



## AN AYURVEDIC APPROACH TO MANAGING NEPHROTIC SYNDROME: RESTORING BALANCE AND RENAL HEALTH

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### ABSTRACT

Nephrotic syndrome is a chronic kidney disorder characterized by increased protein leakage in the urine, swelling, and low levels of proteins in the blood. The conventional medical approach to managing nephrotic syndrome focuses primarily on symptom management and immune suppression. However, Ayurveda, an ancient holistic system of medicine, offers a comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying imbalances and aims to restore renal health. This article explores the Ayurvedic perspective on nephrotic syndrome and provides insights into the principles and treatment strategies employed in Ayurvedic medicine. The Ayurvedic understanding of nephrotic syndrome revolves around the concept of dosha imbalance, particularly Vata and Kapha dosha. Imbalances in these doshas are believed to disrupt the normal functioning of the kidneys, leading to the manifestation of nephrotic syndrome symptoms. Ayurvedic treatment for nephrotic syndrome involves a combination of dietary and lifestyle modifications, herbal remedies, detoxification procedures, and rejuvenation therapies. Specific herbs and herbal formulations are utilized to support kidney function, reduce protein leakage, and promote the regeneration of damaged renal tissues. Additionally, dietary recommendations focus on balancing the doshas, reducing inflammation, and promoting overall kidney health. Furthermore, the article highlights the importance of personalized Ayurvedic treatment, as the management of nephrotic syndrome may vary depending on an individual's con-

stitution, imbalances, and stage of the disease. The holistic approach of Ayurveda aims to not only alleviate symptoms but also prevent disease recurrence and enhance the overall well-being of the individual. In conclusion, this article provides valuable insights into the Ayurvedic approach to managing nephrotic syndrome. By addressing the root cause of the condition and employing individualized treatment strategies, Ayurveda offers a promising alternative or complementary option for individuals seeking a holistic and natural approach to renal health. Further research and clinical studies are warranted to validate the efficacy of Ayurvedic interventions in the management of nephrotic syndrome.

**Keywords:** Nephrotic syndrome, Dosha imbalance, renal health, protein leakage, dietary modifications, personalized treatment, inflammation, rejuvenation therapies.

## INTRODUCTION

Nephrotic syndrome is a chronic kidney disorder characterized by excessive protein leakage in the urine, edema (swelling), and low levels of proteins in the blood. It is a condition that significantly impacts the quality of life and requires careful management. While conventional medical treatments focus on symptom control and immune suppression, Ayurveda, a traditional holistic system of medicine originating from India, offers a unique and comprehensive approach to the management of nephrotic syndrome. Ayurveda, which translates to "knowledge of life," views health as a state of balance between the mind, body, and spirit. It recognizes that imbalances in the doshas, Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, can contribute to the development and progression of various diseases, including nephrotic syndrome. Ayurvedic principles and therapies aim to restore this balance, supporting the body's innate healing mechanisms and promoting renal health. This article delves into the Ayurvedic perspective on nephrotic syndrome, exploring the underlying causes and imbalances according to this ancient system of medicine. It highlights the holistic nature of Ayurvedic treatment, which takes into consideration individual differences, including constitution, dosha imbalances, and the stage of the disease. Ayurvedic management of nephrotic syndrome encompasses a multifaceted approach. It involves dietary and lifestyle modifications, herbal remedies, detoxification procedures, and rejuvenation therapies. Specific herbs and herbal formulations are used to support kidney function, reduce protein leakage, and encourage the regeneration of damaged renal tissues.

Dietary recommendations emphasize the importance of balancing the doshas, reducing inflammation, and supporting overall kidney health. It is essential to note that Ayurvedic treatment for nephrotic syndrome is tailored to the individual, recognizing that each person may require different strategies and interventions. This personalized approach addresses not only the symptoms but also aims to prevent disease recurrence and improve the overall well-being of the individual.

By incorporating Ayurvedic principles and therapies into the management of nephrotic syndrome, individuals have the opportunity to explore a holistic and natural approach to renal health. However, further research and clinical studies are needed to validate the effectiveness of Ayurvedic interventions and establish their role as either alternative or complementary treatments for nephrotic syndrome.

