

## AYURVEDA FOR IMMUNITY

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the traditional medicine system of India, has a huge potential in preventive and curative healthcare. Ayurveda has always emphasized on enhancing the body's overall natural resistance to the disease causing agent rather than directly neutralizing the agent itself. Vyadhikshamatva is described in Ayurveda and this concept is considered equivalent to immunity. Normal condition of kapha, bala and ojas are also similar to immunity. According to Acharya Charak Bala is three type-1) Sahaj bala, 2) Kalaj bala, 3) Yuktikrita bala. Sahaja bala occurs naturally according to the body and mind. This force is generated from birth itself, just as the body is generated from mothers and fathers, force is also generated according to one's body and mind. Kalaja bala is called that which is according to seasons and according to age i.e. childhood, youth and old age. Kalaja bala arises automatically according to time and Yuktikrita bala (Modulated by

diet, exercise, regimen and immunomodulator- rasayanas). Innate immunity may be correlated to Sahaja bala described in Ayurveda. Kalaja bala and yuktikrita bala may be correlated to acquired immunity. Ayurveda boasts of many medicinal plants which can enhance body immunity like ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*) etc. Rasayana drugs such as Ashwagandha, Guduchi, Amalaki and sYastimadhu also contribute for good immunity.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurvedic system of medicine not only deals with treating the diseases but also aims to prevent the disease. Acharyas advanced the utilization of rasayana to upgrade ojas and vyadhikshamatva (immunity). Vyadhikshamatva (immunity) is described in Ayurveda and

this concept is considered equivalent to immunity. The word immunity means the strength of protecting from infectious disease. Immunity is defined as the capacity of the body to resist pathogenic agents or body developed resistance power against the antigen. It is the ability of body to resist the entry of different types of foreign bodies like bacteria, virus and toxic substance etc. Immunity is two type- innate immunity & acquired immunity. Innate immunity is the inborn capacity of the body to resist pathogens. By chance, if the organisms enter the body, innate immunity eliminates them before the development of any disease. It is otherwise called the natural or non- specific immunity. Acquired immunity is the resistance developed in the body against any specific foreign body like bacteria, viruses, toxin, vaccines or transplanted tissues. So this type of immunity is also known as specific immunity. It is the most powerful immune mechanism that protects the body from the invading organisms or toxic substance. The power of a human being to fight against a particular disease or bacteria is called vyadhikshamatava. The disease does not occur when a creature that is susceptible to the disease gets infected with that disease. Innumerable bacteria are present in the environment around our body, which keep entering the body through respiration etc. Blood (Rasa + Rakta) has the ability to destroy them, thereby protecting the body from infection by these bacteria. This natural power is called disease potential. Many people prone to disease due to breaking their dietary habit, change in climate, on the other hand, some people remain healthy in spite of breaking dietary rules or change in climate and do not get affected by any disease. Many micro-organisms enter the human body through air and water, but fail to create disease due to immune response present in the living body. Rasayana is health promoting and rejuvenates the whole physiology, producing resistance against disease both physically and mentally. If a person has a strong mind, even serious disease can be faced by the physiology as minor disease. Some factors which influence immunity in the body- A healthy uterus for a baby growth can be likened to fertile and nourishing soil for seed. Wholesome, adequate and timely nutrition in infancy plays an important role in developing immunity. Generally Kapha constitution people have stronger immunity than pitta and vata constitution.

Following formulations enhance immunity- water+milk, water+ghee, milk+ghee or pure water, water+honey

Ayurvedic foods that can help to boost immunity- with a good diet consisting of natural produce, spices, herbs and whole grains, a proper sleep schedule and regular exercising, we can strengthen our internal system in no time. Here we will focus upon some that are considered the healthiest options in ayurveda- amalaka, datepalm, tulsi leaves, turmeric,

ginger, jaggery and clarified butter or ghrít.

**Amalaki-** The Tiny green fruit is the richest source of vitamins, a powerful antioxidant that helps to strengthen the body's natural defence system.

**Tulsi leaves-** Helps to treat infections in the respiratory tract and strengthen the immune system.

Some yoga exercises for a healthy immune system- Mandukasana or frog pose, Samakonasana, Triyak tadasana, Bal Bakasana.

**Ginger-** The anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties of this root can boost immune health and reduce acute inflammation in the body.

