

AYURVEDIC DIETETICS AND FOOD TECHNOLOGY: ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE FOR NUTRITION IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PILES (ARSHA)

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, hemorrhoid, or Arsha, are a common condition where the anal blood vessels swell, leading to pain, discomfort, and bleeding.^[1,2] Ayurveda uses a more natural and holistic approach, whereas modern medicine often employs surgery to cure severe conditions. focusing on only treating the symptoms, it aims to identify and deal with the root of the issue.^[6] Ayurveda states that when the body's natural balance (dosh) is disturbed, digestion (agni) is impaired, and toxins (am) accumulate, then arsha occurs. Bad eating habits, such as eating too hot, oily, or heavy foods, or eating foods that don't go together, are often the culprit. Ayurveda provides nutritional guidance that helps create balance in the body. This paper looks at how traditional Ayurvedic food wisdom can be combined with modern food technology to create healthier, easy-to-eat, and culturally appropriate food products. These would be free from harmful preservatives and designed to suit different body types (doshas).^[8] Study shows that when patients follow a proper diet and take Ayurvedic medicines like **Triphala Guggulu**.^[11]

Along with treatments like **Kshara Basti** (a type of enema therapy), they experience fewer recurrences and an overall better quality of life.^[7] This highlights how we treat hemorrhoids—focusing more on diet and natural methods rather than surgery or temporary relief.

KEYWORDS: Arsha, Virudha ahara, Pathya, Apathya, Vata-Pitta-Kapha, Agni, Kshara basti.

INTRODUCTION

According to classical Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita.^[2,3] piles are caused by a disturbance in one or more of the three doshas - primarily apana vata, pitta and kapha. —leading to the formation of fleshy growths (mansa ankura) at the anal orifice. The degenerative doshas enter the anus (anal region), which is classified as a marma (vital point), leading to structural changes and poor function. From the perspective of Kriya Sharir (Ayurvedic physiology), disturbed Apana Vata and Mandagni are the main culprits that lead to the formation of Ama and Drishti in Purisavaha and Raktavaha shratas. These anatomical abnormalities make hemorrhoids not just a local pathology, but a reflection of a systemic disorder.

In hemorrhoids, diet is a key diagnostic and treatment factor. In classical texts, the significance of food and anti-inflammatory medications in the development and treatment of hemorrhoids has been highlighted frequently.^[4,5,9] The disease is directly caused by improper food combination (Viruddha ahara), excessive consumption of Ruksha, guru, or Ati-Snigdha Ahara, irregular eating habits, and a deficiency of nutritional fiber.^[9] Thus, Ayurvedic dietetics provides a strong basis for prevention and management, guided by the principles of satmya (compatibility), Mithyaahara (moderation), and Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana (particular requirements of food consumption). At the same time, new opportunities have arisen to transform these ancient dietary principles into accessible, palatable, and useful food compositions that fit into contemporary lifestyles due to improvements in food technology. Having a focus on its physiological foundations, traditional dietary practices, and current studies, this paper aims to determine the function and potential applications of Ayurvedic dietetics and food technology in the treatment of Arsha. Utilizing the integration of Ayurvedic physiology, clinical data, and technology innovation, we provide a patient-friendly, evidence-based, holistic method for hemorrhoid management.

Table no. 1: Pathya and Apathya food on the basis of Physiology.^[9]

Pathya	Apathya	Principle (Based on Physiology)
Warm water	Cold water, carbonated drinks	Warm water supports agni, prevents ama formation
Buttermilk with rock salt	Curd, cheese	Buttermilk is deepana and grahi; curd increases kapha
Boiled green gram, red rice, barley	Black gram, white rice, wheat in excess	Laghu & easily digestible foods balance Vata and Pitta
Cooked vegetables like bottle gourd, ridge gourd	Brinjal, spicy pickles	Cooling veggies soothe inflamed mucosa, regulate stool
Ghee in moderation	Excessive oil, fried items	Ghee promotes snehana of colon, helps anulomana
Fiber-rich fruits (papaya, figs, guava)	Dry fruits (esp. fried or salted)	Fiber prevents constipation, ensures regular purgation

Role of Diet in the Etiopathogenesis of Arsha

According to Ayurvedic texts, arsha is an indication of dosha imbalance, specifically Apana Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, that leads to fleshy growths called Mansa-Ankura to develop at the anal opening. The physiology of digestion, excretion, and dosha circulation in the lower gastrointestinal tract are key to the development of this condition. Apana Vata basic role in Kriya Sharira is to assist waste products, specifically shukra, mutra (urine), and mala (stool), move downward. This eliminative mechanism malfunctions when Apana Vata is vitiated by prolonged apathya diet ingestion and lifestyle parameters.

