

ROLE OF SWASTHAVRITTA IN SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Health is a state of complete physical, mental & social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity among the pupils. *Ayurveda* indicate prevention and health promotion, and provides treatment for disease. Its main objective is to achieve desirable health and well-being through a comprehensive approach that addresses mind, body, behavior, and environment. It is the science of preventing diseases, prolonging life, and promoting health under the *Swasthavritta*. Children between the ages of 5-17 years are school age children. About 30 percent of the population is comprised of this age group. It is a period of rapid growth and development of the children. Children in school age are prone to get specific health problems. To prevent the disease and promote the health of school age children, *Swasthavritta* plays an important role. Various regimens i.e. Daily regimen (*Dincharya*), seasonal regimen (*Ritucharya*), *Sandhyacharya* (Evening regimen), *Ratricharya* (Night regimen), and *Aahara* (Dietary habits) and *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Sadvritta* (Ideal routines) and *Achara Rasayana* etc. is given which are very helpful to an individual for healthy life and prevention of diseases. So an attempt has been taken to prevent the diseases among the school going children and promote their health by intervening the *Swasthavritta* in their life through this paper.

KEYWORDS: *Swasthavritta*, School, Health.

INTRODUCTION

Children are vital to the nation's present and its future. Healthy children are more likely to become healthy adults. As we know that "Health is Wealth". There is nothing in our life that is more valuable than good health. Without health there is no happiness, no peace and no success. A person with bad health cannot enjoy the pleasure of being wealthy. Health is a state of complete physical, mental & social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Children between the ages of 5-17 years are school age children. About 30 percent of the population is comprised of this age group. As 5-12 years is middle school age group. It is a period of rapid growth and development of the children. Children in school age are prone to get specific health problems. The major health problems of school children are Malnutrition, Worm infestation, Disease of eyes and ears and Dental caries. There are many procedures are mentioned in our text like daily regimen (*Dincharya*), seasonal (*Ritucharya*) and *Aahara* (Dietary habits) and *Vihara* (lifestyle), *SADVIRITTA* (Ideal routines) and

ACHARA RASAYANA etc., which are very helpful to promote, protect and maintain health of school children.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

AIM: To promote, protect and maintain health of school children and reduce morbidity and mortality in them.

OBJECTIVES

1. The promotion of positive health.
2. The prevention of diseases.
3. Awaken health consciousness in children.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Dincharaya (Daily regimen), *Sandhyacharya* (Evening regimen), *Ratricharya* (Night regimen) and *Ritucharya* (Seasonal Regimen) are very important regimens for overall development of an individual. Various methods are described under the *Dincharaya*. It includes *Brahmamuhuruta Jagrana*, *Ushapana* (Drinking water), *Malatyaga* (Bowel evacuation), *Dantapawana*

(Brushing), *Nasya* (Nasal drops) with *Sarsapa tail*, *Kavala* (Gargling), *Abhyanga* (Massage), *Vyayama* (Exercise), *Snana* (Bathing), *Vastradharana* (clothing), *Padradharana* (wearing shoes), *Nakhadikartana* (cutting of nails), *Ushnishdharnam* (cover the head), in present scenario we can cover the head with cap. By following this daily regimen, many diseases among the children can be prevented and it will also promote the health of them. **Sandhyacharya (Evening regimen)** - Avoid learning, reading, eating and sleeping during evening time. In current scenario due to faulty lifestyle of both parents and children, they are doing such kind of activities during evening time. By educating about health hazards of such activities, we can prevent many diseases and promote the health of child. Encourage the child to pray the god during evening time. It will improve both physical and mental health. **Ratricharya (Night regimen)**- In current scenario due to unhealthy lifestyle, faulty habit of taking late dinner has been developed which causes late sleep and disturbed the biological clock of a person and leads to many diseases. To prevent health hazards, try to take meal at sunset if possible. Otherwise one should complete their dinner before 9 p.m. Diet should be light i.e. easily digestible. Child should be encouraged for slow walking for about 100 feet after meal. For sleeping, Bed of the child should be soft, even and clean. It is best to sleep in left lateral position .It alleviates acid reflux and boost the digestion.

