

ARTICLE ON RITU HARITAKI BENEFITS & USES

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ABSTRACT

Before the start of civilization, people have been more concerned with their health and the prevention of diseases and suffering. *Ayurveda*, the traditional Indian system of medicine that originated thousands of years ago, plays a key role in rejuvenating overall health and well-being. *Ayurveda* focuses on the use of herbs, and natural products in the management of different ailments. *Haritaki* is one such potent herb that has been used in traditional medicines for treating an array of health conditions. Fruits, roots, and bark of this magic plant are used to prepare herbal formulations.^[1] This mystic plant is credited with astringent, rejuvenating, laxative, and purgative traits.

Having *haritaki* powder along with various adjuvants in different seasons is called *Ritu Haritaki*^[2] in *Ayurveda*. A person who wishes to attain the vitalizing actions of *Haritaki* has to consume it with salt during rainy season, with sugar during post monsoon, consume with *Sunthi* during winter, with *Pippali* during autumn with honey during spring and with *jaggery* during summer and this formulation aids in sustaining health and increasing life span.

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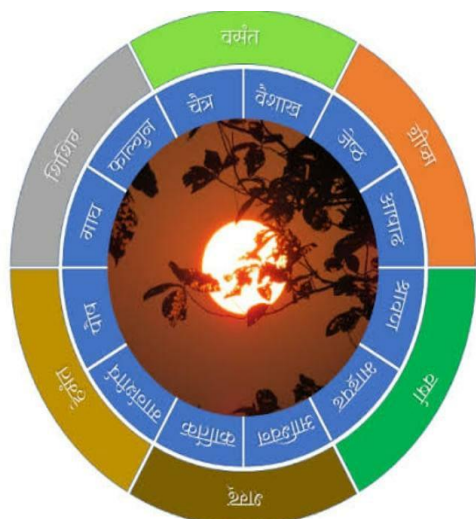
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INTRODUCTION

Ritu is also known as season in modern science. The *Ritu* is a period of some days or months which is marked by changes in weather, growing vegetation e.g.- green and leafy vegetables generally grows in *Shishir- Hemant Ritu* (winter season), and changes in body is marked by the strength of *Agni* (digestive power) and *Bala* (strength of body), by the fluctuation in the state of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha*, to regulates these above condition people must follow *Ritu Charya* (seasonal regimen). There is a perfect guideline given by our *Acharyas* in the context of *Ritu* (season). In this line *Ritu Haritaki* is also helpful to maintain homeostatic condition of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Kapha Doshas*, to maintain the strengthening of body and *Jathara-Agni*. As *Acharyas* says that *Manda-Agni* is the root cause of all diseases. In this article there is description about *Ritu Haritaki* and its benefits and how it works *Acharya Charak* specifically stated *Haritaki* as best among the herbs to be used regularly (*Haritaki pathyanam*).^[3] About the origin of *Haritaki*, it is told that when Lord *Indra* was consuming divine nectar few drops fell on ground & due to its divine origin grew the seven types of *Haritaki*.^[4] According to *Acharya Charaka* except the *Lavan Ras Haritaki* has all five *Rasa* dominant kashaya ras, hot in potency, good for general health. In *Chikitsa sthana* first chapter of *rasayan pad* is given the name *Abhayaamalaki rasayan pad* & *Haritaki* itself and a lot of *yogas* (preparations) of it are depicted here in whole *rasayan pad*. It shows that it is also a best *rasayan*. For healthy life we should use *Haritaki* regularly. It cures different diseases with different *anupan dravyas*. Owing to its *gunas* by *Acharya "Bhav Prakash"* *Haritaki* is indicated as per *ritu* (season) with different *anupan*.

Review of haritaki



- Latin name - *Terminalia chebula*
- Family – Combretaceae
- Guna – Laghu, Ruksha
- Rasa – Panch rasa (Except lavan)
- Virya- Ushna
- Vipak- Madhur
- Prabhav- Tridosahar

Therapeutic effect - Haritaki has five Rasas (tastes), devoid of *lavan rasa* and dominant in astringent (*Kashay Rasa*). It is drying, heat generating, appetizer, brain tonic, attains sweetness after digestion, vitalizer, good for eyes, light to digest, increases longevity strength giving and mild laxative. This drug can relieve cough, haemorrhoids(*Arsha*), intestinal worms(*Krimi*), change in voice, malabsorption, constipation, malarial fevers(*Visham Jwar*), intestinal growths, lower abdominal distension, thirst, vomiting, hiccup tension, splenic diseases, liver diseases, urinary calculi(*Ashmari*), difficult micturition(*Mutrakricha*) and obstructed micturition(*Mutraghata*). Itching sensation, heart diseases, jaundice(*Pandu*), spasmodic pains, upper abdominal distension(*Udavarta*) it helps to cure (skin diseases including leprosy), *Gulma* (phantom tumour), *Udavarta* (upward movement of air in abdomen), *Pandu* (anaemia), *Arsh* (haemorrhoids) chronic and irregular fever, *Prameha* (urinary disease including diabetes mellitus), *Anaha* (abdominal distension).^[5]