In summary, this article provides an introduction to the Ayurvedic approach to nephrotic syndrome. It sheds light on the unique perspective of Ayurveda, emphasizing the restoration of balance and the promotion of renal health. By considering the underlying imbalances and implementing personalized treatment strategies, Ayurveda offers a promising avenue for individuals seeking a holistic and natural approach to managing nephrotic syndrome.

### **PATHOLOGY OF NEPHROTIC SYNDROME:**

Nephrotic syndrome is a complex renal disorder characterized by a set of clinical features, including excessive proteinuria (protein leakage in urine), hypoalbuminemia (low levels of serum albumin), ede-

ma (swelling), and hyperlipidemia (elevated levels of lipids in the blood). It is primarily caused by damage to the glomeruli, the filtering units of the kidneys. Understanding the underlying pathology of nephrotic syndrome is crucial for developing effective management strategies, including those from an Ayurvedic perspective.

In nephrotic syndrome, the glomerular filtration barrier, which normally prevents the passage of large molecules such as proteins into the urine, becomes compromised. This can occur due to various mechanisms, including immune system abnormalities, inflammation, and structural changes in the glomeruli. The exact etiology may vary among individuals, with primary causes attributed to idiopathic or genetic factors, and secondary causes resulting from underlying diseases such as diabetes, lupus, or certain infections. Inflammatory processes play a significant role in the pathogenesis of nephrotic syndrome. Immune dysregulation and immune complex deposition within the glomeruli can trigger an inflammatory response, leading to damage and disruption of the filtration barrier. This inflammatory cascade involves the release of various cytokines, chemokines, and growth factors that further contribute to glomerular injury and proteinuria.

Furthermore, abnormalities in the podocytes, specialized cells lining the glomerular capillaries, have been implicated in the development of nephrotic syndrome. Podocytes play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of the filtration barrier. Dysfunction or loss of podocytes can disrupt the normal filtration process and result in increased protein leakage.

The excessive proteinuria seen in nephrotic syndrome leads to a decrease in serum albumin levels, which contributes to hypoalbuminemia. This hypoalbuminemia disrupts the oncotic pressure in blood vessels, leading to fluid accumulation and edema formation, particularly in the lower extremities, abdomen, and periorbital region.

Hyperlipidemia is another hallmark feature of nephrotic syndrome. The loss of proteins, especially albumin, triggers compensatory mechanisms in the liver, resulting in increased synthesis and release of

lipids into the bloodstream. Elevated levels of cholesterol and triglycerides contribute to the formation of lipid deposits in various tissues, including the blood vessels, and can further contribute to renal damage and cardiovascular complications.

Understanding the pathology of nephrotic syndrome provides insights into the mechanisms underlying the clinical manifestations and guides therapeutic approaches. Ayurveda, with its holistic principles and personalized treatments, aims to address the underlying imbalances and restore renal health in individuals with nephrotic syndrome. By targeting the root causes and promoting balance, Ayurvedic interventions hold promise as an alternative or complementary approach to managing this challenging condition.

In Ayurveda, the *samprapti* (pathogenesis) of nephrotic syndrome involves the interplay of various factors that disrupt the balance of doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) and lead to the manifestation of the condition. The following is a general overview of the *samprapti* of nephrotic syndrome in Ayurveda:

1. **Dosha Imbalance:** According to Ayurvedic principles, an imbalance in the doshas plays a crucial role in the development of diseases. In the case of nephrotic syndrome, the vitiation (imbalance) of both Vata and Kapha doshas is considered significant. Vata imbalance can affect the movement and function of the kidneys, while Kapha imbalance can lead to fluid accumulation and blockage of channels.
2. **Aggravation of Vata and Kapha:** Various factors, such as improper diet, sedentary lifestyle, excessive consumption of cold and heavy foods, and emotional stress, can aggravate Vata and Kapha doshas. This aggravation disrupts the normal functioning of the kidneys and leads to the accumulation of toxins (*ama*) in the body.
3. **Formation of Ama:** Ama is the toxic by-product of incomplete digestion and metabolism. When Vata and Kapha are imbalanced, the digestive fire (*agni*) becomes weakened, leading to impaired digestion and the formation of *ama*. This *ama* further obstructs the channels (*srotas*) in the kidneys and

interferes with their normal filtration and elimination processes.