1. For the promotion of Physical and Mental Health

• Growth and Development

Physical growth is an increase in size. Development is growth in function and capability. Both processes are depends on many factors like genetic, nutritional, and environmental factors.

DIET (Aahara)

In our texts *Aahara* along with *Aahara Vidhi Vidhana & Ritus* has been described which plays an important role in growth and development of child. *Prakriti* of child should be assessed in early childhood. The diet of child must be according to seasons (*Ritus*) and *Prakriti*. It should include-

Various dairy products i.e. Rich source of Calcium and make the bone strong. Whole flour, Dalia i.e. Vitamin - B and fiber rich.

Green leafy vegetables and fruits i.e. Rich source of Iron, Vitamins & Minerals. Legumes i.e. Protein rich.

Sprouted foods i.e. Vitamins and Minerals rich.

Ghee- increase appetite.

Exercise (Vyayama)

Encourage the child to do regular exercise from early school age.

- Develops musculature by improving circulation to all body parts.
- Gives massaging effect over the vital organs and increase the oxygen supply to remote tissue.
- Makes the body active.

Yogasana

- *Suksham Vyayama*
- *Tadasana*
- *Tiryaka Tadasana*
- *Ardha Chakarasana*
- *Vrikshasana*
- *Surya Namaskara*

Effects

- Improves flexibility.
- Improves circulation.
- Enhance digestive power.
- Strengthens muscle power.

Mental Health

Physical health is related to mental health. To promote the mental health, various methods are described.

1. **Brahmamuhuruta Jagrana** – It is not like the elders. Child must be taken adequate sleep. Sleeping hours for Middle school age group (5-12 years) - 10-11 hours Secondary school group (13-17 years) - 7- 10 hours.

Without deprivation in sleep of child, children are educated to “early to bed early to rise”.

Effect: Increase concentration process of the pupil.

Serotonin is released which makes the child active and alert.

2. **Nidra (Sleep)** – Deprivation of sleep lead to Moody & Irritability & other memory related problems. While adequate sleep will help in improved attention, learning, behavior, memory & overall mental health.

3.

4. **Aahara (Diet)** - As in *Chandogyo upnishad*: “*Aahara Sudho Satva Sudho*”. *Hitkara Aahara* and *Satvikka Aahara* maintain the mental health. Milk, *Ghritta*, *Yava* (Barley), *Godhoom* (Wheat), Green leafy vegetables, fruits, chickpea, nuts coconut etc. must be included in children of school age. various preparations like *Shikharini* (main ingredient is curd) *Mudga Yusha* (soup of green gram), *Lapshika* (made up of Semolina Wheat, Besan, Green Gram) *Krishra* (Made up of *Mudga*) etc as mentioned in *Bhavprakash* are very beneficial for children because these are easy to digest and wholesome to children.

5. **Medhya Rasayana**- ‘*Medhya*’ means intellect or cognitive power and ‘*Rasayana*’ means curative or rejuvenative ability. The potent *Medhya Rasayana* herbs play a key role in improving the processing, storing and information retrieving abilities of the brain. This improves the Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Some *Medhya Rasayana* that are beneficial to children are:

- Regular intake of the 10 ml juice of *Mandukparni* i.e *Centalla asiatica* together with honey extensively promotes brain growth in the children.
- Regular intake of the 3 grams powdered root of

Yasthimadhu (Mulethi) i.e. *Glycyrrhiza glabra* along with a glass of milk enhances memory and learning capabilities in children and also reduce the risk of neural disorders.

- Regular intake of *Sankhpushpi* i.e. *Convolvulus pluricaulis* paste infused in lukewarm milk & can be ingested in morning preferably after meals, extremely beneficial to boost memory. It improves memory capacity, concentration, creativity, alertness and calmness in children.