Charaka and Sushruta indicate that Ahara (food) and Vihara (lifestyle) are the key nidana (causative variables) of Arsha. Viruddha ahara (incompatible food pairings) and the ingestion of guru (heavy), abhishyandi (clogging), ati-snigdha (excessively oily), ruksha (dry), vidahi (pungent), and katu-tikshna (hot and spicy) food are dietary causes.^[8] Although ama (toxic, untreated metabolic byproducts) is a fundamental pathogenic component in many conditions, including Arsha, these trigger agni-mandya (weak digestive fire).

The srotas (micro-channels), especially the Purishavaha (fecal elimination) and Raktavaha (blood-carrying) srotas, are obstructed by the accumulation of ama. Dosha develops up in the guda pradesha (anal area), a marma site, when these srotas are obstructed. This leads to localized discomfort, varicosity, and pile economic growth. In addition, one of the subtypes described in Ayurvedic texts is Raktarsha (bleeding piles), which arises when Raktavaha srotas is triggered by an excess of Pitta and rakta dushti.

From a physiological standpoint, improper dietary habits impair the balance of the five types

of Agni – Jatharagni, Bhutagni, and Dhatvagni. Jatharagni is primarily responsible for the digestion of food in the gastrointestinal tract. When it becomes hypoactive due to overeating, untimely meals, or consumption of viruddha ahara, it leads to improper digestion of ahara, producing ama and disturbing dosha homeostasis. Chronic ama presence and altered dosha flow, particularly of Apana Vata, disturbs the function of large intestine, leading to irregular bowel movements, straining, and eventually the formation of Arsha.

Improper eating habits affect the physical balance of the five types of fire: Jathragni, Bhutagni, and Dhatugni. Jathragni is primarily responsible for the digestion of food. Overeating, eating late, or eating the wrong foods can cause it to become hypoactive, which interferes with food digestion, creates ama, and disrupts the balance of the doshas. Particularly in Apana Vata, chronic ama and irregular dosha flow interfere with the ability of the large intestine to function, resulting in straining, irregular bowel movements, and ultimately the development of hemorrhoids.

It's also essential to understand the concept of Udavarta, or the change of Vata, which frequently comes on by persistent constipation and the suppression of natural desires, each of these elevate pelvic and anal pressure. The veins in the anal canal protrude and get obstructed as a result of repeated straining. This pathology closely resembles the modern understanding of internal and external hemorrhoids.

Each dosha produces a characteristic type of Arsha

- **Vataja Arsha:** Dry, hard, painful, non-bleeding, associated with constipation.
- **Pittaja Arsha:** Burning sensation, bleeding, inflammation, often acute in nature.
- **Kaphaja Arsha:** Slimy, heavy, less painful but chronic and sluggish in onset. The dietary causation fits well with these doshic presentations:
- **Excessive dry and spicy food** → Vata & Pitta vitiation → Hard stools & bleeding piles.
- **Heavy, oily, kapha-promoting diet** → Kapha dushti → Chronic, non-painful, mucoid piles.

Food thus represents both the cause and the remedy in Ayurveda. The pathogenesis of Arsha can be prevented at its cause by restoring agni and reversing improper food habits. Ahara Chikitsa (dietary management), an essential component of treatment in the early stages and an additional technique even in surgical patients, is based on this therapeutic explanation.

