

## REVIEW OF MATRA BASTI THERAPY

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## ABSTRACT

In *Panchakarma* therapy, *Basti* holds a prominent place as one of the most effective treatments. *Basti Chikitsa* (therapeutic enema) is a natural and holistic approach to detoxification that revitalizes numerous physiological functions in the body. It helps restore the body's biological rhythm and promotes self-healing by eliminating deep-seated toxins. These accumulated impurities are dislodged and expelled through the action of *Basti Karma*, thereby helping the body return to its balanced and homeostatic state. Recognized as a core component of *Panchakarma* in Ayurveda, *Basti Chikitsa* is valued not only for its curative potential but also for its preventive and promotive benefits. Additionally, it helps reduce physical and mental stress, thereby enhancing overall well-being. Among the different types of *Basti*, *Matra Basti* involves the administration of a minimal dose of medicated oil or unctuous substances. This procedure is typically preceded by *Abhyanga* (therapeutic oil massage) and *Swedana* (sudation or steam therapy) to prepare the body and enhance its effectiveness.

**KEYWORDS:** *Abhyanga, Matra Basti, Swedana.*

## INTRODUCTION

*Panchakarma* therapy' is a composite and distinctive system of treatment in Ayurveda. The *Basti Chikitsa* or Medicated Enema Therapy is one part of the highly effective *Panchakarma* treatment. One particular form of *Basti* is *Matra Basti*. The word 'Basti' or 'Vasti' literally means bladder. In ancient times, bladders of animals were used to perform this procedure. Therefore, the procedure is named as *Basti Karma*. *Basti karma* may simply be understood as therapeutic enema. In this process, Medicated decoctions, ghee and oil are administered in the body through anus with the help of instrument specially made for *Basti* process. The therapy which while moving in the umbilical region, lumbar region, sides of chest and pelvic region churns up the stool including all other morbid matter located there and appropriately eliminates them with ease after nourishing the body can be known as *Basti*. Truly, *Basti* means one that holds the urine i.e. urinary bladder.

## Action of Basti

The process of administration of herbal medicines with the help of *Basti* (urinary bladder) is known as *Basti Chikitsa*.

*Matra Basti* is a specialized form of *Sneha Basti* (fat-based enema) known for its broad and versatile

therapeutic applications. It is considered safe, with minimal to no complications, and can be administered to individuals of any age, at any time, making it highly adaptable in clinical practice.

The primary site of action for *Basti Karma* is the *Pakwashaya* (large intestine or lower gastrointestinal tract), which is the principal location of *Vata Dosha*.<sup>[1]</sup> Therefore, *Basti* is particularly effective in managing conditions caused by the vitiation of *Vata*.

*Vata Dosha* governs all voluntary and involuntary movements in the body. In its natural state, it regulates vital functions such as the heartbeat, respiration, peristalsis, muscle activity, urination, defecation, menstruation, ejaculation, and childbirth. Given its foundational role, maintaining *Vata* balance is essential for health.

*Matra Basti* is beneficial both as a preventive and curative therapy. It is especially effective in treating disorders linked to aggravated *Vata*, including constipation, lower back pain, gout, arthritis, sciatica, rheumatism, neurological disorders etc.

Broadly *Basti* is of two types – 1. *Niruha Basti* 2. *Anuvasana Basti*.

**Table 1: Showing type of Basti.**

Sl.no	Name of Basti	Material used	Quantity
1.	Niruha Basti	Kashaya Dravyas (Decoction)	Up to 1200 ml
2.	Anuvasana Basti	Sneha Dravyas (oils)	Up to 300 ml

An unhealthy diet and a fast-paced modern lifestyle are major contributors to the imbalance of Vata Dosha, leading to the onset of various diseases. In such pathological states, Basti Karma plays a crucial role in restoring and maintaining the equilibrium of Vata. By doing so, it effectively aids in the management and treatment of Vata-related disorders.

Among the five major procedures of *Panchakarma*, *Basti* is considered the most significant and powerful. In fact, Ayurveda describes Basti as accounting for half of all treatment.<sup>[2]</sup> Unlike *Vamana* and *Virechana*, which primarily serve as detoxification therapies, Basti offers a broader range of actions depending on its type. For instance, *Shodhana Basti* serves a cleansing function,

while *Brimhana Basti* provides nourishment.

*Basti* is especially effective in addressing *Vata* imbalances, as *Vata* is considered the primary and most dynamic *Dosha*. Unlike Pitta and Kapha, which are inherently immobile, it is the vitiated Vata that mobilizes and spreads these *Doshas*, contributing to disease formation. Therefore, by controlling *Vata*, one can effectively prevent and manage many illnesses.

For this reason, *Basti* therapy is regarded as the most proactive and comprehensive treatment within *Panchakarma*, and is often considered the cornerstone of Ayurvedic therapeutic interventions.

### Indications and Contraindications of Matra Basti

**Table 2: Showing Indications<sup>[3]</sup> and Contraindications of Matra Basti.**

Sl. No.	Indications	Contraindications
1	Vyayama karshita – those who have got weak due to excessive exercises	Ajeerna and Day Sleep <sup>[4]</sup>
2	Karma karshita – people who are debilitated due to excessive work, strenuous work	All types of diarrhoeas, dysenteries, per rectal bleeding
3	Bhara karshita – people who are debilitated due to excessive lifting of weights	Diabetes
4	Adhwa karshita – people who are debilitated due to excessive walking	Severe anaemia
5	Yana karshita – people who are debilitated due to excessive travelling	Breathlessness, Pulmonary tubercu losis
6	Stree karshita – people who are debilitated due to excessive indulgence in sexual intercourse	Hypoproteinemia
7	Durbala – excessive weakness	Infantile problems
8	Vatabhagneshu – people who are suffering from diseases caused due to Vata vitiation	Senile debility, etc

### Matra Basti Instruments

Syringe of 100cc, Disposable Gloves, Simple rubber catheter of number 10 or 12 etc.

