

## Review Article

# Leads of COVID appropriate behaviour in ayurveda Samhita

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### ABSTRACT

COVID-19 is global pandemic, indicating significant global spread of an infectious disease. COVID -19 pandemic has led to unprecedented and unanticipated challenges requiring collective actions and rules so, COVID appropriate behavior to fight the spread are being affectively led by central government and state government. There is need to reinforce the importance of preventive measures and practices in sustained manner to deal with the disease over the long run. Ayurveda is one world's oldest holistic approach which deals with the prevention and management of the disease. A healthy education system should have codes of conduct for work place, society and family. Ayurveda has explained these codes of conduct under the tittle Sadvritta. Ayurveda emphasizes on social and personal behavior as they both affect mental and physical aspects of health. The codes explained in Ayurveda texts plays important role for the reduction of the highly spreading corona virus which in the present scenario can be related to the COVID appropriate behaviors which are critical to winning this fight against the deadly virus. In this article an attempt has been made for explaining the leads of COVID appropriate behavior in ayurveda Samhita.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, COVID appropriate behavior, Sadvritta, Codes of conduct, COVID appropriate behavior in ayurveda Samhita

## INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 is a new pandemic disease declared by WHO as a global emergency and caused due to sense acute respiratory corona virus syndrome-2 (SARS-CoV-2). The scientists, worldwide are striving vigorously to ascertain the etiology, pathogenesis of new COVID-19, spread and the development of standard drugs as well as treatment protocols for its successful management.

As we all are well aware that, the worldwide pandemic COVID-19, has brought the human activity to a standstill, and has forced the entire world to seek very seriously for its cause, mechanisms of pathogenesis and its solution. The persons infected by the corona virus are the main source of infection. Direct person to person transmission

occurs through respiratory droplets, where the virus remains viable.

To fight against the spread of the novel COVID-19, a comprehensive list of 15 preventive behavioral practices, are being effectively led by the central government and state government which are called as COVID appropriate behaviors.

Adherence to novel corona virus, appropriate behaviors play a crucial role in the management of the infections and transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, it is essential to assess the adherence level to COVID-19 transmission reducing behaviors.

As the second wave of COVID-19 ravaged the country and concerns being raised about a possible third wave and so

on, experts suggests that the next wave could be less severe if people keep following COVID appropriate behavior.

## **COVID APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR**

To reinforce the importance of preventive measures and practices in a sustained manner, to deal with the measures and practices in a sustained manner, to deal with the disease over the long run, the 15 major appropriate behavior are explained by the health experts which are to be followed. Following the administration rules is mandated even in Charka Samhita as Na niyamam bhindyat, that is one should not violate the rules. This article tries to trace the leads of all fifteen COVID appropriate behavior in ayurveda.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Greet without physical contact***

Avoiding physical contact is a responsible behavior as it prevents the spread of COVID-19 disease. Though hugging, holding hands, shaking hands etc. are taken as great ways of greeting, one should avoid such habits even with the loved ones. As we move closer and come in physical contact, the risk of spreading the virus increases. So, the protocol, greet without physical contact should be followed.

### ***Maintain physical distance***

One of the most important ways for the prevention of highly contagious corona virus is maintaining physical distance. One should follow distancing norms in all public places, keep minimum distance of 2 gaj (6 feet), especially in crowded places, markets, hospitals etc. Even one should follow distancing norms when in a room/office etc. If one is infected, their physical contact may increase the risk of transmission, so it is very important to main the physical distance.

Not following above Both factors are very favorable for disease transmission as COVID-19 is spreads through aerosol and physical contact is hasten the spread. Acharya Charaka has mentioned, Yugamatradrika which means one should walk by looking straight to a distance of four arm length in front of himself.<sup>2</sup>

And, Chhatradharana which means use of umbrella, which averts the attacks of diseases, etc., also it guards against the sun, wind, dust, and rain.<sup>2</sup> The present scenario of greeting without physical contact and maintaining physical distance and the concept we have in Ayurveda, Yugamatradrika, Chhatradharana gives us the similar idea that helps in reducing the risk of corona virus. Hence intension of both these practices could be to maintain physical distance with the others.

### ***Wear face cover or mask at all times***

A face cover or mask limits the spread of any respiratory infection and protects the community at large. One should

definitely wear a mask while travelling or going to public places, while in a room with other people, when having any signs of cough, cold or flu.

The intention of wearing it is to prevent transfers of droplets and entry of aerosols. The afflicted COVID patient can transfer and healthy person can receive the infection. Hence, wearing a mask becomes essential for bath. The proper method of wearing with no or limited contamination is as follows.

Wear the mask such that nasal clip is over the nose. External pleats should face downwards. Then open the mask pleats so that it covers mouth and nose. Tie the upper strings first, then lower strings, make sure that there is no gap between face and mask. Do not touch front of the mask. Remove the mask by first untying lower string and then upper string. Replace the mask after 8 hours or when damp/humid. Dispose the mask in the recommended manner. Clean hands after removal of the mask. Do not reuse the single use mask.

