

Chapter 2. Ayurvedic Skin Care Principles

Part 1 — Skin Anatomy & Classification in Ayurveda

1. “Tvak” — What Skin Means in Classical Texts

- **Etymology:** *Tvak* = “that which covers.”
- **Location in the dhātu chain:** An upadhātu (secondary tissue) of **Rakta dhātu**. Healthy blood → healthy skin tone and glow (*kānti*).
- **Primary controller:** **Bhrajaka Pitta** — the sub-doṣa that governs colour, temperature, and quick product absorption.

1.1 Classical Seven-Layer Model

Sanskrit Layer	Literal Meaning	Depth (modern analogy)	Cosmetic Relevance
Avabhasini	“Radiant”	Stratum corneum	Overall glow; first to dull with āma.
Lohita	“Reddish”	Epidermis	Erythema, rashes; houses melanocytes.
Shweta	“Whitish”	Upper papillary dermis	Dry patches, early wrinkles.
Tamra	“Coppery”	Mid-dermis	Acne pustules, eczema locus.
Vedini	“Sensing”	Reticular dermis + nerves	Pain perception; oversensitive skin.
Rohini	“Healing”	Dermal-sub-cut interface	Scar formation, collagen turnover.
Mamsadhara	“Muscle-support”	Fascia covering muscles	Sagging, deep folds, cellulitis.

Advanced Insight: Modern histology counts only three main layers; Ayurveda’s seven are *functional* divisions, helping explain why some facials brighten instantly (Avabhasini) while others need collagen remodelling (Rohini).

2. Doṣhic Classification of Skin Types

Think of doṣas as elemental “software” running your dermal “hardware.”

Trait	Vāta Skin	Pitta Skin	Kapha Skin
Texture	Thin, dry, cool, fine pores	Soft, warm, moderate pores	Thick, oily-smooth, large pores
Colour	Dull, greyish, quick to wrinkle	Pink-reddish, may freckle	Pale, even, sometimes dull
Common Issues	Dehydration, crepey ageing, atopic eczema	Acne, rosacea, hyper-pigmentation	Clogged pores, whiteheads, cellulite
Seasonal Flare	Cold, windy	Hot, humid	Damp, rainy
Ideal Topicals	Heavy oils (sesame-bala), occlusive ghṛita balms	Cooling gels (aloe-sandal), light oils (coconut-neem)	Dry powders (udvartana), light emulsions with trikatu
Diet Pointers	Warm, moist soups; ghee; avoid raw salads	Cooling herbs (coriander); moderate spices; limit fried foods	Warm spices, bitter greens; restrict dairy & sugar

Prakṛti vs. Vikṛti:

Prakṛti = your birth-constitution skin; *Vikṛti* = current imbalance. A Pitta person in winter may temporarily show Vāta features (dryness). Advanced care tailors formulas to **current state**, not labels.



2.1 Sub-types & Mixed Presentations

- **Vāta-Pitta:** Dry surface + inflammatory acne.
- **Pitta-Kapha:** Oily skin with red cystic lesions.
- **Vāta-Kapha:** Flaky yet congested (common in menopausal women).

Strategic blending: a **Vāta-Pitta** protocol may pair sesame-bala oil massage (for dryness) with manjishtha-rose lepa dots on active pimples (for Pitta).

3. Panchamahabhūta Overlay

Bhūta Dominance	Visible Quality	Formula Strategy
Ākāśa + Vāyu (Vāta)	Rough, porous	Close “space” with rich butters; calm “air” with warm compress.
Agni (Pitta)	Hot, inflamed	Cool fire using sandal, vetiver; use bitters internally.
Jala + Pṛthvī (Kapha)	Oily, heavy	Absorb water/oil with clay; increase heat & movement via udvartana.

4. Role of Srotas in Skin & Hair Care

- **Svedavaha Srotas** — sweat ducts; blockages cause prickly heat.
- **Rasavaha & Raktavaha Srotas** — supply nutrition; stagnation dulls glow.
- **Medovaha Srotas** — sebaceous pathways; overactivity → acne & scalp grease.