### Method of administration of Matra Basti: KARMA VIDHI

This is very important that how to induce Basti to the patient. Proper administration of Basti requires not only theoretical but also practical skill. It has three steps. 1. Poorva Karma 2. Pradhana Karma 3. Pashchat Karma

**1. Poorva Karma:** This has great value in the process. Patient should be fully examined with appropriate history taking. This has a long-lasting effect in *Basti-Chikitsa*. Along with this, Abhyanga (external oleation) and Swedana should be given to the patient before Basti Dana.<sup>[4]</sup> Snehana with suitable Sneha (Medicated oil) is applied and then Swedana should be given by steam / hot water bag / tapa-swada / Sarvanga-Sweda etc., especially on Kati, Vankshana and Pakvashya region. Patient is advised to have his

prescribed meal and a short walk. Having passed urine and stool he is asked to lie down on the table of suitable height. The patient is put in left lateral position with his right leg semi flexed and left fully straightened.

**2. Pradhana Karma:** The Basti Material is taken in *Basti- yantra*, which is filled with Basti medicine emulsion, Basti Netra should be smeared with some oil or lubricant and introduced in anal region with the help of index finger of the left hand. Basti Netra should be introduced 2-4 finger away from the anus into rectum. Keeping it in the same position, allow the Basti material to go in. Pull out the Basti Netra. Niruha Basti should be induced on empty stomach while Anuvasana, after the meal.<sup>[5]</sup>

**3. Pashchat Karma:** After that, the patient is kept lying on his back and should be gently thumped three times on each of soles and over the buttocks, the distal part of the cot or table should be raised

(Elevated). Massage should be applied to the patient, especially, on the soles. If the patient develops the urge for defecation, he should be allowed. But in case of Anuvasana basti if Sneha passes out immediately another Anuvasana Basti should be applied. After passing the stools with Basti Dravya, the patient is allowed to take light food (warm and liquid) if he feels hungry.

### Do's and Don'ts

The *Matrabasti* does not demand any regimen of diet or behaviour. It can be given at all times and in all seasons without any restriction. Whereas, Acharya *Vridha Vagbhata* has restricted the day sleep after being treated with *Matrabasti*.<sup>[5]</sup>

### Some commonly used Sneha Yogas in Matra Basti<sup>[6]</sup>

**Table 3: Showing Some commonly used Sneha Yogas in Matra Basti.**

SI No	Condition	Name of Sneha Yogas
1	<i>Vataja</i>	Mahanarayana Taila, Bala Taila, Shuddhabala Taila, Ksheerabala Taila, Dhanwanta ram Taila, Dashamoola Taila, Swadamstradi Taila, Ketakyadi Taila, Sahacharadi Taila, Balashwagandhadi Taila And Indukantam Ghrita Etc.
2	<i>Pittaja</i>	Murchita Goghrita, Chatuhsneham, Madhuyashtyadi Taila, Sukumara Ghrita Etc
3	<i>Kaphaja</i>	Triphaladi Taila, Saindhavadi Taila, Pippalyadi Taila, Etc
4	<i>Raktaja</i>	Chandanabaladi Taila, Changeri Ghrita, Etc

### CONCLUSION

Vata Dosha represents the kinetic energy responsible for all movement and activity within the body. Among the *Pancha Mahabhutas* (five great elements), it corresponds to *Vayu* (air). The health of body tissues (Dhatu) is maintained by keeping the *Doshas*, especially Vata, in balance. One of the most effective methods for regulating Vata is Basti Karma, a key component of *Panchakarma* therapy. A specialized form of this is Matra Basti, which operates on four levels: the therapeutic procedure itself, the medicinal substances used, *Srotoshodhana* (cleansing of bodily channels), and modulation of the gut-brain axis.

From a pharmacokinetic perspective, medicines administered via the rectal route are absorbed quickly and offer higher bioavailability, making this route highly effective. In Ayurvedic practice, *Matra Basti* is considered a potent and transformative therapy—akin to holding a diamond in your hand. When administered with faith and precision, it has the potential to dramatically improve health.

This therapy purifies the body by removing accumulated toxins, promoting internal harmony and vitality. The transformation it brings is metaphorically compared to a caterpillar's metamorphosis into a butterfly—a journey from stagnation and impurity to lightness and renewal. Just as the intestines feel burdened and sluggish when filled with toxins, they become refreshed and rejuvenated once the vitiated *Doshas* are eliminated through *Basti Chikitsa*.

*Matra Basti* is a holistic, rejuvenating therapy suitable for people of all age groups, from children to the elderly. It holds therapeutic potential across a wide range of conditions—from neurological disorders to sports injuries. Described as a “ray of light” in the darkness of disease, *Matra Basti* offers a simple yet profound healing

modality.

This review highlights its value as an accessible and versatile treatment, but also emphasizes the need for more scientific research, clinical trials, and standardization to fully validate its use in both preventive and curative care.

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