In the context of sadvritta acharya Vagbhata has quoted, 'namsavritmukha: kuyartkshutihasyavijrimbhanam'.<sup>3</sup> That is, one should not sneeze, laugh or yawn without covering his mouth. Which effectively mean that mouth and nose should be covered whenever there is risk of droplets emanating.

So, in the present context, we can corelate these two ideas which explains the use of face cover or mask all the times to prevent the spread of infection as corona virus highly spreads through droplets.

### ***Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth***

Hands touch many surfaces and can easily pick up germs and viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to eyes, nose or mouth from there the virus can enter to the body and can infect it.

As an important reference to respiratory hygiene, acharya Vagbhata mentions Nasikam na vikusniyan, i.e., one should not touch and rub the nose.<sup>4</sup> This principle can also be applied to eyes and mouth also. Contaminated hands can easily transfer the virus to the mucosal membranes; hence it is important to avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth as far as possible.

### ***Maintain respiratory hygiene***

Respiratory hygiene is one of the important aspects for the reduction of spreading of microorganisms that cause respiratory infections which is easily transmitted between people. Respiratory pathogens are a leading cause of widespread illness but can be prevented. By following the standard precautions, appropriate respiratory and hand hygiene and appropriate patient at the onset of symptoms, infection can be maintained and managed.

Covering the nose and mouth while coughing or sneezing with, tissue or handkerchief or using of elbow and washing of hands immediately after coughing or sneezing.

The idea given by acharya Vagbhata, 'Namsavritmukh: kuyarkshutihasyavijimbhanam and Nasikam na vikusniyan' that means one should not sneeze, laugh, or yawn without covering his mouth and one shouldn't put finger inside the nose respectively. In the present situation maintaining of respiratory hygiene can be obtained by following the methods described above.

### ***Wash hands frequently and thoroughly***

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Germs get onto hands if people touch any object that has germs on it because someone coughed or sneezed on it or was touched by some other contaminated object. When these germs get onto hands and are not washed off, they can be passed from person to person and make people sick. Handwashing with soap, water and using of alcohol-based sanitizer helps to prevent people from getting sick with germs that are already resistant to antibiotics and that can be difficult to treat.

Shoucha, that is hygiene or cleanliness is an important aspect of once daily life. Cleanliness refers to frequent washing of all parts of the body which tend to get contaminated. Primarily malayana (external orifices like nose, mouth, genital orifice, anus etc..) are to be cleaned frequently. By implication other parts of the body like hands and legs that also come in contact with external dirt need to be cleansed frequently. So acharya Charakas reference malaynesu abhikshanam padayoscha baimalyam adhyata holds good here.<sup>5</sup>

In the present scenario, washing of hands frequently and thoroughly, using of alcohol-based hand sanitizer is the must behavior to be followed.

### ***Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces***

The infected droplets are likely to settle on surrounding surfaces so, it is very necessary to clean and disinfect the frequently touched surfaces with disinfectants wearing gloves.

Acharya Sushruta has said 'guggulvagurusarjarasavachagaurasarshapachoorlavananimbapatramisryairajyukthairdhupayet'.<sup>6</sup>

It is told that after surgery, dhupana should be done to that area so that microorganisms will not infect it. It is said that dhupana with guggulu, aguru, vasa, nimbapatra etc. and fumigating the room and surroundings to remove all the infectious agents.

In contemporary science, this process told as disinfectant.

### ***Do not spit in the open***

Spitting in public places could enhance the spread of COVID-19. Chewing smokeless tobacco products, pan masala, areca nut(supari) increases the production of saliva followed by a very strong urge to spit. By doing so, viruses spread easily in the public.

In view of the increasing danger of the corona virus pandemic, the Indian council for medical research (ICMR) has appealed to people to refrain from consuming smokeless tobacco products and spitting in public places.

Acharya Charaka has mentioned 'na shlesmasinghanakam mucchyata'.<sup>7</sup> That means, one should not let out the oral or nasal excreta during any course in public. As spitting in open leads to spread of virus, ayurveda also emphasizes on not letting out the oral/nasal excreta in open/ public places.

### ***Avoid unnecessary travel***

The corona virus outbreak has taken a hit on travelling over the couple of months. Avoiding unnecessary travel helps to keep safe to self and others too. Travel only when it is absolutely essential. Unfortunately, it is not completely safe or risk free to travel during the coronavirus outbreak regardless the age, health or the place travelling. So, it is recommended to avoid travelling as much as possible to prevent any chances of infection.

Ayurveda identifies three-fold reasons for health as well as diseases. They are asatmya indriyarth samyoga, pragnaparadha and parinama.<sup>8</sup>

Misuse of senses (Asatmya indriyarth samyoga) refers to improper contact of the senses with their objects, and results in an over stimulation of deficiency of sensory activity which harms the body and mind.

