



## UNLOCKING THE ANCIENT WISDOM: AYURVEDIC SECRETS FOR MANAGING SANDHI VATA (OSTEOARTHRITIS)

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### ABSTRACT

Discover the fascinating world of *Ayurveda* as we delve into its age-old wisdom for managing (*Sandhivata*), commonly known as osteoarthritis. This ancient Indian system of medicine offers holistic approaches to address the root cause of joint degeneration and promote overall well-being. Through a careful balance of *Vata Dosha*, detoxification therapies, herbal remedies, yoga, and lifestyle modifications, *Ayurveda* provides a comprehensive and natural way to alleviate joint pain, reduce inflammation, and enhance joint health. Join us on a journey to unlock the hidden secrets of *Ayurveda* and uncover its potential in managing *Sandhivata*, offering a ray of hope to those seeking effective and sustainable solutions for this debilitating condition.

**Keywords:** Sandhivata, Osteoarthritis, Ayurveda, Management, Ayurvedic treatment, Modern science, Pathogenesis, Clinical features, Etiology, Dosha imbalance, Panchakarma, Herbal remedies, Yoga and exercise, Joint health, Personalized care, Integrative approach, Panchakarma therapies, Ayurvedic principles, Ama accumulation, Dosha balancing.

## INTRODUCTION

In the eternal quest for healing and well-being, the fusion of ancient wisdom and modern science often unveils transformative solutions. *Ayurveda*, an ancient system of medicine with its roots deeply embedded in the *Vedic* tradition, meets modern science at the crossroads of managing *Sandhivata*, commonly known as osteoarthritis. *Sandhivata*, a degenerative joint disorder affecting millions globally, challenges both ancient healing systems and contemporary medical approaches alike.

*Ayurveda*, with its profound understanding of the human body's innate intelligence and interconnectedness, views *Sandhivata* as a manifestation of *Vata Dosha* imbalance. The intricate harmony of *Vata*, the force governing movement, and the intricate *Sandhis* (joints) becomes a focal point in *Ayurvedic* management. Drawing upon the principles of *Dosha* balancing, *Ayurvedic* therapies seek to harmonize *Vata*, alleviate inflammation, and promote joint health through natural means.

In parallel, modern science sheds light on the intricate mechanisms underlying osteoarthritis. Insights into joint cartilage degradation, inflammation pathways, and the impact of lifestyle factors provide crucial context to comprehend the complexities of *Sandhivata* from a biomedical standpoint. As researchers strive to develop innovative treatments, the need for integrative approaches that amalgamate ancient wisdom and modern insights becomes increasingly evident.

This article serves as a gateway to traverse the bridge between *Ayurveda* and modern science, presenting a holistic perspective on the management of *Sandhivata*. We embark on an illuminating journey, exploring the compatibility between *Ayurvedic* principles and evidence-based interventions, revealing a comprehensive approach to alleviate pain, enhance joint function, and improve the quality of life for those grappling with *Sandhivata*. By integrating the timeless knowledge of *Ayurveda* with the advancements of modern medicine, a harmonious symphony of healing emerges, empowering individuals to embrace

vitality and resilience on their path to overcoming the challenges of *Sandhivata*.

### **Aetiology:**

*Sandhivata*, or osteoarthritis, is a multifactorial condition influenced by various elements encompassing both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. *Ayurveda* and modern science provide valuable insights into the etiology of this joint disorder, shedding light on the intricate web of causative factors that contribute to its development.

### **Ayurvedic Aetiology:**

According to *Ayurveda*, *Sandhivata* is predominantly a *Vata Dosha* disorder. The natural aging process, known as "*Jara*" is considered a primary factor in *Vata Dosha* imbalance. As one ages, the body's natural lubrication and nourishment mechanisms tend to decline, leading to the drying and deterioration of joint tissues. Additionally, a sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical activity, and improper diet can further exacerbate *Vata Dosha* imbalance, leading to the accumulation of *Ama* (toxins) and aggravation of joint-related *Vata* functions.

*Ayurveda* also highlights the role of poor digestion and weak *Agni* (digestive fire) in the development of *Sandhivata*. When digestion is compromised, the body fails to assimilate nutrients effectively, leading to the accumulation of metabolic waste and toxins. These *Ama* deposits can eventually reach the joints, triggering inflammation and damage to the joint structures.

### **Modern Science Aetiology:**

Modern science provides valuable insights into the pathophysiology of osteoarthritis. While aging is a significant risk factor, osteoarthritis is not merely a consequence of wear and tear. It involves a complex interplay of genetic predisposition, joint biomechanics, inflammation, and metabolic factors.

The gradual breakdown of joint cartilage is a central feature of osteoarthritis. Repetitive use, joint injuries, and mechanical stress on the joints can lead to cartilage wear and tear, triggering an inflammatory response. Inflammatory cytokines and enzymes further

contribute to the degradation of cartilage and the underlying bone, exacerbating joint damage.

