***AYURVEDIC DERMATOLOGY: A FRONTIER OF SKIN CARE***

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Skin is the medium for perception of beauty of the person which is the keen pleasure to the senses especially that of sight or which charms the intellectual of moral faculties. It means it has physical aspect as well as mental and spiritual aspect. The word beautiful as an adjective qualifying the human beings refers to the physical beauty only. Skin illnesses are becoming a big threat to mental health as well as physical health because they disrupt aesthetic harmony. Skin discloses the normal and pathological state of individual by changing its normal physiology and anatomy.

Humans are confronted with a range of ailments in the twenty-first century, due to machine-like routine, quick food, and a fast-paced living in a scientifically advanced environment. Improper food habits, lack of sleep, stress, and environment pollution all contribute to the disruption in the body, particularly on the skin as well as contribute to the ongoing need for effective skincare practices. The answer of all skin care practices either preventive or therapeutics hidden under the science of *veda* called *Ayurveda*. Ayurveda defined anatomical and functional description of skin under the heading of *Twacha*. Currently new area of skin care is developing under the umbrella of Ayurveda called as Ayurveda dermatology. It focuses on using natural remedies, holistic approaches, and lifestyle changes to address skin-related issues and promote overall skin health. The principles of Ayurveda dermatology are based on balancing the three *Doshas* (*Vata, Pitta,* and *Kapha*), maintaining proper digestion and metabolism, and promoting harmony between the body, mind, and spirit. In *Ayurvedic* dermatology, skin conditions are often seen as a manifestation of imbalances within the body. The approach involves identifying the root causes of skin issues rather than just treating the symptoms. *Ayurvedic* Skin care is the variety of practices that support, nourish or enhance the integrity of normal skin and its appearance. It can be by taking good nutrition, healthy practices like following daily regimen which are prescribed and appropriate use of medicines.

The in-depth understanding of *ayurvedic* dermatology starts forms the concept of skin or *Twacha*.

**1.1 What is skin (*Twacha*)?**

The skin is the largest sense organ in the body and covers the body's exterior surface. It is the first line of defense mechanism of the body which protects the body from pathogens, abrasion, heat, and chemicals in a variety of ways. Along with its defensive actions against pathogens, it is also helps in body's thermoregulation through glands. Skin also have abundant of nerve ending through which sensation travels. It is *Twacha* is derived from *Twak Dhatu*, which means "to cover" in *Ayurveda*[[1]](#endnote-1). *Twacha* is formed in *Garbha* by the mixture of *Shukra* (semen) and *Shonita* (ovum), much like the creamy coating over hot milk[[2]](#endnote-2). According to *Acharya Vagbhata* in *Astanga Hridaya*, skin is formed from *Rakta Dhatu* during the sixth month of intrauterine life[[3]](#endnote-3). *Twacha* is dominated by *Prithvi* and *Vayu Mahabhuta*.

**1.2 Differentiation of skin layers in *Ayurveda***

*Twacha* is considered as a seat of *Sparshanendriya* (i.e. sense organ)[[4]](#endnote-4). Development of skin occurs in 3rd month of intrauterine life. Skin is formed from the heat generated during *Shukra-Shonita Samyoga in Garbha*[[5]](#endnote-5). *Ayurveda* mentions 7 layers of skin[[6]](#endnote-6).

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| **Layers**  | **Functions**  |
| *Avabhasini*  | * Outermost layer, reflects complexion and quality of *Rasa Dhatu* and aura of an individual
* Internal and external re-hydration and regular massage supports the health and appearance of *Avabhasini*
 |
| *Lohita*  | * Indicates the quality of *Rakta Dhatu*.
* If there is *Aama* in blood, it impacts aura of the outer layer and accentuates sensitivity to sun.
 |
| *Shweta*  | * Provides balance to skin color, lightening the darker color of inner layers.
 |
| *Tamra*  | * Supports immune system
* It helps skin to perform its function of being a barrier.
 |
| *Vedini* | * Center for transformation of sensation , feeling of pain etc.
 |
| *Rohini* | * It supports healing and regeneration
* A balanced diet, rich in nutritional value supports this layer.
 |
| *Mamsadhara*  | * It is the platform for the skin’s stability and firmness.
* A skin product that has *Vayasthapana* effect nourishes this layer to retard ageing process.
 |

**Table 01: Skin layers in *Ayurveda***

**1.3 Skin in contemporary sciences:** Modern medical sciences elaborated skin as the sense organ of touch and differentiate it into two prime layers called epidermis and dermis which further divided into many layers based on types of cells present[[7]](#endnote-7).