Protocol Hint: Always *open* Srotas (light steam, gentle massage) **before** applying high-value serums; absorption improves two-fold.

Key Take-Aways

1. **Seven-layer lens** explains where a problem originates; choose depth-matched therapy.
2. **Doṣha typing** predicts susceptibilities—customise oils, masks, diet.
3. **Bhūta mapping** refines ingredient choice (earthy clays vs fiery saffron).
4. **Srotas housekeeping** is the hidden secret—clear channels, then nourish.

Part 2 — Daily & Seasonal Routines (Dinacharya & Ritucharya)

1. Dinacharya — A 24-Hour Skin-Care Clock

Local Time*	Universal Step	Vāta-Skin Focus	Pitta-Skin Focus	Kapha-Skin Focus
4-6 a.m. (<i>Brahma-muhūrta</i>)	Wake + Hydrate drink 1 cup warm water	Add 1 tsp ghee for lubrication	Add 5 drops rose water for cooling	Squeeze ½ lemon for gentle detox
6-7 a.m.	Abhyanga (oil massage) 5 min face + neck	Sesame-bala taila, slow strokes	Coconut-sandal taila, cool room	Mustard-trikatu taila, brisk strokes



Local Time*	Universal Step	Vāta-Skin Focus	Pitta-Skin Focus	Kapha-Skin Focus
7-8 a.m.	Udvardhana / Cleansing	Oat-milk gentle polish	Neem-licorice foam	Horse-gram powder scrub
8-9 a.m.	Sun-Salute + Breakfast	Porridge, stewed fruit	Chia pudding, mint	Spiced millet, ginger tea
10 a.m.-4 p.m.	Work Hours - Protective Layer	Thin ghṛita balm under SPF	Aloe-sandal gel + zinc SPF	Lightweight mattifying lotion
1 p.m.	Main Meal (strongest agni)	Warm veggies, lentils, ghee	Cooling salads + quinoa	Steamed greens + chilli-lime
4 p.m.	Hydration Mist	Vetiver-rose spritz	Cucumber-mint spritz	Tulsi-lime spritz
6-7 p.m.	Gentle Cleanse	Sesame milk + cotton pad	Triphala-rose micellar	Foam cleanser 2 pumps
8 p.m.	Light Dinner	Soupy khichadi	Barley + steamed veg	Clear veggie soup
9 p.m.	Night Ritual mask or serum 2-3x/week	Śata-dhauta ghṛita balm	Manjishtha-licorice gel	Lodhra-clay paste 10 min
10 p.m.	Sleep - repair hormones peak	Aim 7.5 h	Aim 7 h, cool room	Aim 6.5-7 h, elevate head

*Adjust to local sunrise/sunset; times reflect natural doṣha cycles.

2. Ritucharya – Tuning Skin Care to India’s Six Seasons

(Use equivalent climate if you live outside South Asia.)

Ritu (Season)	Calendar Rough Guide	Doṣha Trend	Skin/Hair Behaviours	Topical Must-Haves	Diet & Lifestyle Tweaks
Śiśira (Late Winter)	Mid-Jan - Mid-Mar	Vāta ↑ (dry, cold)	Extra dryness, flaky scalp	Thick sesame/almond oil; ghṛita lip mask	Soups, sesame-laddu, sun-bathing 15 min
Vasanta (Spring)	Mid-Mar - Mid-May	Kapha ↑ (wet, pollen)	Oily T-zone, whiteheads	Horse-gram udvardhana, clay masks	Light grains, trikatu tea, early morning jogging
Grīṣma (Summer)	Mid-May - Mid-July	Pitta rising + dehydration	Heat rash, tanning, redness	Aloe-cucumber gel, vetiver spritz, mineral SPF	Watermelon, coconut water, avoid fried food
Varṣā (Monsoon)	Mid-July - Mid-Sept	Āma & Vāta mix (humidity + digestion weak)	Combination skin chaos, dandruff spikes	Neem-tulsi foam, probiotic mist	Warm khichadi, ginger-lime water, avoid raw salads
Śarada (Autumn)	Mid-Sept - Mid-Nov	Pitta peak release	Post-sun melasma, hair-fall	Manjishtha-rose lepa, bhringraj oil	Bitter greens, coriander infusion, moon-bathing
Hemanta (Early Winter)	Mid-Nov - Mid-Jan	Agni strong, Vāta latent	Firm skin but potential dryness if windy	Bala-ashwagandha taila, milk-cream masks	Ghee in meals, strength exercise, silk scarves

