



## Chapter 09. Formulation Fundamentals for Ayurvedic Cosmetics

Today's lesson focuses on **Formulation Fundamentals**—translating Ayurvedic principles and herbs (from previous days) into **practical** skincare and haircare products. We'll explore **basic formulation guidelines**, **simple recipes**, **preservation tips**, and **shelf-life considerations** for **homemade** Ayurvedic cosmetics.

### 1. Overview and Objectives

Over the last two days, you've learned how Ayurveda views skin and hair health and examined **key herbs and ingredients** that form the backbone of Ayurvedic cosmetology. Today, we'll start putting **theory** into **practice** by studying basic **product formulation** techniques—creating your own **face packs**, **hair oils**, and **cleansers** using **dosha-specific** strategies.

#### Key Objectives for Today:

1. **Understand** core principles of Ayurvedic formulations (choosing proper carriers, balancing ingredients, etc.).
2. **Learn** simple, **dosha-focused** recipes for **face packs**, **hair oils**, and **natural cleansers**.
3. **Discover** basic **preservation methods** and how to gauge **shelf life** of homemade products.
4. **Develop** confidence in **experimenting** with herbal combinations safely and effectively.

### 2. Core Principles of Ayurvedic Formulation

**Ayurvedic formulation** emphasizes synergy among ingredients, the correct **carrier/base**, and the user's **doshic profile**. Keep these principles in mind:

1. **Dosha Alignment**
  - Pick herbs and bases that either **pacify** or **balance** your (or your client's) dominant dosha(s). For instance, a **cooling** base is ideal for **Pitta**, while a **moisturizing** base supports **Vata**.
2. **Synergy (Sahapana)**
  - Combine herbs that **complement** one another. Some ingredients (like Neem and Turmeric) work better together for anti-acne, while others (like Hibiscus and Amla) form a powerful hair-nourishing duo.
3. **Appropriate Medium (Base/Carrier)**
  - **Water-Based:** Rose water, distilled water, or herbal decoctions are common carriers for **face packs** or **spritzes**.
  - **Oil-Based:** Sesame oil, coconut oil, or almond oil typically serve as carriers for **massage oils** or **hair oils**.
  - **Milk/Yogurt/Ghee:** Sometimes used for **Vata** dryness or **Pitta**-soothing, depending on the formula.
4. **Proportion & Potency**
  - Use **small amounts** of potent herbs (like Turmeric) to avoid irritation, especially for **Pitta** or sensitive skin.
  - Adjust **proportions** if combining multiple herbs—each with its own potency—so they don't overpower each other.
5. **Freshness & Seasonality**
  - Whenever possible, use **fresh** or **well-stored** dry herbs.
  - Adapt formulations to the **season** (cooling in summer, warming in winter) and location's climate.

### 3. Formulating Face Packs (Lepa)

Face packs or masks are among the most common Ayurvedic beauty applications. They can be made using **powdered herbs**, **liquids**, and sometimes **binding** agents (like honey or yogurt).

#### 3.1 General Guidelines

1. **Choose a Base Liquid**
  - **Vata:** Warm liquids such as **lukewarm milk** or a light oil if dryness is severe.



- **Pitta:** Rose water, cucumber juice, or aloe gel for cooling effect.
- **Kapha:** Witch hazel, diluted lemon juice, or light decoctions (like green tea) to prevent heaviness.

## 2. Select Herb Powders

- **Vata:** Hydrating, nourishing herbs (Aloe powder, Ashwagandha powder, or a bit of Bhringraj).
- **Pitta:** Cooling, soothing herbs (Sandalwood, Neem, Hibiscus).
- **Kapha:** Stimulating, clarifying herbs (Turmeric, Trikatu\* blend in moderation, Manjistha).

\*Trikatu is a classic blend of ginger, black pepper, and long pepper—quite heating, so use sparingly and with caution for skin.

## 3. Optional Additions

- **Humectants** (like honey) for extra moisture.
- **Binding Agents** (like chickpea flour) to create a smooth paste.
- **Essential Oils:** 1-2 drops for aroma and therapeutic effect (e.g., lavender for calming, tea tree for acne).

