



## A REVIEW ARTICLE OF CONSIDERATION OF PANCHAKARMA

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**ABSTRACT**

Panchakarma is composed of two words; *Pancha* means 'five' and *Karma* means 'action', so Panchakarma means five actions. Panchakarma (five major Bio-Purification Therapies) viz. 1) *Vamana*, 2) *Virechana*, 3) *Basti* 4) *Nasya* 5) *Raktamokshan*. These five procedures are used for internal purification of the body through the nearest possible route. Such purification allows the biological system to return to homeostasis and rejuvenate rapidly and also facilitates the desired pharmacokinetic effect of medicines administered thereafter. Panchakarma provides a comprehensive therapy role as a Promoter, Preventive, Curative & Rehabilitative procedure.

**Keywords:** Panchakarma, *Vamana*, *Virechana*, *Basti*, *Nasya*, *Raktamokshana*.

**INTRODUCTION**

Panchakarma helps to eliminate *Ama* (toxins) and excess Doshas from the body and restores balance. Panchakarma has been categorised as a Shodhana therapy. According to Ayurveda, excess *Ama* formation in the body is the cause of all diseases. Whenever *Agni* or the digestive fire be-

comes weak, all the food that we eat does not get digested. Some of the undigested, half-metabolized, unabsorbed food circulates in the body as a toxin called *Ama* and becomes the cause of disease.

Ayurveda gives immense importance to the digestive system. The digestive system is divided into three

parts based on the *Doshas*. The upper part of the digestive tract till the stomach comes under *Kapha Dosh*. The middle part of the tract from the lower part of the stomach to the small intestines comes under *Pitta Dosh*. The lower part of the tract from the Colon to the Anus Is Categorized as *Vata*.

**UTILITY OF PANCHAKARMA<sup>1</sup>:** Panchakarma is a very unique therapeutic procedure, because of its preventive, promoter, prophylactic, and rejuvenating properties as well as providing a radical cure. Panchakarma plays a vital role in the preservation, maintenance & conservation of health & promotion of longevity. They form a part of the regimen of preventive medicine (*Svasthanavritta*) indicated as prophylactic measures in the context of epidemics and pan epidemics.

All diseases occur due to suppression and forceful expulsion of natural urges. Panchakarma is the best treatment for diseases caused by the suppression of natural urges (*Vega Daharana*). Suppression of natural urges affects gastrointestinal motility and continence of sphincters and later neuro-humoral control of glands. *Vatanulomana* is the prime line of treatment for disease due to suppression of urges and *Basti* is the best treatment among *Vatanulomana* therapies. These measures are indicated as preparatory procedures before the administration of Rejuvenation therapy (*Rasayana*) & Aphrodisiac therapy (*Vajikarana*).

**Panchakarma Itself Is Divided into Three Phases:**

- **PURVAKARMA (Preparation Phase):** In this phase, the body is prepared for the main phase which includes the five actions. As already mentioned, the digestive tract holds immense importance in Ayurveda. This is a foundation of Panchakarma, following preliminary methods tolerance an acceptance of the consequence of the main procedure is improved. It makes changes in vitiated *doshas* to mobilize them without trouble, and thus easily removed from the body tissues without creating harm to the body. Purvakarma helps to achieve the best response to the main procedure of Panchakarma; subsequently, the body develops sensitivity, to keep balance throughout the process of *Pradhankarma*. Devoid of pre-

procedure produces complications as an unripe fruit gets crushed during juice extraction, whereas ripped fruit is best, and juice can easily be extracted.

*Purvakarma* helps the mobilization of doshas from *sakha* (Periphery) to *koshtha* (GIT) and can be excreted from their nearest route of excretion. Mobilization of doshas (Bio-humor) is achieved with the help of *Snehana* (Oleation) and *Swedana* (Sudation). The evacuation of morbid, spoiled, and vitiated doshas was initiated during the preliminary procedure. This is an effort to make up the body and its doshas in a proper state of elimination of *ama dosha* (toxins) also helps the *Pradhana karma* to produce a positive and stable response to the body.

**Importance of Purva Karma:** As in vessels smeared with oil, water falls without sticking to the vessels, similarly *Kapha* and other morbid humors are expelled out easily from the body which has undergone *Snehana* (oleation) therapy. As a fire makes the water in moist wood trickle out from every pore, similarly *Swedana* (Sudation) therapy causes the adhered, stagnant toxic matter to melt and flow out in a person who has been previously oleated<sup>2</sup>. Just as the dirt of cloth is separated and washed by soap and water, so by *Snehana* and *Swedana* therapies, the toxic matter in the body is separated and washed out by *Pardhana karma*.<sup>3</sup> Purificatory therapy (*Vamana, Virechana, etc.*) given without *Snehana* (Oleation) and *Swedana* (Sudation) would destroy the body like dried wood.<sup>4</sup> Apart from these methods some other systemic procedures have their importance to assemble the raw material procedure after improper digestion; these are *Rukshana* (roughness), *Dipana* (appetizer), and *Pachana* (digestive) these actions should be applied according to the condition and require a special sense of treatment.

