

2c. Practices of Rajaswala Paricharya and its potential effects on reproductive health

Rajaswala Paricharyā: Practices and Potential Effects on Reproductive Health

Learning goals

- Understand the Ayurvedic concept of **Rajasrava-kāla** (menstrual phase) and the rationale of **Rajaswala Paricharyā** (code of conduct during menses).
- Memorise the **do's and don'ts** in āhāra (diet), vihāra (activities), and āchara (conduct) with exam-ready tables.
- Correlate these practices with **dosha dynamics**, **Artavavaha Srotas** function, and **reproductive outcomes** (Artava-doṣṭi, dysmenorrhoea, infertility risks).
- Apply the regimen with **modern hygiene** and safety guidance.

Key terms:

Rajas—menstrual blood; **Rajasrava-kāla**—bleeding phase; **Rajaswala**—menstruating woman; **Apāna Vāta**—downward-moving Vāta; **Artavavaha Srotas**—channels carrying Artava (menstrual/reproductive tissue).

1) Concept and classical basis

In Āyurveda, the monthly **Artavacakra** (menstrual cycle) is divided into phases governed by **Kapha-Pitta-Vāta** dynamics. The **Rajasrava-kāla** (usually **3-5 days**, extending up to 7 as per some authorities) is the phase of **elimination** of accumulated **Rajas** from **Garbhaśaya** (uterus). **Apāna Vāta** predominates and drives the **downward flow**. Classical texts (Bṛhatrayī and Kāsyapa Saṃhitā) prescribe **Rajaswala Paricharyā** to protect **Artavavaha Srotas**, prevent **Doṣa-prakopa**, and ensure future **supraja** (healthy progeny).

(Ref.: *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, *Śārīrasthāna*; *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya*, *Śārīrasthāna*; *Kāsyapa Saṃhitā*, *Khila-sthāna*; *Cakrapāṇi on Caraka in Yonivyāpada* context—see References.)

Dosha logic in Rajasrava-kāla

- Vāta (especially Apāna)**: ↑ Chala, Rukṣa; drives uterine contractions and expulsion.
- Pitta**: may aggravate pain/burning if provoked by **kaṭu-amla-lavaṇa** diet, heat, anger.
- Kapha**: supports mucosal integrity; heavy, guru diets worsen lethargy/congestion.

Clinical takeaway: The regimen avoids **Vāta-Pitta aggravators**, encourages **light, warm, digestible** intake, **restful routines**, and **genital hygiene** to minimise **Artava-doṣṭi**, dysmenorrhoea, and infections.

Shloka support (contextual)

For Rajaswala Paricharyā, classical prescriptions are compiled chiefly from **Kāsyapa Saṃhitā** (**Khila-sthāna**, **Rajaswala-charyā**), **Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya** **Śārīra-sthāna**, **Suśruta** **Śārīra-sthāna**, and **Caraka** (**Yonivyāpada**/**Śārīra**) commentarial traditions.

2) Rajaswala Paricharyā—Do's and Don'ts

A) Āhāra (Dietary regimen)

Pathya (advised):

- **Uṣṇa-laghu** foods: **Maṇḍa/peya** (thin rice gruels), **yavāgu** (light porridge), **śāli** rice with **mūṅg** dal, soft cooked vegetables.
- **Sneha** in moderation: **ghee** in small quantity if agni allows (reduces Vāta).
- **Warm water, coriander-cumin**-infused light herbal waters for bloating.
- **Iron-supportive** foods around cycle (not during severe nausea): black raisins (soaked), sesame preparations post-flow, leafy greens when appetite returns.

Apathya (to avoid):

- **Kaṭu-amla-lavaṇa** excessive (spicy, sour, salty), **tikṣṇa-uṣṇa** condiments—aggravate **Pitta** → cramp/burning.
- **Guru-snigdha** heavy meals (deep-fried, cheese-heavy), **rukṣa** fasting/meal skipping—both disturb **Vāta**.
- **Caffeine, alcohol**, highly processed, very cold foods.

Exam tip: “Rajasrave—**uṣṇa-laghu-mṛdu** āhāra; avoid **kaṭu-amla-lavaṇa** and **guru/rukṣa** extremes to keep **Apāna Vāta** sāmyāvasthā.”

B) Vihāra (Activities & routines)

To follow:

- **Restful routine**: reduce mental/physical strain on Days 1-2. Gentle stretching/walking only.
- **Warmth** to lower abdomen/back as comfortable; adequate **sleep** at night.
- **Hygiene**: regular change of sanitary materials; warm-water perineal cleansing front-to-back; breathable garments.

