

Role of *Rasayana* in Respiratory Health & Prevention of Post-Covid-19 Complications

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ABSTRACT

Health in Ayurveda is conceived as union of sound body, mind, senses & soul. Maintenance & promotion of health and happiness is the first objective while next is to prevention of disease and cure of sickness. The knowledge of *Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Swasthavritta*, *Rasayana* gives us a guideline for promotion of health.

In today's era, we all are facing the post-Covid-19 complications and everyone is following the preventive measures and consuming *Rasayana* dravyas to induce body nourishment and satisfy the aim of prevention and restoring the health of respiratory organs.

Rasayan-chikishta is one of the specialized branches of Ayurveda; which deals with maintenance of health. *Rasayana* plays effective and safe solution for various health problems like lifestyle disorders, degenerative conditions. *Acharya Charaka* widely described the effect of *Achara Rasayana* on health; which helps to boost the immunity for prevention of various infections.

Rasayana therapies are said to revitalize all the seven *Dhatus* (body elements) and specifically respiratory system & restores Respiratory health. *Naimittika Rasayana* are disease specific; which help to destroy the diseases like flu, rhinitis, sinusitis, influenza, asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia & post-Covid-19 complications and are capable to act at the level of *Agni* (digestive fire) & *Srotas* (Channels); specifically *Pranavah strotas*; opening the channels, widening the air flow and alveoli function helps to remove the congestion by sticky mucus and improves respiration. It increases *Ojas* / *Vyadhikshamatva* (immunity) and exhibits multidimensional activities like Anti-oxidant, Tissue protective, Immune modulator and improves the quality of life.

Key Words *Rasayana*, *Naimittika-Rasayana*, *Achara Rasayana*, post-Covid-19 complications, *Pranavaha strotas*, Respiratory health, *Vyadhikshamatva* (Immunity).

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INTRODUCTION

In spite of advancement in medical science with invention of sophisticated investigative tools and deep knowledge of human physiology and its

structure, there had been no significant control over diseases, rather new health issues are emerging and in many cases with no remedial solution. Every system of medicine emphasizes

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on treating the disease but in Ayurveda, treating a disease is always secondary rather, maintaining and preserving health which is the first objective of health-care plans. May be for this reason, utmost importance has been given for maintenance and sustenance of health in Ayurveda considering physical, mental, and spiritual aspects.

To achieve this goal, daily regimen and seasonal regimen, code of conduct of diet and social behaviour are mentioned in Ayurveda along with implication of *Rasayana*. *Rasayana* is one of the comprehensive disciplines of Ayurveda, which comprises a specialized use of herbs, herbomineral formulations, food articles, and lifestyle along with self-discipline with social etiquette to achieve the optimum state of tissues and systems of the body so that there is the least effect of etiological factors on the body. In other words, it can be stated that *Rasayana* is a way to achieve homeostasis and thus retarding the process of aging phenomenon and prevention of diseases.

In healthy condition, *Rasayana* can be understood as nutritional dynamics for rejuvenation of body and psyche. Aging in Ayurveda is considered as disease occurring due to the natural process of degeneration and thus, preventing premature aging and making aging in a healthy way is also considered under the aspect of *Rasayana*.

Looking at the multifaceted approach of *Rasayana*, it can be said that a deep analysis of health parameters, its assessment, and its

maintenance was the first approach of *Ayurveda*, and thus, treatment in *Ayurveda* is defined as all such activities in the form of diet, lifestyle, or medicines which target at *Dhatu Samya* (achieving the state of homeostasis) and not merely treating the disease.

