

**RAJASWALA PARICHARYA-AN ESSENTIAL APPROACH TOWARDS
FEMALE HEALTH IN AYURVEDA**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda focuses on the study of maintaining health and healthy life. A special importance is given to *Stree* in our shastras and also said “*Yatra Naryaastu Pujyante Ramante Tatra Devataha*”. *Stree* is known as an embodiment of the Divine; Hence, *Stree Swaasthya* is given highest priority by the great *Acharya*. *Ayurveda* recognizes menstruation as a physiological and self-purifying process; it is also governed by the actions of the Doshas. *Ayurveda* has prescribed a mode of life to be adopted by menstruating women - a series of Do's and Don'ts-called as *Rajaswala Paricharya*, which aims to protect the health of the menstruating woman and prevent any health defects in the child, in case any conception happens. Menstrual Dysfunctions Risk Factors are conventionally divided into social and medico-biological. Unfortunately, it has been observed that the *Rajaswala Paricharya* is neither being publicized nor followed by the women in modern era.

Also, the wrong information spread by media and manufacturers of sanitary napkins. WHO, UNICEF, NHM-GOI all are emphasizing on improving the reproductive health of adolescent girls and supports the accessible WASH facilities. But, they do not emphasize certain do's and don'ts during menstrual days. So, *Ayurveda* physician has to promote this *Paricharya* for enhancement of reproductive health of female. With little effort, women naturally increased

observance of the restrictions as they practiced them and experienced the benefits. Aim of this is to avoid vitiation of Vata, Pitta and Kapha, prevent formation of Ama and restore the Bala and nurture the Agni of the female. Thus, developing a correct and a positive outlook towards menstruation i.e., *Rajaswala Paricharya* is as important as practicing them.

KEYWORDS: *Rajaswala paricharya*, Normal menstruation, Female health etc.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the irreplaceable system of medicine, helps women in journey towards better health throughout different phases of life and put value to her life.

Guidelines of prevention and promotion of health are described in details at every stage of women life, which should be performed during the different phases like '*Rajaswala*' (menstruation), '*Ritumati*' (fertile period), '*Garbhini*' (pregnancy), '*Sutika*' (postpartum).

Woman is more prone to various diseases, because of drastic physical and psychic changes during these periods. Also, if she does not follow these guidelines, her health status deteriorates fast particular to reproductive functions. Following these '*Paricharya*' (modes of life), women respond to the changes in her body healthily and also it will boost the immunity. The endmost goal of these *Paricharyasis* to conceive a healthy child easily, with a smooth antenatal and postnatal phase. The female who is menstruating is termed as '*Rajaswala*'.^[3] The duration of menstruation has been told as ranging from 3 to 7 days in Ayurveda classics. The female should follow certain do's and don'ts regarding the *Ahara* (dietary), *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Mansika* (psychological) aspects for first 3 days of menstrual cycle, known as *Rajaswala Paricharya*.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim: To validate the effect of *Rajaswala Paricharya* on the menstrual health of woman.

OBJECTIVES

1. To compile all the references regarding *Rajaswala Paricharya* from classical texts.
2. To recognize the scientific concept behind *Rajaswala Paricharya*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out with the help of all the references in Ayurvedic texts and modern science. Review of *Bruhatrayee*, i.e., *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga*

Sangraha and *Ashtanga Hridaya* have been studied for the applicable references of *Rajaswala Paricharya*. Literature review of modern have been studied on regimen during menstruation and its effects on reproductive health. Also, from various medical research databases like Google Scholar, PubMed, internet-based journals, websites and textbooks data have been compiled here.

Table no. 1: Rajswala paricharya according to different Acharya's.

No.	Acharya's	Rajaswala paricharya
1.	Charaka	From the onset of menstruation till 3 days and night, she must follow <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceive abstinence • Eat in unbroken vessel placed in hand • Should not wash or take bath or clean her body
2.	Sushruta	From 1 st day of onset of menstruation a woman should do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Follow chastity <input type="checkbox"/> She must sleep on bed made up of Darbha <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid <i>Anjana, Lepana, Abhyanga, Diwaswapa</i>, cutting nails, laughing, talking too much, racing, combing, wind, exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Eat <i>Havishya Anna</i> i.e., meal prepared with ghee, <i>Sali</i> and <i>Godugdha</i> served in hand or palm or vessels made of clay, leaves etc
3.	Vagbhata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid food which is sour, spicy, salty, hot in nature <input type="checkbox"/> Take food in less quantity. <input type="checkbox"/> Always concentrate on thinking good and auspicious things

Rajaswala Paricharya and Their Scientific Validation.