To avoid:

- **Maithuna** (sexual intercourse) during bleeding (Apāna disturbance; infection risk).
- **Strenuous exercise, long travel, exposure to cold; day sleep** if it worsens heaviness/headache (tailor to prakṛti).
- **Head bath/oil bath** on Day 1 if it triggers spasm or chill; **abhyanga, udvartana**, heavy **sauna**—generally deferred.
- **Intense emotions**—anger, grief, excessive laughter—classically discouraged due to **Vāta-Pitta** flare.

C) Āchāra (Conduct)

Texts describe a calm, modest schedule: simple dress, avoiding perfumes/make-up on heavy-flow days, **separate clean bedding**, and mindful withdrawal from ritual austerities—**health-centric**, not stigma-centric. Contemporary practice translates this into **personal space, rest, and hygiene—no impurity notions** in medical teaching.

3) Three-day micro-regimen (practical template)

Day	Goals	Diet	Activities	Cautions
1	Reduce Vāta spasm, conserve energy	Maṇḍa/peya , thin yavāgu , soft rice-moong; small ghee	Rest at home/hostel; gentle heat pad; quiet reading	No intercourse; avoid heavy workouts, head-oil-bath, cold exposure
2	Maintain flow & comfort	Yavāgu thicker; simple khichri; warm water	Short walks; stretching; naps as needed	Avoid spicy-sour foods; avoid tight clothing
3	Transition to routine	Light laghu meals, add greens; iron-supportive foods as appetite returns	Resume usual tasks if energy returns	Maintain hygiene till spotting stops

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(Adjust for 4–7 day flow; anaemia or severe dysmenorrhoea needs personalised plan.)

4) Applied hygiene and product guidance

- **Change interval:** pads every 4–6h (sooner if soaked); menstrual cup empty 6–8h as per brand; tampons—avoid prolonged retention (TSS risk).
- **Cleansing:** warm water; avoid harsh antiseptics/douching (disrupts vaginal microbiome).
- **Disposal/sterilisation:** follow local biomedical guidelines; menstrual cups sterilised between cycles.
- **Dermatitis prevention:** switch materials if itching/rash; use breathable cotton underwear.

5) Mechanistic rationale & reproductive health outcomes

A) Dysmenorrhoea and Artava-doṣti

- **Vāta prakopa** (cold, fasting, excessive exertion) increases **uterine cramp** and **back pain**. Warm, light, regular meals and rest reduce **prostaglandin-triggered spasm**.
- **Pitta provocation** (spicy, sour, sleep deprivation) worsens **burning/heavy flow**.

B) Infection and endometrial health

- **Intercourse during menses** elevates **ascending infection** and **STI** risk due to cervical opening and altered pH; barrier failure risk is higher.
- Poor hygiene → **vulvovaginal infections**; prolonged tampon use → rare but serious **TSS**.
- Recurrent **Artava-doṣti** (irregular, excessive, scanty) can impair fertility; Paricharyā aims to keep **Srotas** patent and **Doṣas** balanced.

C) Anaemia & fatigue

- Heavy flow with **poor diet** → **iron deficiency**, fatigue, poor folliculogenesis. Repletion with **dietary iron**, vitamin C (on non-bleeding days), and medical assessment when indicated helps restore **ovulatory cycles**.

Integration point for exams: “Rajaswalā Paricharyā guards **Apāna Vāta** and **Artavavaha Srotas** → fewer cramps, infections, and Artava-doṣti; supports **Rasa-Rakta dhātu** replenishment → better cycle regularity and fertility.”

6) Contraindications, red flags, and when to refer

Urgent evaluation if **any**:

- Soaking ≥1 pad/hour for >2 hours, **fainting**, severe pallor.
- **Fever**, foul-smelling discharge, severe unilateral pelvic pain.
- **Cycle <21 days** or **>90 days**, intermenstrual bleeding, postcoital bleeding.
- New severe dysmenorrhoea after age 25 (rule out **endometriosis/adenomyosis**).
- Suspected pregnancy-related bleeding.

7) Quick “Do/Don’t” memory grid

DO: uṣṇa-laghu diet • warm water • gentle heat • rest • hygiene • simple routine

DON’T: maithuna • heavy workout/travel • kaṭu-amla-lavaṇa excess • fasting/meal-skip • day-long sleep if it worsens heaviness • cold exposure • prolonged tampon use

Mnemonic: “FLOW CALM”

Food Light & **On-time** • **Warmth**

Cleanliness • **Avoid** sex/strain/spice • **Laghu** rest • **Monitor** red flags

8) Model case-vignette (for SAQ/LAQ framing)

A 20-year-old hostel student with day-1 cramps, nausea, and loose stools; she skipped dinner, took cold beverages, and ran 5 km the previous evening.

- **Ayurvedic analysis:** **Apāna Vāta** aggravated (rukṣa, śīta, chala); **Pitta** ticked up by cola/spice → cramps + GI upset.
- **Paricharyā plan** (48–72 h): **Peya** → **yavāgu**, small ghee; warm compress; limit screen/workload; avoid intercourse; warm water; hygiene.
- **Outcomes expected:** reduced cramps, better energy, steadier flow; prevention of Artava-doṣṭi.

