



## ASTHMA SHIELD AYURVEDA STYLE

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## ABSTRACT

Childhood asthma is known as *Shwasa Roga* in Ayurveda, affecting millions worldwide. It is a chronic inflammatory condition of the airways due to the vitiated condition of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, which leads to increased breathing. Recurrent incidence of such episodes affects the vital capacity of *Pranavaha Strotas*. The principle of Ayurveda focuses on *Tridosha* imbalance, dietary modification, and lifestyle adjustments, which underscores the significance of *Nidan Parivarjan* (avoidance of causative factors), the importance of *Rasayan Chikitsa* (antioxidant properties), the role of *Pranayama* (breathing exercises) and *Yoga* in strengthening the respiratory system. The Ayurveda approach leads to long-term relief and improved quality of life for children. A comprehensive understanding of asthma in children from an Ayurvedic perspective, combining ancient wisdom with contemporary research, provides holistic approaches to managing this prevalent childhood condition. It highlights the potential of Ayurveda to complement conventional treatments and enhance the overall well-being of children who have asthma.

**Keywords:** Childhood Asthma, *Shwasa Roga*

## INTRODUCTION

Asthma, or "*Shwasa Roga*," as explained in Ayurveda, has remained a problematic respiratory challenge

affecting children worldwide. Ayurveda offers a unique and holistic perspective on this ailment. It

recognizes asthma as a complex interplay of "Doshas" (*Vata* and *Kapha*), often disturbing the equilibrium of "Pranavaha Srotas" – the smaller and larger airways responsible for respiratory functions<sup>1</sup>. Various factors can trigger asthma, including infections, exercise, weather, emotions, dietary factors, and endocrine causes.<sup>2</sup> Children, more vulnerable due to their specific anatomical and physiological characteristics and immature immune response, have a higher incidence and recurrence than adults. This susceptibility makes them more prone to respiratory disorders.<sup>3</sup> The prevalence of bronchial asthma is on the rise, attributed to factors such as excessive pollution, occupational conditions, stress, overcrowding, and poor hygiene.<sup>4</sup> The clinical presentation of asthma varies, ranging from recurrent cough to severe wheezing. Symptoms tend to worsen during seasonal changes, exacerbate during exercise, and may be particularly troublesome at night. Effective asthma management requires bronchodilation, anti-allergic action, anti-tussive effects, and expectorant properties.<sup>5</sup> Poorly controlled asthma is associated with significant morbidity, leading to socio-economic challenges like school or work absenteeism, loss of productivity, and income, ultimately resulting in a diminished quality of life.<sup>6</sup> In severe cases, uncontrolled asthma can be life-threatening.<sup>7</sup> Ayurveda strives to identify

and address the root cause of asthma. Ayurveda's holistic approach advocates lifestyle modification, which helps meet the child's needs.

Modern medicine often focuses on symptom management through bronchodilators and oral or inhaled corticosteroids. Prolonged use of such steroids leads to adverse effects on the child, which suppress their immunity. The Ayurvedic principles are helpful to enhance immunity and reduce the recurrence of the disease. Ayurvedic management is nothing other than *Nidana Parivarjanam*. The knowledge of etiological factors (*Nidana*) is essential for its management. *Tamaka Shwasa* is mentioned as *Kashtasadhya* (challenging to cure), and a thorough understanding of the causative factors is necessary in its management.<sup>8</sup>

Therapeutic techniques like "Pranayama," *Rasayan Chikitsa*, and "Yoga" are recognized for their potential to strengthen the respiratory system and enhance the overall well-being of asthmatic children.

We aim to highlight the relevance of Ayurvedic principles in managing asthma in children, offering an integrative approach that encompasses both traditional wisdom and modern science for the well-being of our younger generation.

#### PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF PEDIATRIC ASTHMA IN AYURVEDIC AND SCIENTIFIC TERMS<sup>9</sup>:

Aspect	Characteristics	Implications
<i>Pranavaha Srotas</i> Imbalance	<i>Vata</i> and <i>Kapha</i> <i>Dosha</i> vitiation, airway hyper-responsiveness, bronchoconstriction, and excessive mucus production.	Respiratory difficulties, increased mucus, and airway constriction.
<i>Vata Dosha</i>	Dryness and mobility, airway narrowing akin to smooth muscle contractions.	Difficulties in breathing due to airway constriction.
<i>Kapha Dosha</i>	Heavy and cold properties, excessive mucus production.	Obstructed airflow, fostering pathogens, worsening respiratory distress.
Inflammatory Response	" <i>Ama</i> " triggering inflammation, pro-inflammatory cytokines, immune cell infiltration in airways.	Inflammation in airways, exacerbating asthma symptoms.
<i>Tridosha</i> Imbalance	Ayurvedic diagnosis based on " <i>Prakriti</i> " to determine asthma predominance ( <i>Vata</i> or <i>Kapha</i> ).	Personalized treatment plans based on individual constitution and triggers.

#### MANAGEMENT

Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of understanding an individual's unique constitution (*Prakriti*) and the imbalance in *Doshas* that might contribute to asthma, requiring a personalized approach.

1. *Nidana Parivarjana*: Ayurveda underscores the importance of avoiding causative factors, including environmental pollutants and allergens<sup>10</sup>. Modern medicine concurs that minimizing expo-

sure to allergens and irritants is vital in preventing asthma exacerbations.

2. *Shodhan*: It is detoxification therapy in Ayurveda. It can be beneficial for managing chronic asthma and preventing exacerbations.
- *Vaman-Teekshna Vamana* is contraindicated<sup>11</sup>. The combination of *Pippali*, *Saindhava*, and *Madhu* helps induce *Vamana* in a milder form, giving the desired effect in *Shwasa*. When a mild emetic (sub-emetic) is administered, it increases the secretion of fluids in the bronchial tubes. This produces less sticky mucus, making it easier for the patient to cough it up. Essentially, *Vamana*

assists in expelling thick mucus, allowing for smoother airflow and relieving the patient.

- Acharya Sushruta recommends *Mridu Virechana* in *Shwasa* with the drugs that have *Vatahara* and *Kaphahara* properties. As the main seat of *Shwasa* is *Pitta Sthana*, *Mridu Virechana* is beneficial to eliminate the *Doshas* from the body (*Kapha Vataatmakavetau Pitta Sthana Samudhbhavava*)<sup>12</sup>.
- 3. Herbal medications: There are many formulations described in different *Samhitas*. Enlisting some of them which are commonly used in practice, such as

Ayurvedic Formulation	Potential Benefits in Respiratory Conditions
<i>Sitopaladi Churna</i> <sup>13</sup>	Reduces cough and throat irritation. Acts as an expectorant. Anti-inflammatory properties.
<i>Shwaskuthar</i> <sup>14</sup>	Used in asthma and bronchitis. Exhibits bronchodilator effects. Anti-inflammatory properties.
<i>Talisadi Churna</i> <sup>15</sup>	Addresses excess mucus production. Acts as an expectorant. Soothes respiratory tissues.
<i>Shrigarabhra Rasa</i> <sup>16</sup>	Exhibits anti-inflammatory effects. Acts as a bronchodilator.
<i>Karpuradi Churna</i> <sup>17</sup>	Respiratory and digestive benefits. Camphor may have anti-inflammatory and soothing properties.
<i>Vasavaleha</i> <sup>18</sup>	Mucolytic properties, helping liquefy and expel mucus. Supports overall respiratory health.
<i>Yashtimadhu Churna</i> <sup>19</sup>	Anti-inflammatory and soothing properties. Reduces inflammation and irritation in the respiratory tract.