A. *Bhrahmacharini*

Vaginal sexual intercourse without precaution (e.g., use of condom) during or shortly after menstruation is a risk factor for the heterosexual transmission of HIV or other sexually transmitted pathogens and the subsequent development of STDs affecting, internalia, the health of the reproductive tract.^[7] Infection from Chlamydia and gonorrhoea are important preventable causes of pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) and infertility.^[8] Vaginal sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman could lead to an increase in the flow of menstrual blood.^[9] Filer and Wu found that infertility patients who frequently or occasionally engaged in coitus during menstruation were almost twice more likely to have endometriosis than those who did not report coital behaviour during menses, while such coital activity was unrelated to PID.^[10]

B. Havishyam Bhojini (Eat Havishya-Shali, Ghrita, Takra, Yawaka etc)

Functional Ingredients in barley grains is having efficacy for preventive chronic diseases. Barley grains can improve bowel health and metabolic syndrome; prevent heart disease; and accelerate wound healing activities.^[11] Barley β -glucans can not only regulate immune responses and connect innate and adaptive immunity.^[12] Antioxidants are compounds that remove reactive oxygen species from cells, which play a dual role in aggravating and preventing diseases.^[13] *Shashtika shali* contains some amount of nitric oxide which increases the blood flow to the uterus.^[14] Many studies have confirmed that dairy food (ghee, milk, yogurt, buttermilk etc) consumption plays a role in influencing women's reproductive health, especially in conditions that involve hormonal deregulation.^[15] Some studies have identified associations between intakes of total dairy foods and a decreased risk of endometriosis.^[16] In addition, a reduced risk of uterine leiomyomata was associated with increasing dairy food intake.^[17]

C. Darbhasansatarshayini

Darbhagrass has been shown to block X-ray radiation in recent medical studies.^[18] It is also believed that wearing or sitting on *Dharbha* will prevent the energy generated during meditation from being released into the ground.^[19] *Darbhagrass* had stunning nano-patterns and hierarchical nano or micro structures that were absent from other grasses when electron microscopy was used to examine them. CeNTAB (Centre for Nanotechnology and Advanced Bio Materials) and CARISM (Centre for Advanced Research in Indian System of Medicine) collaborated on an intriguing study. At various levels of antibiotic properties and hydrophobicity (the property of a molecule that repels water), *Darbha* is found to be more effective than grass.^[20]

D. Kalyanadhyayini (Thinking about positive things)

To regulate the menstrual cycle, the estrogen and progesterone are pillar hormones. An abundance of estrogen receptors (ERs) at several locations related to cognition in the CNS.^[21] Optimism is commonly believed to be a protective factor with regard to well-being and physical and psychological health.^[22] One study has concluded that on day of the menstrual cycle, elevated stress was associated with suppressed estradiol across broad regions of the cycle. These findings provide direct evidence for an inhibitory effect of psychological stress on ovarian hormone production and associated fecundity in women.^[23]

E. Tikshna-Ushna-Amla-Lavanani Varjayet (Avoid Spicy, Hot, Sour, Salty food)

Concerning dietary factors, several studies have analyzed the possible influence between the consumption of certain foods and menstrual pain, highlighting the potentially protective role of increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, fish and dairy products against menstrual pain.^[24] One clinical study has concluded that positive correlation between the number of times fast food(hamburger, pizza, potato chips, etc.) was consumed by girl and the total score of menstrual distress in the bleeding phase, in such a way that an increase in their consumption increased menstrual distress signs. Menstrual distress includes physical, psychological, and behavioural signs whose associated factors have been categorized based on a biopsychological and social model.^[25] Regarding the consumption of pulses more than once a week, which was identified as a potential risk factor for menstrual pain, this contrasts with traditional advice provided in Chinese cultures which recommend red bean soup for menstrual pain. In one interventional study, intake of spicy, acidic and carbonated foods and they concluded that frequency of pain severity in dysmenorrhea was significantly lower in the group treated with it.^[26]