Preservation of health and occurring of disease as per Ayurveda depends basically on how person maintains quality and quantity of food, along with food habits, lifestyle, psychological status, and effect of environmental conditions. Thus, quality and quantity of food plays major role in the health preservation with due consideration of the status of *Agni* (digestion and metabolism mechanics) and suitability of individual depending on his *Prakriti* (body constitution). Considering this fact, healthy food habits and nutritious food have been considered as *Ajasrika Rasayana* (*Rasayana* in the form of food) which includes nourishing suitable healthy food. Thus, awareness among the society about role of healthy food and food habits has to be reintroduced keeping in mind the present lifestyle of the people. As per *Ayurveda*; milk, ghee, honey etc. are few examples of such *Ajasrika Rasayana*, and this can be practiced in judicious manner in healthy individuals¹.

As per *Ayurveda* with advancing of age, there are certain organ or system related changes and replenishing of these structures may postpone many age-related health issues, and thus, *Rasayana* that is age specific can be prescribed for particular age groups, which can ultimately retard age-specific conditions to some

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extent and can promote longevity. A plan for *Rasayana* therapy right from birth shall be introduced in routine immunization schedule.

Concept of Immunity (Vyadhikshamatva) in Ayurveda :-

Immunity is the defence mechanism of body that protects against disease by identifying and destroying pathological organisms. It identifies variety of pathogens like viruses, bacteria, fungus and parasitic worms, and have ability to destroy them. The immune system mainly protects the body from foreign matters that causes damage by disturbing the homeostatic balance. Principles of *Vyadhikshamatva* (Immunity) in Ayurveda are free from ailments and lead healthy and wealthy life².

Concept of Rasayana :-

The *Dravyas* which promotes the *Dhatu*s are known as *Rasayana*. *Rasayana* - therapy is one which delays the *jara* (old age) and helps to cures the diseases. Hence *Rasayana* is used for promotion of strength in the healthy, for Prevention as well as curative purpose of the diseases.

Types of Rasayana :-

Dravyabhuta Rasayana and *Adravyabhuta Rasayana* (Achara *Rasayana*) are two types of *Rasayana*. According to the mode of administration; *Rasayana* is divided into *Kutipravesika Rasayana* (Intensive indoor rejuvenate regimen) and *Vatatapika Rasayana* (Outdoor rejuvenate regimen). On the basis of diet and life styles; it is categorized into *Aushdha Rasayana* (Drug based *Rasayana*), *Ahara*

Rasayana (Dietary *Rasayana*) and *Achara Rasayana* (Life style *Rasayana*). According to the purpose there are three types of *Rasayana* namely :- *Naimittika*, *Ajasrika* and *Kamyas Rasayana*. *Naimittika-Rasayana* is the type of *Rasayana* therapy used for specific curative purpose. It accelerates the recovery from prevailing diseases. *Ajasrika-Rasayana* is used in improving health and preserving good healthy lifestyle, diet or exercise. It involves utilization of milk, ghee, honey and maintenance of discipline life style. *Kamyas-Rasayana* is used to improve certain function that is desirous. *Chyavanprasha*, *Agastya Haritaki* and *Pippali Rasayana* are mainly indicated in disorders of Respiratory system like cough, asthma and hiccup. They also help in increasing immunity and strengthening Respiratory organs. *Guduchi* (*Tinospora cordifolia*), *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), *Haridra* (*Curcuma longa*), *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera*), *Tulsi* (*Ocimum sanctum*) and *Triphala* are mainly used for enhancement of immune system³.

Pranavaha-Srotas & Respiratory disorders :-

As the changes in lifestyle and environment are bound to happen, newer conditions are gaining to come up hence it can be tackled as per the *Tridosha* theory explained in classics of *Ayurveda*. *Acharya Sushruta* has described *Aupasargika rogas* i.e. communicable & contagious diseases which can be transmitted through breathing or touching. Human Corona viruses are most commonly spread between an infected person and others by touching infected

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surface, coughing or sneezing. In *Ayurveda* a term called “*Srotas*” i.e. Channel or path which carry essential nutrients to different organs, acts as one of the significant factors in the pathogenesis of diseases. Obstruction in the *Srotas* is one of the processes in pathogenesis of disease. The transportation & transfusion of *Prana vayu* is the main function of *Pranavaha Srotas* (Respiratory system). This *Pranavaha Srotas* gets vitiated because of various reasons like *Raja* (dust particles containing viruses), *Dhuma* (smoke containing air pollutants) *Sheetasthana* (cold environment). This *Raja* when enters through mouth and nose develops disease like *Kasa* (cough), *Hikka* (hiccups), *Shwasa* (asthma), *Pratishaya* (running or stuffy nose) which are similar to Corona virus⁴.