**Purvakarma mainly consists of<sup>5</sup> -**

- a. *Snehana*
- b. *Swedana*

**a. Snehana:** -<sup>6</sup> The therapy that produces oiliness, liquefaction, softening, and moistening in the body is known as *Snehana*. The drug having properties like liquid, subtle, unctuous, slimy, heavy, cold, sluggish, and soft is called the *Snehana* drug. There are two

main types of *Snehana* – (i) *Abhyantara Snehana* (ii) *Bahya Snehana*.

b. **Swedana:** -<sup>7</sup> the therapy which relieves stiffness, heaviness, and coldness of the body and produces sweating is known as *Swedana*.

• **PRADHANA KARMA (Main Phase):** A diseased body can be compared to a soiled cloth that cannot be colored as we desire. Hence to attain the maximum benefits, the body has to be purified or cleaned before starting the treatment. The cleared channels help medicines to penetrate the deeper tissues.

Panchakarma therapy is a comprehensive Sanshodhan regimen under which all other similar procedures may be included. Classical Panchakarma therapy consists of the following groups of procedures-

1. **VAMANA (Therapeutic Vomiting):** This helps to remove excess *Kapha Dosha*, which has been collected in the upper part of the digestive tract, from the body. Indications for *Vamana* therapy are chronic cough, asthma, respiratory conditions, diabetes, loss of appetite, and other disorders. Contra-indications include gastric ulcers, heart conditions, and tumours in the abdominal region.

2. **VIRECHANA (Therapeutic Purgation):** This helps to remove excess *Pitta*, which has been collected in the middle part of the tract, from the body. Indications for a *Virechana* therapy are skin disorders, chronic fevers, conditions of the liver and spleen, jaundice, conditions of the mouth, teeth, and gums, and other *Pitta* conditions.

Contra-indications include anal fissures, bleeding in the lower part of the tract, ulcers in the large intestine, etc.

3. **BASTI (Medicated Decoction and Oil Enema):** Both decoction and oil enemas are given alternatively to remove excess *Vata Dosha*, which has been collected in the lower part of the digestive tract, from the body. Indications for *Basti* treatment are constipation, general pains in different parts of the body, paralysis, epilepsy, bone pain, skeletal conditions, and other *Vata* conditions. Contra-indication includes diarrhea, bleeding from the lower part of the digestive tract, very weak patients, etc.

4. **NASYA (Nasal Administration):** Medicated oils are administered in each nostril to remove excess *Kapha Dosha* accumulated in the head and neck region. Indications are sinusitis, problems in breathing, heaviness in the head, etc.

5. **RAKTAMOKSHANA (Blood Letting):** In earlier days leeches were used (now a day's blood may be removed with a needle and syringe) to remove excess blood from the body which in turn removes excess *Pitta Dosha* from the body. Indications are skin problems, eczema, abscess, hemorrhoids, etc. Contra-indications may include severe bleeding disorders, low blood pressure, etc.

• **Paschatkarma (Post-Treatment Phase):** Panchakarma can be compared to a surgical procedure whereby one must follow certain rules and regulations. Immediately after surgery, one is advised to get back to a normal lifestyle gradually. Likewise, during this phase, one gradually starts following a normal lifestyle including food intake, daily lifestyle, exercises, etc. One also takes certain herbs and herbal remedies to complete the rejuvenation process in the body.

The common herbs given during this phase are *Ashwagandha*, *Pippali*, *Brahmi*, *Amalaki*, etc. Although one must bear in mind the body type before giving any herbs. One should undertake the Panchakarma procedure at least once every two years. Panchakarma is not only for people suffering from diseases but also for healthy people who want to maintain good health and long life. Panchakarma is usually done at the junction of two seasons (e.g., between summer and autumn). During the administration of the above therapies, the patient follows a specific diet. Food should be warm, nourishing, light, and easily digestible. One should avoid excess spicy, sour, salty foods. (a combination of rice, mung beans, and some mild spices) is widely suggested during Panchakarma. One must avoid strenuous physical activities, late nights, alcohol, smoking, etc.

**General Contra-Indications for Panchakarma:** Very weak patients, very old or very young people, pregnancy, certain heart conditions, etc. In such cases, *Shamana* therapy may be administered.

**PRECAUTIONS:** Panchakarma is a special procedure that requires the guidance and supervision of a properly trained Ayurvedic practitioner. Each person receives this treatment in a tailor-made format to suit their body type and medical problems if any. Other medical conditions like high blood pressure, heart problems, bleeding conditions, etc are also taken into consideration before designing a protocol for a patient (as these may form a contra-indication for certain therapies). Always consult a fully qualified Ayurvedic practitioner if you wish to receive Panchakarma therapy.

### CONCLUSION

Panchakarma consists mainly of the three above categories, solitary as well as accompanied it cure and prevent health problems. A diseased body can be compared to a soiled cloth that cannot be colored as we desire. Hence to attain the maximum benefits, the body has to be purified or cleaned before starting the treatment. The cleared channels help medicines to penetrate the deeper tissues. Panchakarma therapy is a comprehensive Sanshodhan regimen under which all other similar procedures may be included.

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