F. Avoid Bathing (Head Bath)

Bathing changes the temperature of the body. It is predictable that there is mutual interaction between the neural circuits that regulate energy balance, body temperature and reproduction. The hormonal changes across the menstrual cycle not only directly control reproductive events in women but also exert effects on other physiological systems, including thermoregulation. These effects may represent a systematic approach to creating an environment conducive to implantation, survival, and development of an embryo. The POA of the hypothalamus is centrally important for the regulation of both temperature and reproductive function, and there is a linkage between these two systems.^[27] Control of core body temperature (T_c) is a hypothalamic homeostatic function that is directly regulated by the sex steroids, 17 β estradiol (E₂) and progesterone.^[28] Superficial hydrotherapy application may cause physiologic reactions such as decrease in local metabolic function, local oedema, nerve conduction velocity (NCV), muscle spasm, and increase in local aesthetic effects.^[29] Also, during menstruation internal os is open; this can cause ascending infections into the uterine cavity due to altered pH of vagina. So, water treatments should be limited during this period. Hence, to avoid these all effects on reproductive organs during menstrual, Acharyas may have denied to bath.

G. Eat in Unbroken Clay Vessel

Considering that Mother Nature has a cure for everything, the assessment of natural elements such as this clay should be considered for health. Clay has alkaline properties so utensils made of clay neutralises the pH balance of the food by interacting with acids in food, thus enhances the digestion. When the clay was mixed with water (2–4 parts water to 1 part clay) and incubated for 24 hours with live bacteria at body temperature (37°C), a broad spectrum of bacteria was killed.^[30] These antibacterial effects might result from physical interaction and/or chemical interaction of the clay with bacteria.^[31] Bentonite clay is shown to decrease the bleeding and clotting time and therefore is suggested as a haemostatic agent.^[32]

H. Over Exertion

One study suggested that intense exercise has been reported to cause luteal phase defects (oligomenorrhea and other menstrual dysfunctions) and amenorrhea. Numerous studies have demonstrated that athletes who engage in intense exercise suffer from oligomenorrhea and amenorrhea, and those who engage in moderate exercise are slightly more likely to have longer periods.

I. Avoid Day Sleeping

One survey study revealed that although menstruating women are likely to show increased disturbance during the luteal phase, those with other, more severe PMS are more likely to experience luteal increase in daytime sleepiness.^[33]

DISCUSSION

All the *Paricharya* have been mentioned for human being will helps to boost immunity. Same as *Rajaswala Paricharya* will also helps to maintain proper at most *Rajaswala* phase or the period of menstruation, is the phase when follicles are recruited for the next cycle and the dominant follicle is chosen by the 5th To 7th day. Following *Rajaswala Paricharya* not only helps the women to adapt to the physiological and psychological changes occurring in the body during menstruation but also helps in conceiving a healthy offspring. *Rajaswala Paricharya* if is not followed properly may lead to *Ashta Artava Dushti* (menstrual disorders) or *Yoni Vyapada* which can be correlated with menstrual problems like dysmenorrhoea, menorrhagia, PCOD, Infertility etc. Hence it is necessary to follow *Rajaswala Paricharya* during *Rajasrava Kala*. *Rajaswala Stree* can be marked by a person, who has undergone *Shodhana* procedure, who is having *Agnimandhya* and a person having a wound i.e., *Vranita*

Vyakti. Menstruation can be stated as monthly *Shodhana* procedure. During this period, the mind and body undergo a period of purification and detoxification.

CONCLUSION

Rajaswala Paricharya is perfect model of *Nidana Parivarjana Chikitsa* (prevention of diseases) so by following *Paricharya*, so if female follows *Paricharya*, female can avoid menstrual disorders and counteract the negative effects of our current way of life on reproduction. Aim of this is avoid vitiation of *Vata* and *Kapha*, prevent formation of *Ama* and restore energy. Most neglected *Paricharya*—‘*Rajaswala Paricharya*’ if followed during menstruation, it will help women to respond healthily to the drastic physical and mental changes during menstrual cycle and in relieving symptoms associated with it. Now a day’s many platforms like *Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakaram*, *Anganwadi centres*, *AYUSH centres*, educational Institutions etc., which are adolescent health friendly. So, *Rajaswala Paricharya* should be promoted under the leadership program of above centres to prevent various menstrual problems.

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