Rasayana as Immunomodulators; effectiveness during the period of post-Covid-19 complications -:

Rasayana, a specialty of *Ayurveda*, deals with measures for rejuvenation. *Rasayana* therapy comprises lifestyle, diet, and medicine that have properties to enhance growth, retard aging, induce tissue regeneration, and stimulate immunity. Due to its effects on improving immunity, *Rasayana* therapy have direct relevance to the prophylaxis and management of post-Covid-19 complications. The herbs used in *Rasayana* therapy have been found to be effective in immunomodulation and restoration of immune hemostasis. Several *Rasayana* herbs described in *Ayurveda* are used in clinical practice for strengthening immunity. *Withania*

somnifera (*Ashwagandha*), *Tinospora cordifolia* (*Guduchi*), *Curcuma longa* (*Haridra*), *Asparagus racemosus* (*Shatavari*), *Phyllanthus embelica* (*Amalaki*), and *Glyceriza glabra* (*Yashtimadhu*) are potential immunomodulators. Such *Rasayana* herbs considered for Covid-19 prophylaxis & post-Covid-19 complications⁵.

Prevention and management of Respiratory health in post-Covid-19 complications through Rasayana -:

Pranavaha Srotas carries *Prana vayu*, in connection with *Hriday* (heart) and *Dashadhamanis*. In post-Covid-19 complications the Respiratory system mainly get affected which is evident from its symptoms like cold, cough and breathlessness. Here the drugs working on Respiratory system and strengthening its functions; can be useful. For boosting immune system for Prevention of post-Covid-19 complications; Giloy, Tulsi, Agastya *Rasayana*, Pippali *Rasayana* are the best *Rasayana* working on *Pranvaha Srotas* (Respiratory system). Chyawanprash avleh, Tribhuvankirti ras, Laxmivilas ras, Mahalakshmi Vilas ras, Chitrak Haritaki, Eladi vati, Talisadi churna, Sitopaladi churna, Kantakari ghrita, Vasa ghrita can be used due to their antipyretic, antiallergic, immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties. Kantakari (*Solanum surattense*), Pushkarmool (*Inula racemosa*), Haritaki (*Terminalia chebula*), Pippali (*Piper longum*), Tulsi (*Ocimum sanctum*) and Amalaki

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(*Emblica officinalis*) can be used in *Pranavaha Sroto-dushti* for strengthening it⁶.

Yoga for Respiratory & Mental Health -:

Poor mental health conditions, including stress and depression, are known to increase the risk of acute respiratory infections. Rising numbers of post-Covid-19 complications cases and deaths raised stress and anxiety cases, while loneliness and depressive feelings are likely due to mandatory social distancing measures. Consideration of the mind is another distinction of *Ayurveda* and *Yoga*. Several measures for mental health are described, including *Pranayama* and Meditation. *Pranayama* is known to improve lung function. Meditation is found to reduce inflammation markers and influence markers of virus-specific immune response. *Yoga* including Meditation could be a simple and useful home-based practice for the prevention and management of post-Covid-19 complications⁷.

CONCLUSION

Rasayana has a definite role to play in the maintenance and preservation of health and appropriate use of *Rasayana* can help to bring down the prevalence of many diseases including post-Covid-19 complications; ultimately reducing health-care burden. Time has come when more focus shall be done on preventive aspects of diseases; and thus, the present policy of health-care system shall deal with awareness among the mass about *Rasayana* utility. *Rasayana* therapy

can be included in the “National Health Policy” and *Ayurveda* can contribute for the betterment of humanity⁸.

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