4. Impairment of Agni: The weakened digestive fire (agni) in the body hampers the proper assimilation of nutrients and elimination of waste products. This impaired agni contributes to the accumulation of ama and further compromises the overall functioning of the kidneys.
5. Obstruction of Renal Channels: The accumulation of ama and the imbalanced doshas can block the renal channels (mutravaha srotas), which are responsible for the filtration and elimination of waste products. The obstruction of these channels results in reduced kidney function and the manifestation of symptoms such as proteinuria and edema.
6. Renal Tissue Damage: Prolonged obstruction of the renal channels and impaired kidney function can lead to damage and degeneration of renal tissues. This damage affects the filtration ability of the glomeruli and allows the leakage of proteins into the urine, leading to proteinuria.
7. Systemic Imbalances: As nephrotic syndrome progresses, the excessive loss of proteins, particularly albumin, from the body results in hypoalbuminemia and disrupts the balance of fluids and electrolytes. This imbalance further contributes to the development of edema and hyperlipidemia.

Ayurvedic treatment approaches for nephrotic syndrome aim to address the imbalances in doshas, eliminate ama, improve agni, and restore the normal functioning of the kidneys. Through personalized dietary modifications, herbal remedies, detoxification procedures, and rejuvenation therapies, Ayurveda seeks to promote renal health, reduce proteinuria, and alleviate symptoms associated with nephrotic syndrome.

#### **CORELATION BETWEEN PATHOLOGY & SAMPRAPTI OF NEPHROTIC SYNDROME:**

The pathology and samprapti (pathogenesis) of nephrotic syndrome in Ayurveda are interconnected, as they both involve understanding the underlying imbalances and mechanisms leading to the manifestation of the condition. Let's explore the correlation

between the pathology and samprapti of nephrotic syndrome in Ayurveda:

**Pathology:** The pathology of nephrotic syndrome, as understood in conventional medicine, involves damage to the glomeruli, immune dysregulation, inflammation, and abnormalities in renal function, leading to proteinuria, hypoalbuminemia, edema, and hyperlipidemia.

**Samprapti:** Ayurveda describes the samprapti of nephrotic syndrome in terms of dosha imbalance, impairment of agni (digestive fire), formation of ama (toxins), obstruction of renal channels, and renal tissue damage.

The correlation between the pathology and samprapti can be explained as follows:

1. **Dosha Imbalance:** The vitiation (imbalance) of Vata and Kapha doshas in Ayurveda corresponds to the inflammatory and immune dysregulation seen in the pathology of nephrotic syndrome. The dosha imbalance disrupts the normal functioning of the kidneys and contributes to the manifestation of symptoms.
2. **Impaired Agni and Formation of Ama:** The weakened digestive fire (agni) and the formation of ama in Ayurveda align with the impaired metabolism and accumulation of toxins seen in the pathology of nephrotic syndrome. The impaired agni leads to incomplete digestion and the formation of ama, which further obstructs the renal channels and affects renal function.
3. **Obstruction of Renal Channels:** The obstruction of renal channels in Ayurveda correlates with the damage to glomeruli and the impaired filtration process in the pathology of nephrotic syndrome. The accumulation of ama and dosha imbalance contributes to the obstruction, resulting in proteinuria and other symptoms.
4. **Renal Tissue Damage:** The renal tissue damage in the pathology of nephrotic syndrome corresponds to the progression of the disease in Ayurveda. The obstruction of renal channels, impairment of kidney function, and prolonged imbalances lead to degeneration and damage to renal tissues, exacerbating the symptoms of nephrotic syndrome.

Ayurvedic treatment strategies for nephrotic syndrome aim to address the underlying imbalances described in the samprapti. By restoring dosha balance, improving agni, eliminating ama, and promoting renal health, Ayurveda seeks to alleviate symptoms and support the healing and regeneration of renal tissues.

Overall, the correlation between the pathology and samprapti of nephrotic syndrome lies in recognizing the underlying imbalances, obstruction of renal channels, and tissue damage that contribute to the manifestation of the condition. Ayurvedic interventions aim to restore balance, eliminate toxins, and promote renal health, aligning with the holistic understanding of disease progression in Ayurveda.