6. **Aachara Rasayana:** Children are educated to always speak the truth, be non-violent, & obey the elders and intake of Milk and *Ghrita* regularly.

Yogic practices

✓ YOGASANA

- Tadasana
- Surya Namaskara
- Savasana
- Balasana
- Makrasana

✓ PRANAYAM

- Anuloma - Viloma
- Bhramri

✓ TRATAKA

✓ KAPALBHATI EFFECTS

- Increases concentration.
- Improves memory.
- Reduce anxiety.
- Improves listening skills.
- Increase functioning of brain.
- Improve child attention.
- Reduce negative behavior.
- Calms the mind.

Prevention of Major Health Problems of School Children Through Swasthavritta

The major health problems of school children are Malnutrition, Worm infestation, Disease of eyes and ears and Dental caries.

EYES: Most important sense organ. Eyes are very delicate organ. Due to faulty lifestyle of children such as prolonged classroom, watching T.V programs for long time, continuous use of mobile phones either for games or for their homework leading to weakness of ocular tissues & strain to eyes. In India, varied prevalence of myopia has been reported in children.

- To prevent these diseases, encourage the child to play outdoor games.
- Brightness of the phone should be on reading mode.
- Avoid dark colored themes mainly of blue color on your phone.

By keeping your eyes healthy, you can keep your brain healthy. Various methods are described in

SWASTHAVRITTA to keep our eyes healthy.

1. **Anjana (Corrylium):** Due to *Mridu* property of *Souviranjana*, it is used during day time daily.
2. Pain, Itching, Burning sensation are common in children. By applying *Anjana*, these subside. *Anjana* dilates the blood vessels, increase the blood flow and maintain the integrity of *Netrasrotas*. It also improves the vision and prevents eye diseases.
3. **Netraprakshalna (Eyewash):** Washing eyes with cold water in *Grishma* & *Sharda Ritu* and slightly warm water in winter season helps in maintaining the constant clear vision.
4. **Nasya (Nasal drops):** *Pratimarsh Nasya* can be used daily. In children there is dominancy of *Kapha Dosha*. So 1-2 drops of *Sarshapa taila* in each nostril, is used in morning time. Due to anatomical communication, the medicine applied through nasal cavity reaches to cavernous sinus (*Shringataka Marma*) which is the site of all the centers of vision, hearing, smell & taste.
5. **Ushapana (Drinking water)** – Drinking of water in morning also clears the vision and prevents the eye diseases.
6. **Shiroabhyanga (Head massage):** Daily application of oil on head region, strengthen the eyes and act as *Drishti prasadaka*.
7. **Padaabhyanga (Foot massage):** Two veins are situated in center of feet that are connected to eyes. This transmits the effect of oil massage on the soles and promotes the eye health & prevents the diseases.
8. **Snana (Bathing):** Cold water or water slightly less than body temperature should be used for bathing in summer season from head always promotes eye health. Hot water head bath is bad for eyes. So Cold water or Luke warm water is always better to use.
9. Hot water on head region is contraindicated because it causes vision loss.
10. **Chatradharana (Umbrella):** While going to school, children are advised to take Umbrella. This will prevent them from dust and sunlight.
11. **Padprakashalana (Foot wash):** Dirt on feet brings abnormality of eyes. Two veins on feet are connected to eyes. Accumulations of dirt (*Malas*) cause abnormality. Washing the feet with clean water clear vision.
12. **Padtradharana (Foot wearing)** - Improves eye sight.

Aahara and Nidra also play an important role in maintaining eye health. Unwholesome food may lead to reduced vision and blindness.

Suppression of hunger leads to weakness in visual perception.

Sleep revitalizes the mind and body. During sleep eyes are at complete rest and recollects functional capacity. So children must be having adequate sleep.

