

Chapter 17. Upanaha (Poultice Application)

Upanaha is a type of **Ekanga Sweda** (localized heat-based sudation therapy) where a medicinal paste is applied to a specific body part and tied with a bandage for a specified duration. The term "Upanaha" literally means **to tie**, and the therapy can be conducted with or without heating the medicinal paste. Upanaha is commonly applied in conditions involving joint pain, such as **osteoarthritis**, **tennis elbow**, and **vatakantaka** (heel pain).

Indications

Upanaha is indicated in conditions such as:

- Sirasoola (headache)
- Vatarakta (gout)
- Apabahuka (frozen shoulder)
- Greevagraha (neck stiffness)
- Sandhisoola (joint pain)
- Sandhivata (osteoarthritis)

Commonly Practiced Upanaha Dravyas (Medicinal Powders)

The medicinal powders used for Upanaha vary depending on the **dosha** involved. Some of the commonly used powders include:

- Kottamchukkadi Choorna
- Nagaradi Choorna
- Jatamayadi Choorna
- Saindhava (rock salt)
- Mahasneha (medicated oil)
- Dhanyamla (fermented liquid)
- Ashwagandha Choorna (*Withania somnifera*)

Infrastructure Facilities

- **Manpower:** An experienced technician and one attendant
- **Space:** The procedure can be done bedside, as it does not require a dedicated Panchakarma theatre

Materials Required

- Medicinal powders: 50-100 g (depending on the dosha dominance)
 - Options include Nagaradi Choorna, Jatamayadi Choorna, Kottamchukkadi Choorna, etc.
- Bandage cloth: 15 cm x 2 meters (1 piece)
- Vatahara Patras: Leaves such as Eranda (*Ricinus communis*) or Arka (*Calotropis gigantea*) to cover the affected area
- Amla Dravya: 50-100 ml of Dhanyamla, Takra (buttermilk), or vinegar (acidic liquid)
- Oil for Upanaha: 50 ml
- Oil for Abhyanga: 30 ml
- Saindhava: 20-30 g

Pre-Operative Procedure

1. Preparation of the medicine:

- Mix the choorna (powder), Saindhava (rock salt), taila (oil), and Amla Dravya (acidic liquid) to form a paste.
- In Sagni Upanaha (heat-based poultice), the paste is heated to 39°C-42°C.
- In Niragni Upanaha (non-heat poultice), the paste is applied without heating.

**2. Sensitivity Test:**

- Perform a skin sensitivity test on the patient before tying the Upanaha to ensure no adverse reaction occurs.

Procedure**1. Positioning:**

- The patient is positioned comfortably, with the affected joint or body part exposed.

2. Abhyanga (optional):

- If indicated, abhyanga (oil massage) is performed locally with lukewarm oil.

3. Application of Upanaha:

- The prepared Upanaha Dravya is applied to the affected area with a 1-2 cm thick layer.
- Cover the paste with Vatahara Patras (leaves of Eranda or Arka) and tie it securely with a bandage.
- Depending on the body part, adopt appropriate bandaging techniques.

4. Duration:

- If applied at night, the poultice is removed in the morning (after about 10 hours).
- If applied during the day, it is removed at night.

Post-Operative Procedure**1. Removal:**

- After the designated time, the Upanaha dravya is removed, and the affected area is washed with lukewarm water.

2. Repetition:

- The procedure is performed daily for the prescribed period based on the condition being treated.

Possible Complications and Management**1. Skin Irritation:**

- If the patient experiences skin irritation, reduce the application time and apply a suitable oil over the affected area to soothe the skin.

Clinical Vital Data Recording

- Record the patient's temperature, pulse rate, blood pressure, and respiratory rate every day before and after the treatment.
- Routine pathological investigations should be conducted on the first and last day of the procedure to monitor the effectiveness and safety of the therapy.

Upanaha is a highly effective therapy for conditions involving joint pain, muscle stiffness, and inflammation. It offers a localized approach to healing by utilizing the anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties of various herbs and oils, providing relief from pain and improving mobility in the affected area.