#### 4. External Treatments:

Therapy	Example	Benefits
Local Oleation ( <i>Snehana</i> )	<i>Karpuradi oil</i> or <i>Til oil</i>	Relieves stiffness, reduces inflammation, and soothes respiratory muscles.
Local Fomentation ( <i>Swedan</i> )	<i>Ajamoda pottali Sweda</i> , <i>Hasta Sweda</i>	Relieves stiffness, improves blood circulation, and reduces respiratory congestion.
<i>Nasya</i> (Nasal Administration)	<i>Panchavardhan tail</i> , <i>vacha tail</i>	Clears nasal passages, reduces congestion, and balances <i>Doshas</i> affecting the respiratory system.
<i>Dhoomapana</i> (Inhalation Therapy)	<i>Haridradi dhoomavarti</i> , <i>agardhoom</i>	Opens up respiratory passages, reduces congestion, and provides relief in asthma symptoms.
Nebulization ( <i>Ksheera Dhuma</i> )	<i>Yashti siddha jala</i> , <i>Tankan</i>	Facilitates direct delivery of herbal compounds to the respiratory system, helping to reduce inflammation, alleviate congestion, and provide relief in respiratory conditions.

#### 5. Dietary Influence<sup>22</sup>:

Ayurvedic principles emphasize the role of diet in managing asthma. It focuses on nourishing, digesting the toxins, and strengthening the body. Certain foods and dietary habits can aggravate *Dosha* imbalances and inflammation. Modern research supports the idea that it can mitigate asthma symptoms. *Nidigdihikadi Yush*, *Mudga lush*, *Dashamuladi Yavagu*, etc., all

have properties that can help reduce inflammation, clear respiratory passages that act as a bronchodilator, and relieve specific ailments. It also helps nourish, is easy to digest & is a good source of protein and essential nutrients.

#### 6. Lifestyle Modifications:

*Pranayama* and *Yoga*:- Ayurveda prescribes practices like "*Pranayama*" and "*Yoga*" to strengthen the respiratory system. Scientific studies have shown that

controlled breathing exercises can improve lung function and reduce asthma symptoms by enhancing respiratory muscle strength and increasing oxygen exchange.

#### 7. *Rasayana Chikitsa* (Rejuvenation Therapy)<sup>23</sup>:

These formulations enhance the immune system, improve lung function, and increase vitality. They can be particularly helpful in managing chronic asthma. Ex. *Chyawanprash*, *Baladi Rasayana*, *Haritaki (Terminalia chebula) Rasayana*, *Guduchi (Tinospora cordifolia) Rasayana*

## DISCUSSION

Ayurveda's approach to understanding asthma through the lens of Doshas, especially Vata and Kapha, provides a unique perspective. The concept of individualized care is based on individuals.

"Prakriti" resonates with the modern understanding of personalized medicine, which recognizes the diverse nature of asthma presentations. Ayurvedic herbs with anti-inflammatory properties help reduce the inflammation central to asthma pathophysiology. Ayurveda promotes prevention. The science of dietary modifications, lifestyle adjustments, and detoxification strategies aligns with the concept of asthma management. It helps to reduce the recurrence of asthma attacks. Ayurveda's approach to balancing Doshas addresses the immediate symptoms and aims to correct the root imbalances, promoting sustained well-being. Also, "Pranayama" and "Yoga" have a role in respiratory muscle strengthening and breathing control in asthma management.

## CONCLUSION

Integrating Ayurvedic wisdom and modern medical science in managing Pediatric asthma offers a promising synergy. Utilizing Ayurvedic herbs has the potential for natural remedies in reducing inflammation and managing asthma symptoms. This enriches the therapeutic arsenal and resonates with a growing inclination towards more holistic and less invasive treatments. Dietary modifications, lifestyle adjustments, and detoxification strategies emphasize the significance of addressing the root cause of asthma,

providing a more enduring solution than symptom-focused management. Incorporating "Pranayama" and "Yoga" in the treatment regimen adds a dimension of self-empowerment and self-care, aiding in improved respiratory function and overall well-being.

After the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to protect children from various asthma-trigger factors like crowded areas, the environment, food, and cold beverages. Administering daily nasal oiling, *Dhoopan* at home, multiple herbs, and *Rasayan Chikitsa* mentioned in Ayurveda helps to reduce the recurrence of disease and to enhance the immunity of the child.

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