RASAYANA – *Trifla Draksha Ghrita*

Milk

Yogic Practices & Eye Health

- Palming and shifting movements of eyes give relief to eyes and prevent the refractive errors & other eye problems of school children.
- **Trataka:** It promotes clear vision and prevents eye disorders.
- **Neti:** For Secondary school group (13-17 years) children. It promotes clear vision and prevents eye disorders.

Dental or Oral Health

As the dental problems are common in children due to various reasons like eating more chocolates, toffees and sweetened food items, improper brushing etc. Various methods are mentioned in *Swasthavritta* to maintain the oral health.

Before the tooth brushing, teach the child to take a sip of water to prevent any injury.

1. **Dantapawana (Tooth Brushing):** Teach the child to brush the teeth twice a day i.e. Morning and Evening.

The benefit of *Dantapawana* is to get rid from bad odor of mouth and it increases the interest towards food due to removal of dirt from tooth, tongue and mouth.

Chewing the twig of *Neem*, *Tejobatti*, *Kaidrya* and *Nirgundi* - makes the teeth strong. Also having antibacterial action and Prevents dental caries.

2. **Jihva Nirlekhna (Tongue scrapping):** It should be blunt and curved.

Stimulates the reflex points of the tongue and removes the bad odor (halitosis). It improves sense of taste and stimulates secretion of digestive enzyme.

3. **Pratisarana (Massaging of gums and teeth):** With *Trifla*, *Trikatu*, *Trijat*, *Kustha* & honey.

It removes the food debris and plaque and helps to maintain the periodontal health.

4. **Kavala and Gandusha (Gargling and oil pulling):** Removes the odor Strengthens the gums and teeth.

Gives massaging effect over oral mucosa & improves the circulation of oral cavity.

Care of Ears – In school children, problems of ear hampers their learning process and hampers their school performance.

Karnapoorna is best method to prevent ear problems. Administering warm oil into the ear canal is **Karnapoorna**. It improves hearing capacity & quality.

- It nourishes the acoustic nerve & enhances better

interpretation of sounds by hearing center of brain.

- Reduces frequent ear infections.
- Reduces inflammation and pain of ears.

Intestinal parasites – Improper hygiene or unhygiene is major cause of this problem. Maintain the proper hygiene to prevent this problem in school children.

1. **Maltyaga (Bowel evacuation - Daily.** Should not be in public places because coming in contact with contaminated faeces causes infestation.
2. **Hastapadprakshalna (Washing of hands & feet) –** Proper washing of hands & feet after Bowel evacuation & frequent washing of children hands prevents infestation & infection.
3. **Snana (Bathing) –** Develop a habit of daily bathing in children. It prevents many infectious diseases like skin diseases. It brings purity. Hot water should not be used over the head. Cold water / Luke warm water is better to use according to season.
4. **Vastradharna (Clothing) –** Wear clean clothes. School dress must be clean. Don't wear clothes of others and of unsightly appearance.
5. In winter season, wear woolen clothes of red color. It prevents the child from cold & is *Vatakaphanasaka*.
6. In summer season, wear *kshaya* clothes & of light color cotton clothes. It prevents the child from heat and is *Pittanashaka*.
7. In rainy season, wear white colored clothes because these are not so warm and so cold. Clothes should be clean & comfortable.
8. **Nakhadikartana (Cutting of nails) –** The habit of Nail biting is common among the children. Long nails are major site of infection. Cut the nails of children weekly or after 15 days. It prevents infection & brings purity.
9. **Padradharana (Wearing shoes) –** Walking bare feet cause worm infestation. Shoes of children should not be so tight & of hard sole.

CONCLUSION

As the school age is growing age of children. In this age, children are more vulnerable to many health problems. So for the prevention of diseases & promotion of health, *Aahara* & *Vihara* plays an important role. Balanced diet should be given to school age children. Children are educated to follow the daily regimen (*Dincharya*), seasonal regimen (*Ritucharya*) & *Sadvritta* (Ideal routines).

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