### **Effect of Hita and Ahita food substances on immunity**

Some food substance are wholesome and suitable for the body as the body can inheritably transform those substances into its own (Congruent) by virtue of jatisatmya, called hita substances (Satmya). Substances which are always suitable and accustomed (To man) by birth like water, ghee, milk, porridge (Boiled rice) etc are called hita substance while others those which are always unsuitable and causes putrefaction and similarly death (destroying) such as fire, caustic alkali, poison etc. so also some others which by combinations become similar to poison, are called Ahita substance (Asatmya).

### **Factors responsible for promotion of strength**

There are 12 factors responsible for increasing Bala (Strength) of the body-

1. Birth in a country where people are naturally strong.
2. Birth at a time when people naturally gain strength i.e. Hemanta (November to January) and Shisira (January to March)
3. Favorable deposition of time (Pleasant and Moderate climate)
4. Excellence in the qualities of seed i.e. sperm and ovum, and Asaya i.e. proper anatomical and physiological status of uterus of mother
5. Excellence of the ingested food
6. Excellence of the physique
7. Excellence of the Satmya (Wholesomeness of various factors responsible for maintenance of the body)
8. Excellence of the mind
9. Favorable deposition of the nature

10. Young age of both the parents i.e. they should not be over aged
11. Habitual performance of exercise
12. Cheerful disposition and immense love for each other. The individuals possessing most of these factors are natural.

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

As this article is thoroughly explained with the help of Ayurvedic Samhita like Charak Samhita, Sushrut Samhita, Ashtang Hridaya, as well as educational website.

## DISCUSSION

Vyadhikshamatva is described in ayurveda and this concept is considered equivalent to immunity. Normal condition of kapha, bala and ojas are also similar to immunity.

*Acharya Charaka's* observation in that kapha, in its normal states of functioning, represents a potential source of strength and power to resist decay and disease and all constitutions are equally capable of vyathi-kshamatwa. Likewise, Chakrapanidatta's interpretation of the term vyadhi-kshamatwa as vyadhi-bala virodhitwa (Antagonistic to the strength and virulence of disease) and vyadhyutpada vibandhakatwa (The capacity to inhibit, contain, fix or bind the causes or factors of disease was mentioned. Charaka was also cited as describing bala as the factor that destroys doshas (Disease causing factors). The term ojas, has been stated in the samhita granthas to stand, not only for sleshma but also for rasa and rakta. It is seen, in addition, that a reference has been made to two kinds of ojas viz., ardhanjali ojas and ashtabindu ojas by Chakrapani datta. These are important and significant, in the context of vyadhikshamatwa, interpreted both as vyādhibala virodhitwa and vyādhhyutpāda-vibandhakatwa. The two kinds of ojas have a direct bearing on body's defence against decay, degeneration and infection.

According to Charaka- The colour of sleishmika ōjas is white, slightly reddish or yellow, resembling the colour of ghee; it is sweet in taste, like honey and, has the smell of laja.

According to Shusruta- Ojas is somatmaka(Cooling and watery), Snigdha (Viscous); shukla (Clear white); shita (Cold in potency); sthira (Responsible for promoting the stability and strength of shariravayavas (Or organs of the body); sara (Prasaransashila or capable of flowing and permeating through); viviktam (Pratyagra or foremost in action; nutrition of the best quality); mrudu (Soft); mritsna (Slimy); pranayatana (The seat of life) and uttama (The

best)". Describing its functions, he notes: "The entire body, with its limbs and organs, is permeated with ojas and a loss (Deficiency) of it leads to wasting, decay and destruction.

In Ayurvedic text, various Acharyas have described countless useful formulations and mode of duct for children.

Acharya Kashyapa described a special formulation by the name of Lehan. The Lehan promotes health, complexion, strength (Immunity), digestive & metabolic power is summarized below in brief- Svarana Prasana, Samvardhan ghrit and Brahmi ghrit.

Acharya Charaka – Panchagavya ghrit, Brahmi ghrita, Kalyanaka ghrit.

Acharya Sushruta- Svarana Bhasma with Kustha, Vacha, madhu and ghee. Svarana Bhasma with paste of Brahmi, Sankhapuspi with honey and ghee.

## CONCLUSION

All unwholesome food articles are not equally harmful, all dosas are not equally powerful and all persons are not capable of resisting diseases. Our immune system, a network of intricate stages and pathways in the body, protects us against these harmful microbes as well as certain diseases. It recognizes foreign invaders like bacteria, viruses and parasites and takes immediate action. The most important thing in relation to health and disease is immunity of the body. It is not exaggeration to mention that, Ayurveda described Vyadhikshamatva in more detail and magnificent way which can be considered equivalent to modern concept of immunity.

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