Various risk factors, such as obesity, sedentary lifestyle, joint overuse, and certain genetic factors, have been implicated in the development and progression of osteoarthritis. Obesity, in particular, places excessive stress on weight-bearing joints, accelerating cartilage degeneration. Additionally, genetic factors influence the integrity of joint tissues and may predispose individuals to a higher risk of osteoarthritis.

### **Integration of Ayurvedic and Modern Science Perspectives:**

By combining the wisdom of *Ayurveda* and the knowledge of modern science, a more comprehensive understanding of *Sandhivata* aetiology emerges. The *Ayurvedic* emphasis on *Vata Dosha* imbalance, lifestyle factors, and digestive health aligns with modern science's recognition of joint biomechanics, inflammation, and genetic predisposition. This integrative approach offers a broader and more holistic view of the contributing factors behind *Sandhivata*, laying the foundation for effective management strategies that encompass both ancient wisdom and evidence-based interventions.

### **Clinical Features:**

*Sandhivata*, an affliction rooted in the ancient wisdom of *Ayurveda*, manifests through a myriad of clinical features that deeply affect the joints and overall health. Drawing upon *Ayurvedic* terminology, we explore the intricate nuances of these manifestations, enabling a holistic comprehension of the condition and guiding us towards a comprehensive management approach.

1. *Sandhishoola* (Joint Pain): The cardinal feature of *Sandhivata* is *Sandhishoola*, an enduring pain that emanates from the affected joints. The pain varies in intensity, often aggravating during joint movement and bearing weight. It is characterized by a deep and gnawing sensation, profoundly influencing joint functionality.
2. *Sandhigraha* (Joint Stiffness): A hallmark of *Sandhivata*, *Sandhigraha* refers to joint stiffness, particularly noticeable after periods of rest or upon waking in the morning. The joints feel rigid

and challenging to mobilize initially, gradually easing with gentle activity.

3. *Sandhi mandala* (Reduced Range of Motion): *Sandhivata* leads to the gradual restriction of joint movements, clinically termed *Sandhi mandala*. This limitation impairs the natural range of motion, hindering routine tasks like bending, reaching, or fully extending the affected joints.
4. *Sandhishotha* (Joint Swelling): Inflammation within the joint gives rise to *Sandhishotha*, characterized by localized swelling and tenderness. The affected area may appear visibly swollen, and touching the joint elicits discomfort.
5. *Sandhigraha* (Crepitus): The sensation of crepitus arises during joint movement, manifesting as a crackling or grating sound within the affected joints. This is attributed to the irregular surfaces of deteriorated joint cartilage rubbing against each other during motion.
6. *Mamsa Dourbalya* (Muscle Weakness): Chronic joint pain and compromised mobility lead to *Mamsa Dourbalya*, a state of muscle weakness around the affected joint. Feeble muscles contribute to joint instability and further impede functional movements.
7. *Sandhichalana* (Joint Instability): *Sandhivata* progression can result in *Sandhichalana*, characterized by joint instability, wherein the joint feels unsteady and may give way during motion.
8. *Sandhivikriti* (Joint Deformities): As *Sandhivata* advances, it may culminate in *Sandhivikriti*, marked by the formation of bony outgrowths called osteophytes. These deformities alter joint alignment and impair joint function.
9. *Klama* (Fatigue) and *Nidranasha* (Sleep Disturbances): The persistent pain and discomfort of *Sandhivata* contribute to *Klama*, causing fatigue, and *Nidranasha*, leading to disturbances in sleep patterns. These factors profoundly impact an individual's quality of life and emotional well-being.
10. *Dinacharya Vighatana* (Impact on Daily Activities): The clinical features of *Sandhivata* significantly hinder *Dinacharya* (daily activities), causing limitations in functional independence and affecting the overall quality of life.

By embracing *Ayurvedic* terminology to describe the clinical features of *Sandhivata*, a deeper understanding of the condition emerges, paving the way for holistic management that integrates the principles of *Ayurveda* and evidence-based medical interventions. This integrative approach empowers individuals to embark on a transformative journey towards enhanced joint health and overall well-being.