Contraindication to take haritaki: - Those who are tired of travel, emaciated, dry skinned, physically weak people who have low strength and immunity due to excessive and regular

sexual activities, alcohol consumption, taking dry and spicy food for a long time, lean peoples, starved, having excess of pitta, pregnant women and who underwent bloodletting (*raktamokshana*) shouldn't consume *Haritaki*.^[6]

Special properties of different form of *haritaki* When chewed; it increases the digestive fire, when taken in the powder acts as a purgative. When boiled on steam and eaten causes constipation. When fried, removes all the three doshas. When consumed along with food, enhances intellectual power and sensory functioning, removes the bad effects of pitta, kapha and and stream lines the excretion of urine, faeces and sweat. When taken after food removes the defects of wrong dietary habits and diseases caused by vata, pitta' kapha. If taken with rock salt, reduces kapha, with sugar- pitta, with ghee- vāta eases and with jaggery, (*guda*) cures all diseases.^[7]

Use of *haritaki* according to *ritu*

To achieve the vitalizing activity of *Haritaki*, it should be combined with various additives so that efficacy of *ritu Haritaki* is enhanced according to season

Varsha ritu – *sharirika bala* is least in starting of *visarga kala* and *Jathara-Agni* is also weak, when the rainy season comes, the evil stomach becomes even weaker due to contaminated wastes. In this season, when the power of fire becomes very weak due to the release of steam from the ground, rains from the sky and the acidification of water and due to this *Valtadi Doshas* are alleviated Therefore, in the rainy season, all the methods (rules) should be followed in general. *saindhav lavana* stimulates the power of digestion (*Dipana*), & carminative (*pachana*). It is an excellent anti – geriatric. *Saindhav lavana* imparts taste to food, and give lightness to body. It enhances taste perception, cooling, aphrodisiac, good for eyes and alleviates all the three Dosas. It bestows longevity & nourishment. It eradicates all diseases and promotes intellect, sense perception and vitality.^[8] It immediately cures *kushtha*, *gulma*, *udavarta*, *shosha*, *pandu*, *mada*, *arsha* various types of obstructions in the channels of circulation of adhesive material (like fat) around the heart and chest i.e. *Srotoshodhak* and enhances memory as well as intellect.

Sharad ritu -It is the second *Ritu* of *Visarga Kala* including Hindi months *Aswin- Kartik* approximately mid September to mid November is considered as *Sharad Ritu*. The body which is habitual for rain and cold environment then sudden exposure of sun rays causes the aggravation of *Pitta Dosha* in *Sharad Ritu*.^[9] In this season extreme temperature and humidity is present in the environment, lakes, rivers and ponds water is pure in *Sharad Ritu*

and intoxicated by due to rise of *Agastya* star.^[10] Strength of body is medium *Jathar-Agni* also in medium state. *Haritaki* should be preferred with *Sarkara* (sugar) or *Mishri* in *Sharad Ritu*. *Haritaki* pacifies *Pitta* by its *Madhura* (sweet), *Tikta* (bitter) and *Kashaya* (astringent) taste, *Sarkara* due to its *Sheeta* (cold) potency and *Madhura* (sweet) taste, is also helpful in pacifying *Pitta Dosha*. Allergies, skin disorders, burning sensation, sore throat, acute ear infection, common cold, flu etc. are the common diseases which manifests in *Sharad Ritu* due to vitiated *Pitta* and *Kapha*. *Haritaki* is indicated in *Kasa* (cough), *Tamak Swasha* (bronchial asthma) mainly in *Kaphaj* disorder and *Mishri* is indicated in *Pitta* dominant disorders like *Daha* (burning sensation), *Raktagata Vikar* (bleeding disorders).

