

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

### Rajaswalā Paricharyā: Practices and Potential Effects on Reproductive Health

### **Learning goals**

- Understand the Ayurvedic concept of **Rajasrava-kāla** (menstrual phase) and the rationale of **Rajaswalā 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; **Rajaswalā**—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 (Bṛhattrayī and Kāśyapa Saṃhitā) prescribe **Rajaswalā Paricharyā** to protect **Artavavaha Srotas**, prevent **Doṣa-prakopa**, and ensure future **supraja** (healthy progeny).

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

#### Dosha logic in Rajasrava-kāla

- Vāta (especially Apāna): ↑ Chala, Ruksa; 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 Rajaswalā Paricharyā, classical prescriptions are compiled chiefly from Kāśyapa Saṃhitā (Khilasthāna, Rajaswalā-charyā), Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya Śārīra-sthāna, Suśruta Śārīra-sthāna, and Caraka (Yonivyāpada/Śārīra) commentarial traditions.

## 2) Rajaswalā Paricharyā—Do's and Don'ts

### A) Āhāra (Dietary regimen)

#### Pathya (advised):

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- 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):

- Kaţu-amla-lavana excessive (spicy, sour, salty), tikṣna-uṣna condiments—aggravate Pitta → cramp/burning.
- Guru-snigdha heavy meals (deep-fried, cheese-heavy), rukşa 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 prakrti).
- **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) Āchara (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	<b>Yavāgu</b> thicker; simple khichri; warm water	Short walks; stretching; naps as needed	Avoid spicy-sour foods; avoid tight clothing
3	Transition to routine	Light <b>laghu</b> 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-doșți

- 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-doșți (irregular, excessive, scanty) can impair fertility; Paricharyā aims to keep Srotas patent and Doşas 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-doṣṭi; 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.

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# 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 + Gl
  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-doșți.

### 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 **apathya** 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

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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) Peya/maṇḍa 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-kaşāya b) Kaţu-amla-lavaṇa c) Kaşāya-tikta-madhura d) Madhura-śīta-snigdha

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

### References

### Classical sources (for citation in answers)

- Kāśyapa Saṃhitā (Vṛddha Jīvakīya 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 Samhitā, Śārīrasthāna: Description of Artavavaha Srotas, uterine blood flow physiology, and related injunctions.
- Caraka Samhitā (with Cakrapāṇi), Cikitsāsthāna 30 (Yonivyāpada) and Śārīrasthāna: Pathophysiology of Artava-doṣṭi and reproductive health principles.
- Bhāvaprakāśa, Pūrva-khanḍa (Strīroga/Artava): Collated rules on diet-conduct during menses and their justification in doşa 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-doṣṭi → better cycle regularity & fertility.
- Watch: Heavy bleed, fever, foul smell, severe pain → refer.

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