## 3.2 Example Face Pack Recipes

### 1. Vata Soothing Pack

- **Base:** 2 tsp chickpea flour + 1 tsp aloe vera gel + enough warm milk to form paste
- **Key Herbs:** ¼ tsp Ashwagandha powder + ¼ tsp Turmeric
- **Method:** Mix well; apply for 10–15 minutes, rinse with lukewarm water. Helps with dryness, mild inflammation.

### 2. Pitta Cooling Pack

- **Base:** 2 tsp sandalwood powder + 1 tsp rose water
- **Key Herbs:** ½ tsp Neem powder (optional for acne-prone)
- **Method:** Mix into a smooth paste; apply for 10–12 minutes, rinse gently. Reduces redness, soothes irritation.

### 3. Kapha Clarifying Pack

- **Base:** 2 tsp chickpea flour + warm water or diluted lemon juice
- **Key Herbs:** ¼ tsp Turmeric + ¼ tsp Manjistha powder
- **Method:** Mix to desired consistency; apply for 10–15 minutes, rinse with lukewarm water. Brightens, tackles excess oil, and helps cleanse pores.

## 4. Formulating Hair Oils (Taila)

Ayurvedic hair oils can be simple (one herb + one carrier oil) or more **complex** (multiple herbs, decoctions, and extended heating times). They often follow a **base oil** + **herbal infusion** method.

### 4.1 General Guidelines

#### 1. Choose a Carrier Oil

- **Vata:** Sesame oil or almond oil—both warming and nourishing.
- **Pitta:** Coconut oil or sunflower oil—cooling and soothing.
- **Kapha:** Mustard oil (warming), or a lighter oil like grapeseed to avoid heaviness.

#### 2. Herbal Infusion Methods

- **Direct Infusion:** Soak powdered/dried herbs in oil at room temperature for 2–3 weeks, shaking occasionally.
- **Heat Infusion (Sneha Paka):** Simmer herbs in oil gently on low heat, ensuring they don't burn. Traditional Ayurvedic processes sometimes include a **decoction** of the herbs plus the oil.

#### 3. Key Herbs

- **Vata:** Bhringraj, Brahmi, Hibiscus for hydration and scalp nourishment.
- **Pitta:** Amla, Hibiscus, Aloe Vera or Vetiver for cooling effect.
- **Kapha:** Rosemary, Tulsi (Holy Basil), or a pinch of ginger to stimulate circulation, but used carefully.

#### 4. Additional Ingredients

- **Essential Oils:** 2–3 drops per 100 ml for scalp issues (e.g., tea tree, rosemary).
- **Fenugreek seeds** can be added to help with dandruff or dryness.



## 4.2 Example Hair Oil Recipes

### 1. Vata Rejuvenating Oil

- **Base Oil:** 100 ml sesame oil.
- **Herbs:** 1 tbsp Bhringraj powder + 1 tbsp Brahmi powder.
- **Method:** Gently heat sesame oil with herb powders for 20-30 minutes on low. Let cool, strain, and store. Massage scalp 1-2 times a week.

### 2. Pitta Cooling Hair Oil

- **Base Oil:** 100 ml coconut oil.
- **Herbs:** 1 tbsp Amla powder + few fresh Hibiscus petals (optional).
- **Method:** Warm coconut oil just until melted (if solid). Add amla, lightly heat for ~15 minutes. Infuse fresh petals if available. Strain and store. Apply before bed or 1 hour before shower.

### 3. Kapha Stimulating Hair Oil

- **Base Oil:** 100 ml mustard oil + 25 ml sesame oil (to dilute intensity).
- **Herbs:** 1 tbsp rosemary leaves or ½ tsp rosemary powder.
- **Method:** Gently heat, let herb infuse. Massage into scalp sparingly (mustard oil can be potent). Encourages circulation to scalp, helps reduce heaviness.

## 5. Formulating Cleansers (Powders & Liquid Washes)

Natural cleansers can replace conventional **shampoos**, **facial cleansers**, or **body washes**. Ayurveda often relies on herbal powders (like Shikakai, Reetha) or mild, **pH-friendly** solutions.

### 5.1 Herbal Hair Cleansers

#### 1. Shikakai-Reetha-Amla Blend

- **Ratio:** 1 part shikakai : 1 part reetha : 1 part amla powder.
- **Usage:** Mix powder with warm water to form a paste. Massage into wet hair/scalp, then rinse. This gentle wash is suitable for all doshas, though you can tweak the ratio (less shikakai for Vata dryness, for instance).