**Epidermis**: outermost layer, it acts as a barrier to infection from environmental pathogens and regulates the amount of water released from the body into the atmosphere through transepidermal water loss. It is composed of multiple layers of flattened cells that overlie a base layer (stratum basale) composed of columnar cells arranged perpendicularly.

**Dermis:** it is a thick layer composed of fibrous and elastic tissue that gives skin flexibility and strength. It has got nerve endings, sweat glands, hair follicles and blood vessels.

**1.4 Relationship of Ayurvedic and contemporary skin types**

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| **Layers of skin (modern)** | **Layers of skin *(Ayurveda)*** |  |
| Stratum corneumStratum lucidumStratum granulosumStratum malphigi  | *Avabhasini* *Lohita* *Shweta**Tamra*  | **Epidermis** |
| Superficial papillary layer Superficial reticular layerHypodermis  | *Vedini**Rohini**Mamsadhara*  | **Dermis**  |

**Table 02: Differentiated layers of epidermis and dermis and their correlation with *Ayurvedic* skin layers types**

Understanding present skin layers variance from the standpoint of *Ayurveda* facilitates in-depth knowledge of dermatology in terms of disorders.

**1.5 *Dosha Sambandha* to *Twacha*[[8]](#endnote-8)**

*Doshas* are fundamental energies or principles that govern the physiological and psychological functions of the human body. These *Doshas*—*Vata, Pitta, and Kapha*—are believed to be present in varying degrees in every individual and play a significant role in determining an individual's constitution, health, and overall well-being. The balance and harmony of these *Doshas* are central to *Ayurvedic* philosophy and practices. *Dosha* are further divided into 5 types each based on the functionality within the body and site of area residing. Out of each *Dosha* types, some of them resided in the body specially and having important role in maintaining the skin integrity in terms of anatomy and physiology.

**Figure 01: *Dosha* responsible for skin functionality.**

**1.5 Skin care in *Ayurveda*:**

Skin having more protective function and getting easily exposed to infection, diseases and injuries. Hence, a proper and extra care should be given to skin. Healthy skin is a result of overall health condition of individuals and prescribes numerous skin care treatment that need to be preserved at every stage of life, the vitiated *Tridoshas* from the body as they are mainly responsible for skin disorders and other diseases. Major causes of skin disorders are: change in lifestyle, decreasing body’s nutritional level, poor quality of food, hormonal problems and age effect.

*Ayurveda* mentions various concepts which will become the future of skin care in coming era. Like *Dinacahrya, Ritucharya, Ritu Anusara Shodhana, Prakriti, & Sara* etc. One must adopt these healthy routine only after knowing their skin type.

**1.5.1 *Dinacharya*** **– Daily Regimen for a Healthy Skin[[9]](#endnote-9)**:

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| ***Dinacharya***  | **Importance**  |
| *Ushapana (*Drinking water before sunrise*)* | * Helps in prevention of many diseases
* Removes toxins from the body imparting healthy complexion to skin
 |
| *Dantadhavana (*Brushing of Teeth) | * One should brush their teeth twice i.e. in the morning and at night after the intake of food
* It removes bad odor and wastes on teeth
* It brings about freshness and cleanliness in mouth
 |
| *Jihvanirlekhana* (Scraping of tongue) | * Cleaning of tongue should be done with as instrument which is smooth, soft made of silver, gold or iron
* It helps in removing bad taste, odor of mouth, stiffness of tongue and gives taste
 |
| *Gandusha* (Gargling) | * Mouth is completely filled with some *Dravyas* like oil/water and kept without movement is *Gandusha*
* It enhances strength to mandible, resonates voice, nourishment to face and taste sensation.
* It prevents dryness of throat, decay of teeth and making it strong
 |
| *Ajana* (Collyrium) | * Eyes being one of the most important sense organ. One must protect it by applying *Anjana* every day. It helps in cleaning of eyes[[10]](#endnote-10).
* One must avoid *Anjana* in case of tiredness, crying, after intake of alcohol, anger, fever and fear
 |
| *Nasya* (nose instillation) | * Practice of *Nasya* at proper time as said in text, prevents premature greying of hair, hairfal. Veins, bones, joints and ligaments of skull are nourished by *Nasya*
* Face becomes pleasant, voice becomes sweet, deep and loud, cleanliness in sense organs and strength get enhanced
 |
| *Vyayam* (Exercise) | * Regular exercise nourishes body, gives good complexion, provides lightness in body, enhance tolerance power of tiredness.
 |
| *Abhyanga* (Massage)1. *Shiro abhyanga* (head massage)
2. *Padabhyanga* (foot massage)
 | * One should massage the body with oil as per the season in the direction of body hair.
* Daily practice of *Abhyanga* delays ageing, cures tiredness and vata disorders, improves vision, complexion, nourishment, good sleep, lustrous skin and strength.
* *Abhyanga* should be done specifically to head, ears and feet
* It prevents balding, greying of hair, strengthens hair roots. It also nourishes the sense organs softens the skin, provides luster to face
* Helps to remove dryness, stiffness, roughness, tiredness and numbness instantly. It makes the skin smooth, provides strength and stability to feet and improves vision. It prevents disease like sciatica, cracking of foot and stiffness of ligaments.
 |
| *Udvartana*  | * Massage with powder of herbs without oil is *Udgarshana*[[11]](#endnote-11)
* Massage with the paste of herbs without oil is *Utsadana*
* *Udgarshana* – blood vessels get dilated, *Bhrajaka* *pitta* gets enhanced, cures itching, rashes, *Vata* disorders, enhances strength of thighs and provides lightness
* *Utsadana*- enhances complexion, cleanliness and lightness in the body
 |
| *Snana* (Bath) | * Taking bath is auspicious, enhances virility, longevity, strength, compactness and *Ojas*, at the same time cures tiredness, sweat and impurities of the body
 |
| *Vastra dharana*  | * Wearing clean clothes enhances beauty, success, longevity, pleasantness of mind
 |
| *Padatra dharana*  | * Wearing footwear is good for eyes, skin and destroys diseases of foot. It enhances strength, courage and virility
 |
| *Chatra dharana*  | * Wearing head turban and umbrella helps to keep the hair clear and good hair. Umbrella protects from rain, wind, dust and intense heat of sun. It improves complexion and good for eyes and enhances *Ojas*
 |