9) Exam-oriented points to write in 5-10 marks

1. **Definition:** Rajaswalā Paricharyā = prescribed āhāra-vihāra-āchara during Rajasrava-kāla to prevent Doṣa-prakopa and Artava-doṣṭi.
2. **Rationale:** **Apāna Vāta** predominance → need for warmth, light diet, rest, abstinence from maithuna.
3. **Do's/Don'ts:** (tabulate) Diet, activity, conduct, hygiene.
4. **Benefits:** ↓ dysmenorrhoea, ↓ infections, ↓ cycle irregularities, supports fertility.
5. **Applied hygiene:** change interval, safe products, perineal care.
6. **Red flags:** list 5 to refer urgently.
7. **Integration:** Link to **Artavavaha Srotas** and **Rasa-Rakta dhātu** support.

Assessment

A) Short answer questions (SAQ—5 marks each)

1. Define **Rajaswalā Paricharyā** and explain its **doṣa-based rationale**.
2. Enumerate **pathya** and **apathyā** āhāra during Rajasrava-kāla with reasons.
3. Write the **hygiene protocol** for a menstruating student using modern products.
4. Discuss how **maithuna during menses** affects **Artavavaha Srotas** and infection risk.
5. List **five red flags** in menstruation that mandate referral.

B) Long answer question (LAQ—10 marks)

- Describe **Rajaswalā Paricharyā** under headings: **āhāra, vihāra, āchara, hygiene**. Add **dosha logic** and **potential impacts on reproductive health**. Provide a **3-day micro-regimen**.

C) Clinical vignette (10 marks)

- A 26-year-old reports severe day-1 cramps, heavy flow, and frequent day sleep; she takes very spicy food and

performs HIIT workouts. Frame an **Ayurvedic assessment** and draft a **7-point Paricharyā plan** with modern hygiene measures and red-flag counselling.

D) MCQs (1 mark each; choose one)

1. During Rajasrava-kāla, the predominant doṣa is:
a) Kapha b) **Vāta (Apāna)** c) Pitta d) Sādhaka Pitta
2. Which is **pathya** on Day-1?
a) Ice-cold cola b) **Peyā/māṇḍa** c) Deep-fried snacks d) Raw salad
3. Intercourse during menses primarily risks:
a) Anaemia b) **Ascending infection** c) Thyroiditis d) Migraine only
4. Prolonged tampon use risks:
a) Hypoglycaemia b) **TSS** c) IBS d) UTI only
5. Which food trio aggravates Pitta?
a) Madhura-tikta-kaṣāya b) **Kaṭu-amla-lavaṇa** c) Kaṣāya-tikta-madhura d) Madhura-sīta-snigdha

(Answer key: 1-b, 2-b, 3-b, 4-b, 5-b)

References

Classical sources (for citation in answers)

- **Kāśyapa Saṃhitā (Vṛddha Jīvakiya Tantra), Khila-sthāna—Rajaswalā-charyā:** Regimen for menstruating woman; dietary and behavioural injunctions; implications for future progeny.
- **Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya, Śārīrasthāna:** Artava, phases of the cycle, and code of living during specific phases; doṣa predominance across Artavacakra.
- **Suśruta Saṃhitā, Śārīrasthāna:** Description of **Artavavaha Srotas**, uterine blood flow physiology, and related injunctions.
- **Caraka Saṃhitā** (with Cakrapāṇi), **Cikitsāsthāna 30 (Yonivyāpada)** and **Śārīrasthāna:** Pathophysiology of Artava-doṣti and reproductive health principles.
- **Bhāvaprakāśa, Pūrva-khaṇḍa (Strīroga/Artava):** Collated rules on diet-conduct during menses and their justification in doṣa terms.

Modern standard texts and reviews

- Dutta D.C. **Textbook of Gynecology** (menstruation physiology, dysmenorrhoea).
- Shaw's **Textbook of Gynaecology** (menstrual disorders, hygiene recommendations).
- WHO/UNICEF. **Guidance on Menstrual Health and Hygiene** (product safety, infection prevention).
- Contemporary Ayurvedic reviews on **Rajaswalā Paricharyā** (JAIMS, IJRAP, IOSR-JDMS): summarising classical directives and clinical correlations.

Rapid review (2-minute recall)

- **Aim:** Protect Apāna Vāta and Artavavaha Srotas during Rajasrava-kāla.
- **Core:** Warm-light food, rest, no intercourse/strain/spice, hygiene.
- **Why:** Less cramp, infection, Artava-doṣti → better cycle regularity & fertility.
- **Watch:** Heavy bleed, fever, foul smell, severe pain → refer.