Hemant ritu- It is the last *Ritu* of *Visarga-Kala* including Hindi months *Margshirsha-Posha* approximately mid November to mid January considers as *Hemant Ritu*. Cold weather with cold winds becomes resistant the internal *Agni* in its place, so *Agni* (digestive power) become more powerful to digest any kind of food. People should take heavy, rich and nourished diet in more quantity like Cow milk and its products (butter, ghee etc.), sugarcane and its product (jiggery, sugar etc.) If people do not follow the heavy and nourished diet than *JatharAgni* affects the body and consumes the tissues that increase *Vata Dosha*. *Haritaki* should be taken with *Shunthi* (dried ginger), *Vata* is already aggravated due to cold weather during this *Ritu*, *Haritaki* and *Shunthi* both are hot in potency and having sweet taste which is helpful in balancing the *Vata Dosha*. Diseases of this *Ritu* are mainly occurs due to vitiated *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha* like common cold, sore throat,, arthritis, dry and cracking skin, asthma, bronchitis, migraine, pain in joints. *Haritaki* and *Shuthi* combination of both drugs are beneficial in *Kaphaj* and *Vataj Vikar* by the properties of them which are *Laghu* (light), *Ruksha* (dry), *Ushana* (hot).^[11]

Shishir ritu – Due to (hot) potency of *Pippali*, it pacifies *Kapha* whereas *Snigdha Guna* of *Pippali* pacifies *Vata*. Both *Haritaki* and *Pippali* have rejuvenating effects which are associated with long duration of life, maintaining good health in healthy people, giving vitality to the body, and enhancing intellectual power and memory.^[12] The common cold, flu, bronchitis, strep throat, and nor virus (winter vomiting bug) are the most common ailments in *Shishir* (winter) *Ritu*.

According to the Ayurveda sciences these type of diseases also known as *Urdhwajatru-Gata Vyadhi* (Diseases which occurs in upper clavicular region) this area is already *Kapha* dominant area, and in *Shishir Ritu*, *Kapha dosha* is more prominent, *Haritaki* and *Pippali* is

indicated in *Kasa*(coughing), *Tamak Shwasa*(Bronchial Asthma), *Kapha Praseka*(salivation), *Chhardi*(Vomiting), *Hikka*(hic-cough), *Ajeerna*(Indigestion), *Pandu*(Anemia), *Krimi Roga*(Intestinal worms) due to *Deepana*, *Pachana*, *Rochana* and *Dosha Prashamana* (Balancing between three *Doshas*) Properties.

Vasant ritu -It is the second *Ritu* of *Aadan- Kala*, including Hindi months *Chaitra-Vaishakh* approximately mid march to mid may is consider as *Vasant Ritu*. This is the season of flowering, new leaves, seed germination, and overall renewal of Nature. There is a lovely and peaceful environment. During this season, *Jathra-Agni* decreases due to the melting of *Kapha Dosha* deposited in *Hemant Ritu* by the powerful sunrays. In *Vasant Ritu* body strength is medium. *Haritaki* should be eaten with *Madhu* (honey) in *Vasant Ritu*, according to *Ritu Haritaki*. *Madhu* has the properties of *lekhana* (scraping), *Grahi* (moisture absorption capacity), *Deepan* (digestive), *Vranaropana* (healing wounds), *Rochana* (appetiser).^[13] and *Haritaki* has the properties of *Laghu* (light), *Ruksha* (dry), *Ushna* (hot), and *Anulomana* (regulation of the provocation and suppression of natural urges) properties which pacifies *Kapha* and prevents from the Common diseases of *Vasant Ritu* like asthma, rhinovirus, flu, gastroenteritis, strep throat, allergic conjunctivitis like condition which are mainly occurs due to vitiated *Kapha*. *Madhu* enters the channels minutely and clears them, and *Yogvahi* in nature (which contains the properties of the associated adjuvant) and increases the potency of the combination.

Grishm ritu- *Grishm ritu* is the last season of *aadana kala*, in this season *sharirik bala* (strength) of human being is least. In *grishm* (summer) season *haritaki* is used with *guda*. According to *Acharya Charak*, the environment becomes dry as a result of excessive sunlight. *Guda* has *snigdha* property^[14] hence it calms *ruksha*/dryness of body and being *Shita* (cold) in *virya* balances *haritaki's* warmth (*ushna virya*). It preserves the body's coolness and oiliness. *Guda* raises *kapha*, *krimi*, and *meda dhatu*; nevertheless, having dry/*ruksha haritaki* and *ushna guna* calms *krimi*.

CONCLUSION

Everyone wants a healthy life but in present Era it is hard to maintain the healthy life due to faulty diet habits and life style. There are many methods in *Ayurveda* to regulates the healthy status of life like *DinaCharya* (daily regimen), *RituCharya* (seasonal regimen), *sadvritta* (good habits), *Aachar Rasayan* (to maintain social health) etc. *Ritu Haritaki* is the one of among them. It is said that “As is the grain so is the mind”. *Haritaki* producing the

wholesome effect (the ones that helps to stay healthy) “*Haritaki Pathayanam*”. In *Ritu Haritaki*, *Haritaki* is recommended with different adjuvant in different season like *pippali*, jiggery, dried ginger etc., Adjuvant is an ingredient which modifies and enhances the strength and the qualities of principal ingredient.

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