#### 2. Hibiscus Shampoo

- **Method:** Crush fresh hibiscus leaves/flowers + a bit of reetha or mild soapnut solution.
- **Usage:** Great for **Pitta** hair types wanting a cooling effect.

### 5.2 Facial Cleansers

#### 1. Chickpea & Turmeric

- **Vata-Kapha** friendly: 2 tbsp chickpea flour + a pinch of turmeric. Mix with water/rose water.
- For **Pitta**, use less turmeric or swap for sandalwood.

#### 2. Oat & Milk (for Vata dryness)

- Finely ground oats + a bit of powdered milk. Mix with water or rose water to gently cleanse.

### 5.3 Body Cleansers

- **Ub tan:** A traditional combination of chickpea flour, turmeric, sandalwood, and sometimes ground lentils or masoor dal. Good for pre-bath exfoliation and gentle cleansing.

## 6. Preservation & Shelf Life

Homemade Ayurvedic products often **lack** synthetic preservatives, so they typically have a **shorter shelf life**. Here's how to **extend** it safely:

### 1. Dry vs. Wet Formulations

- **Powders (Churna):** When kept **dry** in airtight containers, they can last **6-12 months**.
- **Liquid or Fresh Blends:** Usually last **1-2 weeks** in the fridge; some might need to be used **immediately**.



## 2. Oil Infusions

- If **properly** strained and stored in **sterile, dry** containers, infused oils can last **2-3 months** (or longer if minimal moisture is present).
- Keep them **cool** and away from **light** to reduce rancidity.

## 3. Refrigeration

- Face packs or concoctions containing **fresh aloe, milk, or fresh juices** should be **refrigerated** and used within a few days.
- Check for changes in **smell, color, or texture** before each use.

## 4. Hygiene & Container Choice

- Always use **clean, dry utensils** and containers. **Glass or high-quality plastic** jars with airtight lids are recommended.
- Avoid dipping **wet** fingers or tools into stored products to prevent **bacterial** growth.

## 5. Patch Test & Monitoring

- Even if the product looks fine, always do a **quick smell/visual check**.
- If you sense any **rancid** odor or mold, discard it immediately.

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## 7. Reflection & Exercises

### Exercise 1: Simple Face Pack Formulation (10-15 minutes)

- **Task:** Choose one **dosha** you'd like to address (Vata, Pitta, or Kapha). Create a hypothetical **face pack recipe** with at least **2 herbs**, specifying your chosen **base liquid** and approximate **ratios**.
- **Goal:** Practice applying the formulation principles, focusing on synergy and dosha balance.

### Exercise 2: Designing a Custom Hair Oil (10 minutes)

- **Task:** Sketch out a **personal** hair oil formulation. Think about your scalp's needs—dry? itchy? oily? Then select your **carrier oil** and **herbs** accordingly.
- **Goal:** Gain confidence in combining herbs for scalp/hair benefits and consider how you'd preserve it (heat infusion vs. cold infusion).

### Exercise 3: Preservation Strategy (5 minutes)

- **Task:** For your face pack or hair oil idea, note how you'd **store** it and determine an **estimated shelf life**.
- **Goal:** Reinforce the **importance** of proper storage and usage timelines to ensure product safety.

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## 8. Summary & Looking Ahead

### 1. Today's Key Points

- Ayurvedic formulations rely on **synergy, dosha alignment, and fresh, quality** ingredients.
- **Face packs, hair oils, and cleansers** can be easily crafted at home with the right **carriers, herbs, and ratios**.
- **Preservation** matters: shorter shelf lives demand **careful** storage, **clean** practices, and frequent **quality checks**.

### 2. Preparation for Next Lessons

- In upcoming sessions, we'll explore **detailed regimens** for **common skin/hair concerns** (acne, pigmentation, dandruff, hair fall). We'll also look into **simple in-house spa treatments** (like herbal steams, scrubs, and scalp massages).
- You'll learn how to **personalize** these regimens further for each dosha or **combination** doshas.



## Summary

By understanding the **fundamentals** of Ayurvedic formulation, you're well on your way to **customizing** natural and **dosha-specific** beauty products. Continue experimenting with **simple** recipes, maintain good **preservation** practices, and keep refining your approach based on **individual** feedback—this is exactly how Ayurvedic cosmetology thrives in **personalization** and **holistic** care.

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