 **Table 04: Applicability of *Dinacharya* concept in skin care.**

**1.5.2 *Ayurvedic* concept of personalized skin care:**

*Ayurveda* considers *Ahara* as one among *Trayopastambha* and no treatment is complete without mentioning of diet/ nutrition to be followed. Thus, proper healthy balanced diet, dietary guidelines play an important role in maintaining the normal integrity of skin and promoting the immunological role of skin. *Ayurveda* divides people into three types of *prakriti*: *Vata, Pitta*, and *Kapha*, each with its own set of characteristics. Your dominant *Dosha* influences your skin type and probable skin concerns. To preserve skin health, eat foods that match your unique *Dosha*.

*Vata* Skin: Eat warm, filling meals like cooked grains, root vegetables, healthy fats, and warming spices like ginger and cinnamon.

*Pitta* Skin: Eat cooling foods like leafy greens, cucumbers, and coconut, and avoid spicy and hot meals.

*Kapha* Skin Type: Choose light, warming meals like steamed vegetables and lean meats, and add spices like turmeric and cayenne to promote metabolism.

**Figure 02: *Prakriti* based skin care.**

**1.5.3 *Ritucharya*- Regimen to be followed as per Season in Maintaining Healthy Skin: [[12]](#endnote-12)**

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| ***Ritu*** | **Diet Regimen**  | **Lifestyle**  |
| *Shishira* (winter) | * Food having *Amla rasa* (sour) is preferred.
* Cereals/pulses, wheat/gram flour products, new rice are advised.
* Ginger, garlic, *haritaki, pippali,* sugarcane products, milk and milk products are to be included in diet.
* Avoid food with *Katu* (pungent), *Tikta* (bitter), *Kashaya* (astringent), *Laghu* (light) and *Sheeta* (cold) food
 | * *Abhyanga* with oil/powder/paste
* Bath with luke warm water
* Exposure to sunlight
* Wearing warm clothes
* *Vata* aggravating lifestyle like exposure to wind, sleeping late at night is to be avoided.
 |
| *Vasanta* (Spring) | * One should take easily digestible food
* Cereals like old barley, wheat and rice
* Pulses- lentils, moong dal are preferred
* Food with *Tikta* (bitter), *Katu* (pungent) and *Kashaya* (astringent) are to be taken
* Include honey in diet
* Meat which are easily digestible can be taken
* Avoid *Sheeta* (cold), *Snigdha* (oily), *Guru* (heavy), *Amla* and *Madhura Rasa*, new grain, curd, cold drinks
 | * Bath with warm water
* Exercise, *Udvartana* with powder of *Chandana, Keshara* and *Agaru*
* *Kavala, Dhoomapana, Anjana*
* *Shodhana – Vamana (*emesis*)* and *Nasya*
* Sleeping in day time to be avoided
 |
| *Grishma* (Summer) | * Food that are light to digest, *Madhura* (sweet), *Snigdha* (oily), *Sheeta* (cold), *Drava* (liquid)
* Rice, lentils are preferred
* One should drink plenty of water and other liquid such as cold water, buttermilk, fruit juices, meat soups, mango juices, churned curd with pepper
* At bed time one should to take milk with sugar candy
* Avoid *Katu, Amla, Ushna* and *Lavana* food
 | * Staying in cool places
* Applying *Chandana* and other aromatic pastes over the body
* Wearing light dresses
* Sleeping at day time is advised
* During night one can enjoy cold moon rays with breeze
* Avoid excessive exercises or hard work, too much indulgence in sexual act and alcoholic preparations
 |
| *Varsha* (Monsoon) | * Food having *Amla, Lavana* in taste and *Snigdha* are to be taken
* Cereals- old barley, rice, wheat etc
* Include meat soups in diet
* It is advised that one should take medicated water or properly boiled water.
