brahmanand Sharma², Dr. Sourabh Agrawal³,
Dr. Avadhesh Shandilya⁴, Dr. Ashok Kumar Sen⁵
(2026). Grishma Ritucharya And Hydration: An
Ayurvedic Review. World Journal of
Pharmaceutical Research, 15(12), 43-55.

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ABSTRACT

The Ayurvedic philosophy of Ritucharya focuses on seasonal adaptation to maintain balance between Doshas, Agni, Dhatus, and general health. The summer season, known as Grishma Ritu, is distinguished by extreme heat, aridity, and diminished physical vigor as a result of the prevalence of Adana Kala. The body loses more fluids, has less Kapha, has a slow buildup of Vata, and has a weaker digestive system during this time. In the summer, maintaining hydration is essential for preventative care. In addition to avoiding excessive heat exposure, taking the right lifestyle measures, and drinking cooling drinks, classical Ayurvedic literature recommends eating Madhura, Sheeta, Drava, and Snigdha Ahara. Dehydration, which causes electrolyte imbalance, heat exhaustion, and compromised physiological function, is another significant summer health issue recognized by contemporary science. With a focus on

hydration from ancient Ayurvedic texts, this study explores the idea of Grishma Ritucharya and connects it to current preventative methods. In addition to contemporary advice like oral rehydration, sufficient water consumption, and heat preventative measures, traditional Ayurvedic practices such as the usage of Takra, Panaka, Mantha, coconut water, and herbal

cooling beverages are also addressed. The relevance of Ayurvedic seasonal diets in preserving health and preventing summer-related ailments in modern society is emphasized in the essay.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Grishma Ritucharya, Hydration, Dehydration, Summer regimen, Pitta, Vata, Preventive healthcare.

INTRODUCTION

Preventative healthcare is given priority in Ayurveda, the ancient Indian medical system, through living in harmony with nature. Seasonal routines intended to sustain physiological equilibrium throughout climatic changes are referred to in Ritucharya as one of its key concepts. Seasonal changes have a significant impact on Doshas, Agni, Bala, and mental health because the human body is constantly interacting with the outside world.

The year is divided into six seasons by classical Ayurvedic texts: Hemanta, Shishira, Vasanta, Grishma, Varsha, and Sharada. Intense heat, dryness, and increased solar radiation define the Grishma Ritu, which spans from about the middle of May to the middle of July. The last stage of Adana Kala is thought to be when living things lose moisture and energy to the sun.

Excessive perspiration, dehydration, weariness, burning feeling, and weakness are all caused by the intense summer heat. Due to dryness and depletion of body fluids, Ayurveda explains that Vata gradually accumulates while Kapha decreases. The body's defenses against exhaustion and disease are weakened by the diminished digestive fire (Agni).

As a result, maintaining hydration is deemed crucial during Grishma Ritu. To restore fluid loss and maintain homeostasis, Ayurvedic texts advise consuming meals and drinks that are cooling, liquid, sweet, and oily. Historically, heat-related diseases have been avoided and hydration has been maintained through the use of traditional therapies like herbal-infused water, Takra, Mantha, and Panaka.

Dehydration is likewise recognized as a significant public health issue during the summer by modern medicine. Insufficient hydration can lead to heat stroke, electrolyte imbalance, and heat stress. Universal preventative strategies include drinking plenty of fluids, replenishing electrolytes, and avoiding too much heat exposure.

Concept of Ritucharya in Ayurveda

The term Ritucharya is derived from two Sanskrit words: “Ritu” meaning season and “Charya” meaning regimen or conduct. Ritucharya refers to the adaptation of diet and lifestyle according to seasonal variations to preserve health and prevent disease.

Ayurveda states.

“स्वस्थस्य स्वास्थ्य रक्षणम्”

“Preservation of health in healthy individuals.”

Seasonal variations influence the Tridoshas—Vata, Pitta, and Kapha. Failure to follow appropriate seasonal regimens results in Dosha imbalance and disease manifestation.

The year is divided into two major periods.

1. Adana Kala (Northern Solstice/Uttarayana)

- Shishira
- Vasanta
- Grishma

2. Visarga Kala (Southern Solstice/Dakshinayana)

- Varsha
- Sharada
- Hemanta

During Adana Kala, the sun becomes progressively stronger and absorbs moisture and strength from the earth and living beings. Hence, body strength gradually diminishes.