Table No. 2: Dosha-Specific Food Recommendations and Restrictions in Arsha.^[9]

Dosha Predominance	Recommended Foods	Foods to Avoid
Vata-dominant Arsha	Warm soups, ghee, sesame oil, cooked grains, buttermilk	Dry foods, excessive fiber, cold water, fasting
Pitta-dominant Arsha	Cooling foods (milk, coconut), amalaki, coriander water	Spicy, sour, fermented, fried, excessive salt
Kapha-dominant Arsha	Light, dry foods, barley, green gram, trikatu	Dairy, sweets, cold foods, excess oil, sedentary eating

Food tech allows **dosha-specific diet kits**, which are aligned with

- **Vata-prone individuals:** Warm, oily, fiber-rich but easy-to-digest mixes.
- **Pitta-prone individuals:** Cooling, alkaline formulations (e.g., shatavari, amalaki).
- **Kapha-prone individuals:** Light, dry snacks with deepana (digestive) herbs.

Review of Literature

Ayurvedic texts regard Arsha as primarily a *Vata*-driven disorder, often with *Pitta* and *Kapha* involvement. Key etiological factors include chronic constipation (*Vibandha*) and suppression of urges, which aggravate *Apana Vata* downward flow. The pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) involves *Agnimandya* generating *Ama* (sticky toxins) that block the digestive channels (*Srotodushti*). Vitiated *Apana Vata* carries these toxins to the anal region, where congested channels produce *Sanga* (obstruction) and *Shiragranthi* (venous lumps). Over time, chronic obstruction and inflammation lead to both internal and external piles. Prodomal (*Poorva*) symptoms such as anorexia, sluggish digestion, scanty stools and lethargy reflect underlying agni impairment. Thus impaired agni and mala stagnation are seen as root causes making digestive regulation (through diet) fundamental to prevention and cure.

According to Ayurvedic texts, Arsha is mainly a *Vata*-driven medical conditions, which frequently involves *Pitta* and *Kapha*. Chronic constipation (*Vibandha*) and urge suppression are key etiological factors that aggravate the downward flow of *Apana Vata*. *Agnimandya* produces *Ama*, or sticky toxins, which obstruct the digestive channels (*Srotodushti*) as part of the pathogenesis (*Samprapti*). These toxins are transported by vitiated *Apana Vata* to the anal region, where obstructed channels lead to venous lumps (*Shiragranthi*) and blockage (*Sanga*). Both internal and externally piles grow over time as a result of constant inflammation and blockage. Anorexia, slow digestion, loose stools, and fatigue are examples of prodromal (*Poorva*) symptoms that indicate fundamental Agni dysfunction. Impaired Agni and Mala stagnation are therefore seen to be the root cause, making diet-based digestive management crucial for both prevention and treatment.

Role of Agni, Ama and Mala

In Arsha, the quality of Agni plays an important role. Weak Jatharagni (digestive fire) combines with feces and body fluids to form ama. When this ama blocks the nadis, especially the colon or Pakvashaya, it causes Malabaddhata or stool retention. According to Ayurveda, piles are frequently considered as a secondary illness (Anubandha) caused by baddhakoshtha, or a plugged gut. Therefore, before treating the local piles, therapies aim to eliminate Ama and ignite Agni, for example, through the application of digestive herbs and mild laxatives (Vatanulomana dravyas). If the waste (malas) is vitiated, it irritates the vessels. Therefore, it is important to maintain consistent Malakriya (bowel movements). These observations coincide with our present knowledge that hemorrhoidal growth is caused by constipation and stool stagnation.

Table No. 3: Pathya In Arsha.

Food Category	Examples	Ayurvedic Action / Benefits	Modern Nutritional Insight
High-fiber Grains & Legumes	- Barley (<i>Yava</i>) - Horse Gram (<i>Kulattha</i>)	- Mild laxative , reduces <i>Purisha Sangraha</i> (constipation)- <i>Vatanulomana</i>	High in dietary fiber, reduces straining during defecation
Whole Cereals	- Wheat (<i>Godhuma</i>) - Red rice (<i>Rakta Shali</i>)	- Nourishing (<i>Brimhana</i>)- Does not obstruct <i>Agni</i> when taken in moderation	Provides satiety, protein, fiber
Vegetables	- Punarnava leaves- Elephant foot yam (<i>Surana</i>)- Pumpkin, leafy greens	- <i>Shothahara</i> (anti-inflammatory)- Adds bulk to stool- Cooling effect on gut mucosa	Anti-inflammatory, soluble fiber (~4g/100g in yam)
Fermented/Probiotic Foods	- Buttermilk (<i>Takra</i>)- Rice gruel (<i>Kanji</i>)	- Enhances <i>Agni</i> and gut flora- <i>Laghu</i> and easily digestible	Rich in probiotics, aids digestion
Cooling & Lubricating Agents	- Aloe vera gel- Sesame powder in milk- Clarified butter (<i>Ghrita</i>)	- Soothes anal mucosa- Prevents <i>rukshata</i> (dryness) - Supports <i>Basti sthana</i> (colon) lubrication	Prevents hard stool; healthy fats improve gut motility
Herbal Supplements	- Triphala (Amla, Haritaki, Bibhitaka) - Amla alone- Triphala + Guggulu	- <i>Vatanulomana</i> , <i>Shothahara</i> , <i>Vrana Ropana</i> - Supports bowel regulation and healing	Antioxidant, vitamin C, gentle laxative, wound healing