* Avoid intake of river water, churned preparations having more water, excessive liquid and wine and food which are heavy to digest are prohibited
 | * Use of boiled water for bath and rubbing body with oil after bath is advised
* *Basti* (medicated enema) is advised for removal of vitiated *Vata dosha* in body
* Avoid getting wet in rain, day-sleep, exercise, hard work, sexual indulgence, wind, staying at river bank
 |
| *Sharad* (Autumn) | * Food with *Madhura, Tikta* and *Laghu* and cold are advised.
* Wheat, green gram, sugar candy, honey, *Patola*, flesh of animals of dry land are included in diet
* Avoid food like fat, oil, meat of aquatic animals, curds etc.
 | * Eating food only when hungry is recommended.
* Take water purified by the rays of sun in day time and rays of moon at night time for drinking, bathing etc.
* One should wear garlands and apply paste of *Chandana* on the body.
* It is said that moon rays of first 3 hours of night are conducive for health
* *Virechana* (purgation therapy), *Rakta mokshana* (bloodletting) are advised during this *Ritu*.
* Avoid day-sleep, excessive eating, excessive exposure to sunlight
 |
| *Hemanta* (Late Autumn) | * Food with oily, sweet, sour and salty taste
* Cereals/pulses- new rice, flour preparations, green gram, black gram are to be used.
* Various meats, fats, milk and milk products, sugarcane products, fermented products (*Shidhu*), *Tila* are also to be included in diet.
* *Vata* aggravating food like, light, cold, dry foods, cold drinks are to be avoided
 | * Exercise, body and head massage, use of warm water, *Atapa-sevana* (sunbath), application of *Agaru* on body, heavy clothing, sexual indulgence with one partner, residing in warm places is recommended.
* Exposure to strong and cold wind, day-sleep is to be avoided.
 |

**Table 05: Applicability of *Ritucharya* in skin care.**

**1.5.5 *Mukhalepa* (Facepack) according to Season**:

*Vagbhata* mentioned *Ritu Anusara Mukhalepana*. He adds the person who are habituated to applying paste of herbal drugs over face, vision become keen, face never gets dull and glows like lotus flower *(A.H Su 22/22)* [[13]](#endnote-13)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Season**  | ***Mukhalepana***  |
| *Grishma*  | *Kumuda, utpala, Chandana, Ushira*  |
| *Varsha*  | *Kaliyaka, Tila, Ushira, Padmaka*  |
| *Sharad*  | *Pundarika, Yastimadhu, Ushira, Agaru*  |
| *Hemanta* | *Vasa, Badara, Lodhra, Sarshapa*  |
| *Shishira*  | *Daru haridra, Yava, Tila, Kateri roots* |
| *Vasanta*  | *Chandana, Ushira, Shirisha, Shatapushpa*  |

**Table 06: Different herbal formulation as *Mukhalepa* for facial glow**

**1.5.6 Single herbs as a solution to Skin Problems:**

*Ayurveda* mentions varieties of single herbs in treatment of skin disorders. Even household drugs like neem, turmeric, coconut and castor oil etc. can also be used as a medicine in ailments to skin. Castor oil is useful in sunburn, age spots etc. Daily usage of coconut oil can increase complexion of skin and has anti-microbial property. Aloe Vera get accelerates the process of wound healing and helps in skin burns and effective against UV radiation. Honey has been used topically in healing of wounds burns. It also has antifungal and antibacterial property. Turmeric is having anti-inflammatory activity. Neem has got antifungal, anti-inflammatory action. Even face pack can be prepared with besan, honey and curd and applied to face and neck once in a week. It helps to increase complexion.