### **Causative Factors of *Sandhivata* (Osteoarthritis) in *Ayurveda*:**

In *Ayurveda*, the development of *Sandhivata* is influenced by various *Ghataks* (causative factors) that disturb the delicate balance of *Doshas* and lead to joint degeneration. These intrinsic and extrinsic factors contribute to the pathogenesis of *Sandhivata*:

1. *Vata Prakopa* (Aggravation of *Vata Dosha*): The primary *Ghataka* in *Sandhivata* is the vitiation of *Vata Dosha*. Factors such as advancing age, exposure to cold and windy climates, irregular lifestyle, and sedentary habits can lead to the derangement of *Vata Dosha* in the body.
2. *Ama Sanchaya* (Accumulation of *Ama*): Impaired digestion due to excessive consumption of heavy, oily, and incompatible foods leads to the accumulation of *Ama* (toxins) in the body. *Ama* formation is considered a significant causative factor in the development of *Sandhivata*.
3. *Asatmya Ahara-Vihara* (Incompatible Diet and Lifestyle): Consuming incompatible food combinations or engaging in unhealthy lifestyle practices can disrupt the body's natural equilibrium, contributing to *Dosha* imbalances, including *Vata* aggravation.
4. *Ati Shrama* (Excessive Physical Strain): Overexertion and excessive physical activities, especially when the body is already weak, can disturb the balance of *Doshas* and influence the onset of *Sandhivata*.
5. *Santarpana* (Overnourishment): Overindulgence in heavy, sweet, and fatty foods, coupled with a sedentary lifestyle, can lead to excessive nourishment and contribute to the accumulation of *Ama* and *Vata* aggravation.
6. *Ati Krodha* (Excessive Anger): Emotional disturbances, especially excessive anger and stress, are known to impact the body's *doshic* balance,

leading to an increased risk of developing *Sandhivata*.

7. *Dhatu Kshaya* (Tissue Depletion): Malnourishment or improper metabolism of body tissues (*dhatu*s) can weaken the joints, making them more susceptible to degeneration.

The combined influence of these *Ghatakas* disrupts the natural harmony of *Doshas*, leading to the vitiation of *Vata* and the accumulation of *Ama* in the joints. This sets the stage for joint degeneration, inflammation, and the manifestation of *Sandhivata*.

### ***Samprapti* (Pathogenesis) of *Sandhivata* (Osteoarthritis):**

The *Samprapti* (Pathogenesis) of *Sandhivata* unfolds through a complex interplay of causative factors, involving both *Ayurvedic* wisdom and modern medical knowledge. This comprehensive understanding offers insights into the intricate process leading to joint degeneration and the manifestation of osteoarthritis.

1. Initial Degenerative Changes: The process of *Sandhivata* begins with the gradual degeneration of joint structures, driven by a combination of age-related wear and tear, joint injuries, and repetitive mechanical stress. These degenerative changes primarily affect the articular cartilage, leading to its erosion and loss of the smooth surface that allows frictionless joint movement.
2. Inflammation and Cytokine Release: The degeneration of cartilage triggers an inflammatory response within the joint. Pro-inflammatory cytokines, such as interleukin-1 (IL-1) and tumor necrosis factor-alpha (TNF-alpha), are released, perpetuating joint inflammation and further contributing to cartilage breakdown.
3. *Vata* Imbalance: *Ayurveda* views *Vata Dosha* as a central player in the development of *Sandhivata*. The degenerative changes and inflammation in the joints lead to *Vata Dosha* aggravation. The vitiated *Vata* further disrupts joint lubrication, hampers nutrient supply to the joint tissues, and exacerbates joint pain and stiffness.
4. Accumulation of *Ama* (Toxins): *Ayurveda* highlights the role of *Ama* accumulation in *Sandhivata*. The inflammation and *Vata* aggravation led to the accumulation of *Ama* in the joint tissues. *Ama*, a sticky and toxic substance, impairs joint

function, further aggravating *Vata Dosha*, and perpetuating joint degeneration.

5. **Activation of Enzymes:** Inflammatory mediators stimulate the release of enzymes like matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) that contribute to the degradation of collagen and other components of joint cartilage. This enzymatic breakdown of the cartilage accelerates the progression of *Sandhivata*.
6. **Joint Instability and Compensation:** As the condition advances, joint instability may develop due to the loss of cartilage integrity and the altered joint mechanics. The body attempts to compensate for the damage, leading to changes in joint alignment and the formation of osteophytes (bone spurs) in an effort to stabilize the joint.
7. **Secondary Inflammation:** As joint degeneration continues, the inflamed synovial membrane releases more inflammatory cytokines, perpetuating a cycle of chronic inflammation and joint damage.
8. **Pain and Functional Impairment:** The culmination of these pathological processes results in joint pain, stiffness, and functional impairment, hallmark features of *Sandhivata* (osteoarthritis).

The pathogenesis of *Sandhivata* intricately links the mechanical wear and tear of joint structures with inflammation, *Vata Dosha* imbalance, and *Ama* accumulation. Integrating the *Ayurvedic* and modern medical perspectives provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the multifaceted nature of *Sandhivata*.