Clean the intestinal tract with ease, prevent constipation, ignite the digestive fire (Agni), and reduce hemorrhoidal symptoms" is the combined aim of these Pathya foods. In terms of nutrition, the diet provides nutrients, insoluble and soluble fiber, fluids, and antioxidants (such as triphala's gallic acid), all of which are compatible with present high-fiber, anti-inflammatory diets.

Table No. 4: Apathya (Foods to Avoid).

Ayurvedic texts prohibited foods that aggravate Arsha. These include.

Category	Foods/Substances to Avoid	Reason (According to Ayurveda)
Heavy, Oily Meats	Fatty meats (<i>Anoopa Desha Mamsa</i>), Fish (<i>Matsya</i>)	Hard to digest; aggravate <i>Vata</i> and <i>Pitta</i> , worsen constipation
Dairy & Dense Foods	Excess curd (<i>Dadhi</i>), deep-fried sweets, starchy tubers (yams, potatoes)	Cause heaviness; can block bodily channels (<i>srotas</i>)
Spicy, Sour, Fermented Foods	Pickles, chilies, raw garlic/onion, other heating (<i>Vidahi</i>) items	Increase heat in the body and blood; provoke inflammation
Processed & Constipating Items	Cheese, fast food, refined flour, sweets, low-fiber snacks	Constipating, low in fiber; disrupt digestion
Other Lifestyle Factors	Overeating, suppressing natural urges (e.g. defecation), excessive sun, alcohol, caffeine, mango, sesame seeds	Create <i>Ama</i> (toxins), disturb <i>Vata</i> , and increase internal heat

These Apathya are in compliance with current recommendations to stay away from nourishment that is high in fat, low in fiber, and stimulants because they could lead to inflammation and constipation. Both systems try to prevent strain and toxin accumulation by eliminating these.

Table No. 5: Functional Foods and Nutraceuticals in Ayurveda.

Category	Example/Substance	Purpose/Function	Modern Equivalent
Herbal Formulations	<i>Triphala</i> , <i>Triphala-uggulu</i> tablets	Mild laxative, stops bleeding, heals mucosa	Natural laxatives with healing properties
Bulk-Forming Agents	<i>Ispaghula</i> (Psyllium husk)	Softens stool by absorbing water; promotes easier bowel movement	Psyllium-based fiber supplements
Digestive Decoctions	Cumin, coriander, ginger, garlic (<i>Trikatu</i>) teas	Enhances digestion, reduces gas and inflammation	Herbal/digestive teas
Probiotic Dairy	Buttermilk or fresh yogurt with spices (<i>asafoetida</i>)	Soothes intestines, promotes good gut flora, reduces inflammation	Probiotic yogurts or kefir
Medicated Ghee/Oils	Aloe vera ghee, <i>Sneh Basti</i> (oil enema)	Lubricates colon, pacifies <i>Vata</i> , reduces dryness and pain	Lubricant laxatives + herbal therapy
Fiber-Rich Ingredients	Soaked/sprouted pulses, coarse grains	Increases dietary fiber and micronutrients; eases bowel movements	Fortified whole grains, plant-based fiber