**1.5.7 Anti- Ageing properties of *Ayurvedic* medicines**:

Anti-ageing treatment includes 2 types of therapies- *Urjaskara* (promotive) and *Vyadhihara* (curative). For *Vata* skin type’s product that can nourish and rehydrates the skin should be used. For *Pitta* skin types good skin oils, *Lepa* should be used daily, and *Kapha* skin should use daily warm oil massage, cleansing of skin with special type of medicated drugs and special *Lepa* is performed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Properties**  | ***Ayurvedic* drugs/ herbs*[[14]](#endnote-14)***  |
| *Vayasthapana* (Age defying activity )  | *Amruta, Abhaya, Dhatri, Mukta, Jivanti, Mandukaparni, Punarnava*  |
| *Varnya* (complexion promoters)  | *Chandana, Tunga, Padmaka, Ushira, Madhuka, Manjista, Payasya, Sita, Lata*  |
| *Sandhaniya* (healing and regenerative)  | *Yastimadhu, Guduchi, Mocharasa, Dhataki, Udumbara* |
| *Vranaropana* (deep healing)  | *Shallaki, Laksha, Madhuka, Arjuna, Udumbara* |
| *Twachya* (nurturing) | *Patola, Khadira, Arjuna, Karanja* |
| *Shothahara* (anti-inflammatory)  | *Chandana, Ashwagandha, Devadaru, Lodhra* |
| *Twagrasayana* (skin promoters)  | *Amalaki*  |

**Table 07: Skin healing and care properties of herbs.**

**1.5.8 Clinical skin care approach**

Various *Ayurvedic* texts like, *Sushruta Samhita* mentions *kshudra Rogas* in which many skin care treatment have been documented[[15]](#endnote-15).

* ***Arumshika* (eczema on scalp and face):** Decoction of *Nimba* (Azadiracta ndica) can be used to wash the lesions, and then paste of *Haratala* (Orpiment), Turmeric, *yastimadhu* (Glycyrrhiza glabra), *Eranda* (Ricinus commuis) and *Bhringaraja* (Eclipta alba) is applied overhead.
* ***Vyanga* (black spots) and *Nilika* (Naevus):** here patient is advised to apply the paste of bark of *Kshira-Vriksha* (plant containing sap) or paste of *Bala* (Sida cordifolia), *Atibala* (Abutilon indicum), *Yastimadhu* (Glycyrrhiza glabra) and *Gairika* (Haematite)
* ***Yauvana pidika* (Pimple/Acne):** Applying the paste of *Vacha* (Acorus calamus), *Lodhra* (Symplocos racemosa), *Saindhava* (rock salt), *Dhanyaka* (Coriandrum sativum), *Kushta* (Saussura leppa).

**1.5.9 *Rasayana Chikitasa*- Rejuvenation Therapy:[[16]](#endnote-16)**

*Rasayana chikitsa* is said to enrich *Rasa Dhatu* with nutrients to help one attain longevity, memory, intelligence, health, youthfulness, excellence of luster, complexion and voice, optimum development of physique and sense organs, mastery over phonetics and brilliance, reverse ageing process by arresting the degeneration of body cells and immunization of the system. It includes head and face massages with medicated oils and creams, body massage with oil/powder, internal rejuvenate medicines and medicated steam bath. The most common *Rasayana* used are *Triphala Rasayana, Chyawanprash, Amalaki Rasayana, Brahmi Rasayana* etc.

**1.5.10 General *Ayurvedic* guidelines for healthy and glowing skin**

* In the morning, drink warm water with a twist of lemon for good digestion and cleansing.
* Include healthy fats in diet, such as ghee, coconut oil, and olive oil. They keep the skin hydrated and create a healthy shine.
* Eat fruits and vegetables that are locally sourced and in season. These meals are said to be more energetically compatible with the current season and can help with general well-being.
* In *Ayurveda*, several spices are thought to promote healthy skin. Turmeric is well-known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. Coriander, cumin, and fennel promote digestion, which helps to avoid skin problems caused by poor digestion.
* Highly processed and refined meals can worsen bodily imbalances and cause skin problems. Reduce your consumption of sugary, fried, and processed meals.
* *Ayurveda* recommends limiting dairy consumption, particularly for people with congested or acne-prone skin, because dairy products can aggravate skin problems.
* *Ayurveda* recommends periodic cleaning procedures such as *Panchakarma* to eliminate toxins from the body and support skin health.

**Conclusion:**

Skin is one of the most presentable organs of the assessment of beauty and appearance for the person. Skin is mirror image of body & mind. A good, healthy skin reflects ones personality. By following guidelines of *Ayurvedic* dermatology, one can maintain the functional integrity of healthy and glowing skin.

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