#### **Chikitsa Sutra (Treatment Principles) of Sandhivata (Osteoarthritis) in Ayurveda:**

*Ayurveda* adopts a comprehensive approach to managing *Sandhivata*, encompassing various treatment principles tailored to individual needs. The *chikitsa sutra* for *Sandhivata* involves a combination of *Dosha* balancing, joint rejuvenation, and lifestyle modifications. Here are the key treatment principles:

1. **Dosha Balancing:** The primary focus of treatment is to pacify aggravated *Vata Dosha*. This is achieved through a *Vata*-pacifying diet and lifestyle. Favouring warm, moist, and nourishing foods while avoiding cold, dry, and processed foods is essential. Regular mealtimes and main-

taining a daily routine help restore *Dosha* equilibrium.

2. **Panchakarma Therapies:** *Panchakarma*, the *Ayurvedic* system of detoxification, plays a crucial role in managing *Sandhivata*. Specific therapies like *Abhyanga* (*Ayurvedic* massage) with medicated oils, *Swedana* (herbal steam therapy), and *Basti* (medicated enemas) help reduce joint pain, inflammation, and stiffness.
3. **Herbal Remedies:** *Ayurveda* utilizes various herbs known for their anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and rejuvenating properties. Herbs like *Shallaki* (*Boswellia*), *Guggulu* (*Commiphora mukul*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), and *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*) are commonly prescribed to support joint health and manage *Sandhivata*.
4. **Internal Medications:** Internal formulations like powders, tablets, and decoctions are prescribed based on the individual's *Dosha* imbalance and specific symptoms. These medications aid in reducing joint inflammation, improving joint mobility, and nourishing the joint tissues.
5. **Yoga and Exercise:** Gentle *yoga asanas* and exercises are beneficial in strengthening the muscles around the affected joints, improving joint flexibility, and enhancing overall joint health. However, high-impact exercises that may strain the joints should be avoided.
6. **Abhyanga (Massage):** Regular self-massage with warm, medicated oils, especially in the morning, helps to improve joint mobility, reduce pain, and nourish the joint tissues.
7. **External Applications:** Topical applications like herbal poultices, paste applications, and fomentations can provide targeted relief to the affected joints.
8. **Stress Management:** Stress can worsen *Vata* imbalance. Practices like meditation, *Pranayama* (breathing exercises), and relaxation techniques help manage stress, improving overall well-being.
9. **Weight Management:** Maintaining a healthy weight is crucial in managing *Sandhivata*, as excess weight places additional stress on weight-bearing joints.

10. Joint Protection: Avoiding activities that strain the joints, using proper joint support during physical activities, and maintaining good posture contribute to joint protection and prevention of further damage.

*Chikitsa sutra* for *Sandhivata* emphasizes a holistic and personalized approach, focusing on restoring *Dosha* balance, promoting joint health, and enhancing overall well-being. A qualified *Ayurvedic* practitioner should be consulted to develop a customized treatment plan based on individual constitution, symptoms, and severity of the condition.

## DISCUSSION

The discussion explores the harmonious coexistence of *Ayurvedic* principles and modern science in managing *Sandhivata*. Integrating the wisdom of both systems allows for a more comprehensive assessment and tailored treatment plans, leading to improved patient outcomes. It fosters a collaborative approach where *Ayurvedic* and modern medical practitioners work together to address the multifaceted nature of *Sandhivata*.

While modern medicine primarily focuses on symptom management and joint replacement surgery in advanced cases, *Ayurveda* goes beyond symptom alleviation, addressing the underlying imbalances and promoting overall health. The combination of *Ayurvedic* therapies like *Abhyanga*, *Basti*, and herbal remedies with modern interventions offers a potent and integrative approach to managing *Sandhivata*.

Moreover, *Ayurveda's* emphasis on individualized care recognizes that each person's constitution and imbalances are unique. Personalized treatment plans ensure that patients receive tailored interventions, optimizing therapeutic results.

However, challenges remain, such as limited research on *Ayurvedic* interventions and the need for standardized clinical trials to validate its efficacy. Collaborative efforts between *Ayurveda* and modern medicine

can bridge these gaps, leading to evidence-based integrative care for individuals with *Sandhivata*.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, *Sandhivata*, known as osteoarthritis in modern medicine, is a prevalent joint disorder that affects millions worldwide. The integration of *Ayurveda's* ancient wisdom and modern medical knowledge provides a comprehensive understanding of this condition, from its aetiology and clinical features to its management strategies.

*Ayurveda's* holistic approach to *Sandhivata* management emphasizes the importance of *Dosha* balance, detoxification, and nourishment to address the root cause. By restoring *Vata Dosha* equilibrium and eliminating *Ama* accumulation, *Ayurvedic* treatments aim to alleviate joint pain, reduce inflammation, and improve joint function. *Panchakarma* therapies, herbal remedies, yoga, and lifestyle modifications play pivotal roles in supporting joint health and enhancing overall well-being.

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