Grishma Ritu represents the peak of this depletion phase.

Grishma Ritu: Seasonal Characteristics.

Definition and Duration

Grishma Ritu corresponds to summer season and approximately extends from Jyeshtha to Ashadha months in the Indian calendar.

Environmental Features

- Intense sunlight
- Hot and dry winds

- Reduced environmental moisture
- Increased perspiration
- Water depletion in nature

Ayurvedic texts describe the environment as excessively dry and hot due to the penetrating rays of the sun.

Dosha Dynamics in Grishma

Kapha

Kapha decreases because of heat and dryness.

Vata

Vata begins to accumulate due to excessive dryness and fluid depletion.

Pitta

Pitta gradually accumulates owing to increased environmental heat.

Effect on Agni and Bala

Digestive fire becomes weak during summer due to heat exposure and exhaustion. Physical strength (Bala) is considered minimal during Grishma Ritu.

Ayurveda therefore advises.

- Light diet
- Cooling foods
- Adequate hydration

Reduced physical exertion

Concept of Hydration in Ayurveda

Although the exact modern term “hydration” is not directly mentioned in Ayurvedic classics, the maintenance of body fluids is extensively discussed through concepts such as.

- Udaka
- Kleda
- Rasa Dhatu
- Udakavaha Srotas

Water is considered essential for.

- Digestion

- Circulation
- Thermoregulation
- Nourishment
- Tissue lubrication

The body loses fluids through.

- Sweating
- Urination
- Respiration
- Excessive heat exposure

Ayurveda recognizes symptoms of dehydration-like conditions such as.

- Trishna (excessive thirst)
- Daha (burning sensation)
- Shrama (fatigue)
- Murchha (fainting)
- Klama (exhaustion)

Modern interpretation correlates these with dehydration and heat stress.

Ayurvedic Principles of Hydration During Grishma

Ayurveda recommends foods and drinks possessing the following qualities.

Madhura (Sweet)

Sweet taste nourishes tissues and pacifies Vata and Pitta.

Sheeta (Cooling)

Cooling substances reduce body heat and burning sensation.

Drava (Liquid)

Liquid foods replenish fluid loss.

Snigdha (Unctuous)

Unctuous substances prevent dryness caused by summer heat.

Recommended Foods

- Rice

- Milk
- Ghee
- Fresh fruits
- Sugarcane juice
- Coconut water
- Buttermilk

Foods to Avoid

- Excessively spicy foods
- Salty foods
- Sour foods
- Fried items
- Alcohol
- Excessive exercise

Classical Ayurvedic Summer Drinks

1. Takra (Buttermilk)

Takra is considered highly beneficial during summer. It aids digestion, replenishes fluids, and improves electrolyte balance.

Benefits

- Digestive stimulant
- Cooling effect
- Prevents dehydration
- Light and easily digestible

Modern studies also recognize buttermilk as a probiotic and electrolyte-rich beverage.

2. Panaka

Panaka is a traditional Ayurvedic summer drink prepared using.

- Jaggery
- Water
- Cardamom
- Black pepper
- Lemon
- Herbs

Benefits

- Restores energy
- Reduces thirst
- Prevents fatigue

3. Mantha

Mantha refers to churned drinks prepared from fruits, cereals, or herbs mixed with water.

Examples

- Mango Mantha
- Date Mantha
- Raisin Mantha

These provide

- Hydration
- Instant energy
- Cooling effect

4. Coconut Water

Tender coconut water is naturally cooling and rich in electrolytes.

Benefits

- Maintains electrolyte balance
- Prevents dehydration
- Reduces heat stress

Modern medicine also recommends coconut water as a natural oral rehydration drink.

5. Usheera (Vetiver) Water

Water infused with Vetiver roots possesses cooling and aromatic properties.

Benefits.

- Reduces burning sensation
- Calms the nervous system
- Enhances hydration

Ahara (Dietary Regimen) in Grishma Ritu

Ayurvedic texts prescribe specific dietary measures during summer.

Recommended Foods**1. Fruits**

- Watermelon
- Grapes
- Pomegranate
- Mango (properly soaked)
- Cucumber

2. Grains

- Rice
- Wheat
- Barley

3. Dairy Products

- Milk
- Ghee
- Fresh butter

4. Cooling Herbs

- Coriander
- Fennel
- Mint
- Cardamom

These foods maintain hydration and support digestion.