### **CLINICAL FEATURES OF NEPHROTIC SYNDROME:**

Nephrotic syndrome is characterized by a set of clinical features that are observed both in modern medicine and Ayurveda. While there may be some variations in the terminology and perspectives, the clinical manifestations are generally recognized in both approaches. Let's explore the clinical features of nephrotic syndrome as per Western medicine and Ayurveda:

Western Medicine:

1. Proteinuria: Excessive protein leakage in the urine is one of the hallmark features of nephrotic syndrome. It is typically characterized by significant amounts of albumin and other proteins in the urine.
2. Hypoalbuminemia: Nephrotic syndrome leads to reduced levels of serum albumin, resulting in low protein levels in the blood. This contributes to fluid accumulation and edema formation.
3. Edema: Edema, or swelling, is commonly observed in nephrotic syndrome. It is usually present in the lower extremities but can also affect the face, abdomen, and other body parts.
4. Hyperlipidemia: Nephrotic syndrome often leads to elevated levels of cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood. Hyperlipidemia is a result of altered lipid metabolism and increased synthesis of lipids by the liver.

5. Hypertension: Some individuals with nephrotic syndrome may develop high blood pressure, which can further contribute to renal damage and cardiovascular complications.

Ayurveda:

1. Mutraghata: Ayurveda describes mutraghata as obstructed or decreased urine output, which corresponds to the reduced glomerular filtration rate and impaired kidney function observed in nephrotic syndrome.
2. Mamsagaurava: Mamsagaurava refers to the heaviness or swelling of muscles and tissues, which correlates with the edema seen in nephrotic syndrome.
3. Mootradosha: Ayurveda recognizes disturbances in urinary parameters as indicative of mootradosha, which includes increased frequency of urination, turbidity of urine, and excessive foam formation.
4. Rasakrita Vriddhi: Rasakrita Vriddhi refers to an increase in the levels of albumin and other proteins in the blood, which aligns with the hypoalbuminemia and proteinuria seen in nephrotic syndrome.
5. Medovriddhi: Medovriddhi signifies an increase in fat tissue and lipid metabolism abnormalities. This correlates with the hyperlipidemia observed in nephrotic syndrome.

It is important to note that while western medicine and Ayurveda may have different terminology and diagnostic criteria, the overall clinical features of nephrotic syndrome are recognized in both approaches. The convergence of these perspectives can provide a comprehensive understanding of the condition and guide holistic management strategies.

### **CHIKITSA SIDDHANT OF NEPHROTIC SYNDROME:**

Chikitsa Siddhanta in Ayurveda refers to the treatment principles and strategies followed in the management of various diseases. When it comes to nephrotic syndrome, Ayurveda focuses on addressing the underlying imbalances, restoring the equilibrium of doshas, and promoting renal health. Here are the

key Chikitsa Siddhanta (treatment principles) in Ayurveda for managing nephrotic syndrome:

1. Balance Doshas: Ayurveda considers the balance of doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha) as essential for maintaining health. In the case of nephrotic syndrome, the vitiation (imbalance) of Vata and Kapha doshas is primarily addressed. Treatment aims to pacify and normalize the imbalanced doshas through appropriate dietary and lifestyle modifications, herbal remedies, and therapies.
2. Detoxification (Sodhana): Detoxification procedures, known as Sodhana or Panchakarma therapies, play a crucial role in Ayurvedic management. These therapies aim to eliminate accumulated toxins (ama) from the body and restore the proper functioning of the kidneys. Virechana (therapeutic purgation) and Basti (medicated enema) are commonly employed to remove toxins, reduce inflammation, and improve renal function.
3. Rejuvenation (Rasayana): Rasayana therapies are employed to enhance overall health, strengthen the immune system, and rejuvenate the body's tissues, including the kidneys. Rasayana herbs, such as Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*), Amalaki (*Embolica officinalis*), and Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), may be used to support renal health and promote tissue regeneration.
4. Herbal Remedies: Ayurvedic herbal formulations play a significant role in managing nephrotic syndrome. Specific herbs and herbal combinations are selected based on their properties to reduce proteinuria, improve kidney function, and alleviate symptoms. Punarnava (*Boerhavia diffusa*), Gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris*), Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*), and Varuna (*Crataeva nurvala*) are some commonly used herbs in the management of nephrotic syndrome.
5. Dietary and Lifestyle Modifications: Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of a balanced and appropriate diet in maintaining health. In the case of nephrotic syndrome, dietary modifications are recommended to reduce excessive fluid retention, support kidney function, and prevent further aggravation of dosha imbalances. Lifestyle recommenda-

tions include stress management techniques, regular exercise, adequate sleep, and maintaining a clean and toxin-free environment.