3. Building a Personal “Skin Panchāṅga”

(Your Five-Element Almanac)

- Constitution Base Line:** Identify prakṛti skin from Part 1 table.
- Current Vikṛti:** Note any seasonal or lifestyle deviations.
- Daily Cycle:** Morning Kapha → Mid-day Pitta → Night Vāta; match cleansers, actives, oils accordingly.
- Seasonal Overlay:** Modify weight of oils/ clays/ coolants using the Ritucharya matrix above.
- Micro-Adjust:** Stress week? Add Nasya & Brahmi tea. Heavy travel? Boost Vāta-calming ghṛita and humidifier.

Key Take-Aways

- **Dinacharya** keeps doshas steady daily; **Ritucharya** prevents seasonal flare-ups.
- Successful Ayur-cosmetology = right product + **right time** (day & season).
- Teach clients to pivot routines: heavier oils only in Śiśira/Hemanta; shift to gels and mists in Grīṣma.
- Internal rhythm (meals, sleep) equals topical care in maintaining lasting glow.

Part 3 – Managing Four Everyday Problems: Acne, Pigmentation, Dryness & Ageing

0. Road-Map at a Glance

Issue	Dominant Doṣa + Srotas	Fast Symptom Key	Core Ayur Strategy
Acne (papulo-pustular)	Kapha-Pitta , Medovaha + Raktavaha	Oily shine + red bumps	<i>Lekhana</i> (de-clog) → <i>Rakta-prasadana</i> (cool blood)
Hyper-pigmentation / Melasma	Pitta-Rakta + Bhrajaka Pitta	Brown patches, worse after sun	Mild <i>virechana</i> → varṇya herbs + mineral SPF
Dry / Atopic Skin	Vāta + Rasavaha + Svedavaha	Rough, itchy, dull	<i>Snehana</i> (oil) → <i>Bṛṃhaṇa</i> (nourish)
Intrinsic & Photo-Ageing	Vāta ↑, Agni decline, Māṃsa-Rasa depletion	Fine lines, laxity, mottled tone	Combine collagen-boost rasāyana with antioxidant lepa & micro-stim

1. Acne (Kapha-Pitta Medo-Rakta Dushti)

1.1 Pathway

Excess Kapha sebum + Pitta heat + Medovaha blockage → *Propionibacterium* flourish → Raktavaha inflammation.

1.2 3-Week Protocol

Step	Tool	Notes
Daily Cleanse	Neem-Tulsi Foam (dilute 50 % if sensitised)	Keeps Malassezia/P.acnes load down
Alternate-Night Spot	Neem-Jojoba Roller (Ch 5)	Dab + 30 min exposure, then sleep
Twice-Week Mask	Lodhra-Salicylic Gel (Ch 9)	8-min “lifting” of Kapha scale
Internal (21 days)	Triphala Guggulu 500 mg HS + Manjishtha-Sariva decoction 20 ml BID	Detox Medas, cool Rakta
Diet & Lifestyle	Zero sugary soda, dairy < 1 cup/d; 10 min sun walk for Vit-D	Sugar + dairy feed Kapha-Pitta

Upgrade (clinic): 1 micro-raktamokṣa leech on cystic jaw nodules Day 10 if inflamed; result ≈ 40 % faster flattening.