Foods to Avoid

- Excessively salty foods
- Fermented foods
- Fried foods
- Red meat
- Alcoholic beverages
- Caffeine in excess

Vihara (Lifestyle Regimen) in Grishma

Lifestyle modifications are equally important.

Recommended Practices

Daytime Rest

Ayurveda permits daytime sleep in summer due to depleted body strength.

Wearing Light Clothes

Cotton garments and loose-fitting clothes help maintain body temperature.

Staying in Cool Environments

Exposure to moonlight, gardens, and cool surroundings is recommended.

Application of Sandalwood Paste

Sandalwood possesses cooling and soothing properties.

Avoidance of Excessive Exercise

Heavy physical activity increases dehydration and exhaustion.

Modern Understanding of Hydration

Hydration refers to maintenance of adequate body fluid balance necessary for normal physiological functioning.

Functions of Water

- Regulation of body temperature
- Nutrient transport
- Waste elimination
- Lubrication of joints
- Maintenance of blood volume

An average adult body contains approximately 60% water.

Dehydration: Modern Perspective

Dehydration occurs when fluid loss exceeds intake.

Causes

- Excessive sweating
- Heat exposure
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Inadequate fluid intake

Symptoms

- Thirst
- Dry mouth
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Reduced urine output
- Headache

Severe dehydration may cause.

- Heat exhaustion
- Heat stroke
- Electrolyte imbalance
- Organ dysfunction

Modern Preventive Measures for Summer Hydration**Adequate Water Intake**

Adults are generally advised to consume sufficient fluids according to climate and activity level.

Oral Rehydration Solutions (ORS)

ORS helps maintain electrolyte balance during excessive sweating and dehydration.

Electrolyte-Rich Foods

- Fruits
- Coconut water
- Buttermilk
- Lemon water

Avoiding Heat Exposure

- Avoid direct sunlight during peak hours
- Use umbrellas and protective clothing

Proper Clothing

Light-colored cotton clothes improve heat dissipation.

Cooling Environment

Use of fans, ventilation, and shaded environments helps reduce heat stress.

Correlation Between Ayurveda and Modern Science

Ayurvedic Concept	Modern Correlation
Madhura, Drava Ahara	Hydrating and energy-providing diet
Sheeta Dravya	Cooling agents reducing body temperature
Takra and Panaka	Electrolyte-rich hydration drinks
Avoidance of Atapa	Prevention of heat exposure
Divaswapa	Energy conservation and heat recovery
Weak Agni	Reduced digestive efficiency during heat stress
Trishna and Daha	Symptoms of dehydration

Public Health Importance of Summer Hydration

Heat waves and rising global temperatures have increased the prevalence of.

- Heat exhaustion
- Heat stroke
- Dehydration
- Kidney disorders

Vulnerable populations include.

- Children
- Elderly individuals
- Outdoor workers
- Athletes

Ayurvedic summer regimens provide economical and culturally acceptable preventive strategies.

Traditional cooling beverages and dietary practices can contribute significantly to community health promotion.

Integrative Preventive Strategies

An integrated approach combining Ayurvedic wisdom and modern healthcare can be highly beneficial.

Recommended Integrative Measures

1. Daily intake of natural cooling fluids
2. Avoidance of processed sugary beverages

3. Use of herbal hydration drinks
4. Adequate electrolyte balance
5. Awareness regarding heat stroke symptoms
6. Seasonal dietary modifications
7. Reduced exposure to excessive heat

CONCLUSION

Grishma Ritucharya represents an important preventive healthcare strategy described in Ayurveda for maintaining health during summer. The season is characterized by heat, dryness, depletion of strength, and increased risk of dehydration. Ayurvedic texts recommend specific dietary and lifestyle modifications emphasizing cooling, hydrating, sweet, liquid, and unctuous substances to counterbalance seasonal stress.

Traditional preparations such as Takra, Panaka, Mantha, coconut water, and herbal-infused water effectively support hydration and prevent summer-related disorders. Modern medicine similarly recognizes the importance of adequate fluid intake, electrolyte maintenance, and heat protection during summer months.

The integration of Ayurvedic seasonal wisdom with modern preventive healthcare approaches can provide a comprehensive strategy for combating dehydration and promoting holistic health. Grishma Ritucharya remains highly relevant in contemporary society, especially in the context of rising temperatures and increasing heat-related illnesses worldwide.

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