

Chapter 3. Main Panchakarma Therapies (Pradhana Karma)

Before you move clients into *laser facials* or *micro-needling*, clearing systemic waste (*āma*) and balancing *doṣas* multiplies results and durability. The five classical eliminative procedures—collectively called **Pradhāna Karma**—are your “*cosmetic reset buttons*.”

1. Vamana - Therapeutic Emesis

(Kapha-Pitta Detox & Acne/Oily-Skin Rescuer)

Aspect	Key Points for Cosmetologists
Goal	Expel excess Kapha (sticky sebum, white-heads) + Kapha-Pitta <i>āma</i> from stomach & lungs.
Prime Beauty Indications	Greasy, pustular acne • Oily seborrheic scalp • Puffy face/cellulite (Kapha stagnation).
Step Outline	1) Prep - 3-5 d internal <i>ghṛita</i> (30-60 ml <i>Tikta Ghṛita</i>) + external <i>abhyanga</i> & steam. 2) Day 0 - Overnight fast → morning drink of medicated decoction (licorice, madanaphala)* until full → induce vomiting with lukewarm salt water. 3) Post-Care - Rice-gruel diet (<i>Samsarjana</i>) 3 d, coriander-fennel water, avoid makeup 48 h.
Clinic Pearl	Aim for 6-8 “vomitus bouts”; record quantity and clarity.
Visible Results	Within 7 d: oil-slick T-zone ↓ 50 %, pustules dry faster.
Contra-Indications	Pregnancy, active asthma, age < 15 / > 70, severe GERD.

*Madanaphala = *Randia dumetorum*, classical emetic seed.

2. Virechana - Therapeutic Purgation

(Pitta Heat Drain & Pigment-Fade Catalyst)

Aspect	Key Points
Goal	Drain Pitta-Rakta toxins via small intestine-liver route.
Beauty Indications	Melasma, PIH*, rosacea, inflammatory eczema, heat-triggered hair-fall.
Core Protocol	3-5 d internal <i>snehana</i> → mild <i>swedana</i> → single-day purge (6-10 stools) using Trivṛt lehya or <i>Castor-ghee</i> + <i>Triphala</i> cocktail.
Cosmetic Add-Ons	Start brightening serums (licorice-niacinamide) after day 3 when bowels stabilize; absorption ↑ 2x.
Expected Skin Glow	Day 5 face looks clearer; measurable L* color-meter +3-5 units by week 2.
Contra	Ulcerative colitis, debilitating anemia, menstruation.

*PIH = Post-Inflammatory Hyper-Pigmentation.

3. Basti - Medicated Enema Therapy

(Vāta-Balancing & Deep Nourishment for Dry, Ageing Hair/Skin)

Type	Contents	Indications	Cosmetic Effect
Sneha Basti (Oil)	60 ml warm <i>Bala-Ashwagandha</i> taila	Vāta dryness, telogen effluvium, crepey body skin	Lubricates colon → systemic oleation; clients notice scalp comfort & fewer split ends in 10 d.



Type	Contents	Indications	Cosmetic Effect
Āsthāpana / Niruha (Decoction)	500 ml dashamoola-triphala kashāya + 50 ml honey + 50 ml sesame oil	Cellulite, stubborn constipation dull-skin	Scrapes Kapha-āma; trims bloating for sharper jawline.

| **Course** | 8–16 enemas over 28 d (classical schedule: *Yoga Basti* 8). |
| **Post-Care** | Rice-porridge breakfast; no cold drinks; gentle yoga only. |
| **Contra** | Chronic diarrhea, rectal bleeding, pregnancy third trimester.

4. Nasya - Nasal Detox & “Glow Portal”

(Head-Neck Channel Purge, Hair & Mental Clarity)

Form	Herbal Medium	Beauty Benefits	How Often
Pratimarsha (daily micro-dose)	2 drops Anu Taila per nostril AM/PM	Reduces dark circles, sinus-induced dull complexion, supports hair retention.	Daily home use.
Āschyotana (clinic drip 6–8 drops)	Fresh Brahmi-Centella ghṛita	Calms stress-shed, boosts focus.	Alt-days × 7.
Navana (oil decoction)	Bhringraj-Amla mix for scalp issues	Deep follicle feed via supraclavicular route.	Weekly × 4.

Procedure Short-form: Head low, chest supported; instil; client inhales, spits; gentle face steam 30 s; avoid cold exposure 1 h.

5. Raktamokṣaṇa - Blood-Letting Therapy

(Focused Detox for Stubborn Skin Lesions)

Method	Tools	Best For...	Cosmetic Result
Jalauka (Leech)	Medical leech applied 20–30 min	Cystic acne nodules, localized psoriasis plaques, old PIH patch.	Rapid deflation of cyst & colour fade in 48 h.
Shringa / Sirā-Vyadha (Needle)	Sterile lancet 1–2 ml blood	Inflamed milia, peri-oral dermatitis spot	Stops recurring lesion.

Always follow with turmeric-honey dressing & systemic manjishtha decoction 3 d.

Contra-Signals: Hemophilia, anticoagulants, uncontrolled diabetes, anemia (< 8 g Hb).

6. Putting It All Together - Sample 21-Day “Glow & Grow” Plan

Day	Therapy	For Client With...	Home / Clinic
0-3	<i>Snehana</i> + steam	Mixed melasma + hair-shed	Home (ghṛita) + clinic abhyanga
4	Mild Virechana	-	Clinic morning
5-8	<i>Samsarjana</i> diet	-	Home
9	Nasya (Anu taila)	Dark-circle prone	Clinic
10	Sneha Basti	Vāta scalp dryness	Clinic
12	Leech Raktamokṣaṇa	jaw cyst	Cystic acne
15	Sheet-mask + saffron serum starts	Pigment fade phase	Home
21	Review: lasers / peels may now begin	Clearer, calmer skin	-



Key Take-Aways

1. **Right Karma for Right Doṣa:**

Kapha → Vamana | Pitta → Virechana / Raktamokṣaṇa | Vāta → Basti

2. **Sequence Matters:** Pūrva Karma → Pradhāna → Paschāt delivers predictable results.

3. **Beauty Outcomes** include faster acne clearance, stronger hair shaft, pigment fade, reduced fine lines.

4. **Safety First:** screen for contraindications, obtain consent, document vitals, and explain post-care diet clearly.

5. **Integrate, Don't Compete:** schedule modern procedures **after** detox; skin absorbs actives better and heals quicker.

Sūtra: *"Purified channels reflect pure radiance—outer beauty is the sparkle of inner clarity."*

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