Thus, Ayurveda and modern nutritional advice agree. Both emphasize a stool-easing routine: for achieving softness and regularity, whole grains (bran, porridges), fruits, vegetables, and legumes are recommended. At the exact same time, effort is placed on reducing the transit period through proper hydration. Most importantly, consuming oatmeal or whole-grain cereals

is currently very similar to Ayurvedic "green gram soup" or barley water. In summary, integrating evidence-based fiber-rich nutrition with Ayurvedic Pathya principles results in a broad, synergistic strategy for piles treatment and prevention.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The classical Ayurvedic textual study, secondary literature review, and applied correlation with modern food technology form the backbone of this conceptual research article. This study's fundamental methodology is a qualitative analysis and comparative synthesis, with a focus on Ayurvedic dietetics theoretical structures and food processing techniques.

Particularly in relation to the Nidana (etiology), Samprapti (pathogenesis), and Chikitsa (therapy) of Arsha, classical Ayurvedic references have been taken from the Charaka Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Ashtanga Hridaya, and other respected Nighantus.^[4,5,10] The ideas of Agni, Ama, Apana Vata dushti, and Srotas theory were given particular focus from the perspective of Kriya Sharira (Ayurvedic physiology).^[8] In addition, for interpretive clarity, commentaries like Dalhana on Sushruta and Chakrapani on Charaka were studied. Resources on the internet such as AYUSH Research Portal, PubMed, and Google Scholar were used.

DISCUSSION

Diet, lifestyle, herbal supplements, medicine, exercise, and even massage are all covered by this. The majority of treatment concentrates on maintaining appropriate digestive health because constipation is one of the main causes of piles. The main objectives of Ayurvedic treatment are to minimize symptoms and to improve quality of life. Some measures to prevent and treat arsha are quite easy to understand and lifestyle-related because Ayurvedic therapy calls for different dietary and lifestyle improvements.

The combination of traditional and modern concepts has highlighted the importance of nutritional treatment for hemorrhoids.^[6,12] The growing focus on foods rich in fiber and anti-inflammatory properties suggests that "food as medicine" was a fundamental concept, now supported by studies. The growing focus on foods rich in fiber and anti-inflammatory properties shows that "food as medicine" was a original concept, now supported by studies. In particular, one RCT found that Ayurvedic polyherbal prescription significantly improved symptoms (reduction in bleeding, prolapse grade, and sphincter spasm) over conventional fiber-plus-lidocaine treatment⁶. Similarly, it has been clinically proven that the Triphala-

Guggulu decoction improves constipation and speeds up the healing of anorectal ulcers.^[7,11] These results indicate how traditional treatments can be improved by Ayurvedic food-herbal combinations. Current pharmacologic therapies (such as topical corticosteroids and flavonoid supplements) often focus on the vascular and inflammatory components while neglecting underlying dietary parameters. In contrast, the main objective of Ayurvedic nutrition is to deal with basic metabolic imbalances.

For example, inclusion of carminative spices (cumin, ginger, ajwain) and lukewarm **dravyas** acts to kindle Agni, while cool demulcents (aloe, ghee) lubricate and soothe. These practices may modulate gut microbiota and systemic inflammation in ways modern diets do not. Many Ayurvedic rasayanas (e.g. amalaki) also provide antioxidants and vitamins absent from a typical Western diet.

CONCLUSIONS

Hemorrhoids are classified as a "Mahagada" in Ayurvedic literature, which also highlights the importance of lifestyle parameters, such as daily routines and nutrition, in preventing and treating the disorder.^[9,10] Condition associated with food, lifestyle, occupation, and age. Classical Ayurvedic literature describes a perfect lifestyle that one can follow in order to live a healthy and long life. According to Ayurvedic literature, eating low-fiber foods, poor eating habits, abnormal body posture, difficult deliveries, prevalent abortions, psychological imbalances, and trauma to the anal tract are some important variables that lead to the development of Arsha (piles). All stages of arsha can be effectively treated with several Ayurvedic treatments available, indicating the system's capability to offer safe, most-encompassing, and natural care without any adverse effects. Awareness of appropriate medical measures along with lifestyle changes can reduce the incidence of this common disease and improve the quality of life of those affected. Nidan Parivarjan play a vital role in the prevention of hemorrhoid. As a result, Ayurveda has immense potential to treat all stages of hemorrhoid successfully and without any complications.

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