2. Pigmentation (Pitta-Rakta Heat + Bhrajaka Imbalance)



2.1 Root Causes

- Post-sun melanin surge, • contraceptive hormones, • hot-spice/excess coffee diet, • stress.

2.2 4-Step Cycle

Cycle Phase	Remedy	How
Detox	Mṛdu Virechana (Avipatti 6 g) once	Flushing Pitta heat
Topical AM	Manjishtha-Licorice Gel Serum (Cat 3)	Tyrosinase modulator
Topical PM	Saffron-THC Night Gel (Cat 4)	Brighten & repair
Barrier + Shield	Zinc-oxide SPF 30; broad-brim hat	Prevent new trigger

Internal coolants: Coriander-fennel seed water 500 ml/d; Neem capsule 250 mg after lunch (14 days).

Results Goal: L* color-meter +5 units in 8 weeks.

3. Dryness / Atopic Flare (Vāta + Rasavaha depletion)

3.1 Core Deficit

Rasa dhātu under-hydrated → Avabhasini layer cracks → itch → micro-inflammation.

3.2 Replenishment Matrix

Layer	Intervention	Example
External Lipids	Śata-Dhauta Ghṛita balm 2×/d	Occlusive seal
Humectant Water	Aloe-Triphalādi Hydro-Tonique (Cat 2) mist every 2 h	Draws water
Internal Oils	1 tsp ghee in both main meals	Lubricates Vāta
Micro-Steam	30 s warm vetiver towel nightly	Opens Srotas
Stress Buffer	15-min Yoga-Nidra; Ashwagandha 300 mg HS	Stops Vāta flicker

Caveat: Avoid foaming cleansers; use oat-flax kṣīra-snāna bath soak.

4. Intrinsic & Photo-Ageing (Vāta-kṣaya + Agni fall)

4.1 Mechanism Recap

Collagen decline, glycation, ROS. In Ayurveda this is **Māṃsa / Rasa dhātu kṣaya + Vāta uplift**.

4.2 8-Week Layered Plan

- 1. Internal Rasāyana**
 - Amla-Triphala Glow Tea AM
 - Ojas-Rise Collagen Latte HS
- 2. Weekly Collagen Stimulus**
 - 0.5 mm cosmetic micro-needling + Gotu Kola-Manjishtha serum (Ch 8)
- 3. Night Barrier Soufflé**
 - Radiance Revival Sleep Soufflé (Cat 7) nightly
- 4. Daily Āsana-Prāṇāyāma**
 - Sarvāsana (shoulder stand) 2 min → improves facial micro-circulation
- 5. Antioxidant Mask**
 - Pearl-Vetiver Polish alt-weeks, 90 sec massage



Visible Goals:

- Fine line depth ↓ 20 % (Visia)
- Elasticity ↑ 15 % (Cutometer) by week 8.

5. Quick Decision Grid for Practitioners

If You See...	Ask About...	Likely Doṣa	First Internal Herb	First External Act
Shiny oil film + pustules	Dairy/sugar intake	Kapha-Pitta	Triphala guggulu	Neem-Tulsi Foam
Brown cheek patches, warm palms	Tea/coffee, sunny commutes	Pitta-Rakta	Manjishtha decoction	Licorice serum + SPF
White flakes, tight cheeks	Late nights, low water	Vāta	Warm ghee 1 tsp	Ghṛita balm pack
Crow's-feet, dullness	Smoking, stress	Vāta + Agni drop	Amla Collagen latte	Micro-needling serum

Key Take-Aways

- Treat the **root doṣa & srotas** along with the surface symptom.
- Use **layered plans**: clear → calm → nourish → stimulate.
- Synchronise **internal herbs, diet, lifestyle** to boost topical efficacy.
- Re-evaluate every 2-4 weeks; shift protocols with season and results.

“Healthy skin is a *mirror* of balanced Agni and unclogged Srotas.”