Misuse of intellect (Pragnaparadha) means doing things without discriminating as to whether it is favorable or harmful for the body or mind. These actions may be verbal, mental or physical.

Seasonal variations (Parinama or Kala) refer to the effects of time and natural physical transformation that occur over time. The external environment can trigger disease by unbalancing the body through unnatural or extreme variations in temperature, rainfall or wind.

Traveling excess during the period of pandemic amounts to committing mistakes knowingly or unknowingly vis-à-vis. Pragnaparadha.

### ***Do not discriminate against anyone***

Treating people equally is also a big part of human rights. So, no matter what someone's individual circumstance, they should be treated with respect, dignity, and kindness.

Showing compassion and support to the persons affected with COVID-19 and their families. Similarly showing respect and kindness to all the frontline workers in this deadly COVID-19 situation, boosting their morale, assurance and encouraging them are few humanly behavior we can show to them to build up their confidence.

In ayurveda it is said that, atmavatsatam pasyadapi kitpipilikam which means even the insects and ants should be treated with compassion and kindness just as oneself.<sup>9</sup> It is obvious that human beings should be treated equally with all respect and kindness.

### ***Discourage crowd-encourage safety***

Unnecessary travelling, making crowd in public places or anywhere, gatherings, mass celebrations etc. increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission highly. But we can take steps to reduce the risk if physical distance isn't an option for the safety aspect. Wearing of mask, avoid touching the face, washing of hands and using of alcohol-based sanitizers, avoid handshakes, hugs etc. And once you get home shower as soon as possible, put the used clothes in laundry and disinfect the touched surfaces.

Acharya Sushruta has explained Aupasargika roga, which are spread through physical contact (gatrasparsa), droplets (niswasa), eating together (sahabhojana), sleeping together (sahasayan) etc., which gives us the idea for avoiding the crowd, maintaining the physical distance, not coughing and sneezing in open etc. for the safety and prevention of infectious diseases.<sup>10</sup>

For the same purpose quarantine and lockdown are imposed by the government. Both are effective measure of stopping the spread of coronavirus. Presence of coronavirus or droplets of the virus in atmospheric air amounts to Contaminated air (dushita vayu).<sup>11</sup> Dushita vayu is a cause for disease. Since this pandemic is life threatening, dushta vayu is effectively poisonous air (vishavayu). Dushta vayu and visha vayu both have been listed as external causes (Agantu hetu) for diseases. Hence effective way to protect oneself from contaminated air is to stay isolated in quarantine. Quarantine is that practice where patient or suspect hides himself from the society for which acharya charaka uses the word atmagupta.<sup>12</sup>

### ***Do not circulate social media posts which carry unverified or negative information***

Without having the accurate knowledge about any incidents, one should not spread the false news through any means of social media. As this era is highly depended on social medias and get every information from social media, so the information should be accurate and true. Seeking the information from the credible sources on COVID-19 is must. There are various authentic sources which provides the verified and accurate information.

In Charaka Samhita, it is said that 'suchakanritakalalahapriyabaddanupachara parusah bachanadi bangmithayoga' which means improper utilization of speech like back biting, lying, untimely speech, quarrel, unpleasant utterance, irrelevant, unfavorable talk, harsh words, misunderstanding etc.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Seek information on COVID-19 from credible source***

The most credible source for COVID-19 information is ministry of health and family welfare website. i.e., www.mohfw.com.<sup>16</sup>

Government helpline numbers are also available for the queries related to COVID-19.

Acharya Charaka lays very strong approval process for any information or knowledge before circulation among the public. The information should be authentic and administratively approved (shishthanumata) and useful for the community (lokanugraha).<sup>14</sup>

### ***Call national toll-free helpline numbers 1075 or state helpline numbers for any COVID-19 related queries.***

### ***Seek psychosocial support in case of any distress or anxiety***

Mental health is integral to living healthy and balanced life at every stage of life. It includes our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps to determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make healthy choice. Issues related to mental health can impact different people in different ways. One who is suffering should start to see changes in self-overall happiness and relationships, there are always ways to get the support. Connect with other individuals, friends and family, learn more about mental health through various sources, take mental assessment, talk to professional etc. are few ways to get support for any distress or anxiety related issues.

In Astanga Hridaya, it is said that, 'dhidhairyaatmadibigyanam manodosausadham param' where, Dhi (intelligence), dhairya (courage, strong will) atmabigyan (knowledge of the soul) are the ideal therapies for the mind.<sup>15</sup> These are the tools especially of great value in the treatment of mental disorder. So, one should be very careful and should seek the help for the distress to have a healthy and balanced life.

## **CONCLUSION**

Ayurveda is a complete health science. Every aspect of human life is addressed in some way in ayurveda. Information related to pandemics, COVID-19 and COVID appropriate behaviour also found scattered in Ayurveda literature. Even though the health experts have enunciated fifteen best practices, all of them are mentioned in

ayurveda samhitas under the banner of agantu vyadhi, sadvrutta and janapadadwamsa.

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