6. Individualized Approach: Ayurveda recognizes the uniqueness of each individual and emphasizes personalized treatment. The treatment approach considers the individual's body constitution (prakriti), dosha imbalances, and specific needs. A qualified Ayurvedic practitioner assesses the individual's condition and tailors the treatment protocol accordingly.

## DISCUSSION

The article provides valuable insights into the Ayurvedic perspective on nephrotic syndrome, including its pathology, samprapti (pathogenesis), and treatment protocol. It highlights the holistic approach of Ayurveda, which aims to address the underlying imbalances and promote overall renal health.

The article emphasizes the correlation between the pathology and samprapti of nephrotic syndrome in Ayurveda. It explains how dosha imbalances, impaired agni, formation of ama, obstruction of renal channels, and renal tissue damage contribute to the manifestation of the condition. This correlation provides a comprehensive understanding of the disease progression in Ayurveda, going beyond the conventional medical perspective.

The treatment protocol outlined in the article demonstrates the integrative approach of Ayurveda. Personalized dietary modifications, herbal remedies, detoxification procedures, rejuvenation therapies, and lifestyle recommendations are discussed as key components of Ayurvedic management. The article stresses the importance of consulting a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner for an individualized treatment plan and highlights the need for collaborative management with conventional medical care.

Furthermore, the article emphasizes the significance of Chikitsa Siddhanta (treatment principles) in Ayurveda for nephrotic syndrome. It explains the principles of balancing doshas, detoxification, rejuvenation, and personalized approaches based on an individual's prakriti (body constitution) and dosha imbalances.

This highlights the holistic nature of Ayurvedic treatment, considering not only the physical symptoms but also the individual's overall well-being.

Overall, the article provides valuable information on the Ayurvedic perspective and treatment approach for nephrotic syndrome. It encourages a holistic understanding of the condition and emphasizes the integration of Ayurvedic principles with conventional medical care. This comprehensive approach has the potential to offer individuals with nephrotic syndrome a broader range of options for managing their condition and improving their quality of life.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, nephrotic syndrome is a complex renal disorder characterized by proteinuria, hypoalbuminemia, edema, and hyperlipidemia. While modern medicine focuses on the pathology and clinical features of the condition, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach by considering the samprapti (pathogenesis) and Chikitsa Siddhanta (treatment principles) in managing nephrotic syndrome.

Ayurveda recognizes the importance of restoring dosha balance, addressing impaired agni and formation of ama, and alleviating renal channel obstruction and tissue damage. The correlation between the pathology and samprapti lies in understanding the dosha imbalances, impaired metabolism, toxin accumulation, and renal tissue degeneration that contribute to the manifestation of nephrotic syndrome.

The treatment protocol in Ayurveda for nephrotic syndrome involves personalized dietary modifications, herbal remedies, detoxification procedures, rejuvenation therapies, and lifestyle recommendations. These interventions aim to restore dosha balance, support kidney function, reduce inflammation, eliminate toxins, and promote renal health.

While Ayurvedic management of nephrotic syndrome should be integrated with conventional medical care, the holistic approach of Ayurveda offers valuable insights into addressing the underlying imbalances

and supporting the body's healing processes. Collaborative management can provide a comprehensive and individualized approach to managing nephrotic syndrome, improving symptoms, and enhancing overall well-being.

It is important to consult with a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner for personalized guidance and to ensure the integration of Ayurvedic treatment with conventional medical care. Regular monitoring of renal function and follow-ups are essential to assess progress and make necessary adjustments to the treatment protocol.

By combining the strengths of western medicine and Ayurveda, individuals with nephrotic syndrome can benefit from a multidimensional approach that addresses the pathology, samprapti, and Chikitsa Siddhanta, ultimately leading to better outcomes and improved quality of life.

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