

Unit 2: Health & Lifestyle in Menstrual Well-being

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Overview

Menstrual health in Ayurveda depends on rhythmic regulation of **Apāna Vāta** (downward movement), appropriate modulation of **Pitta** (transformative heat) and **Kapha** (cohesion/lubrication), steady **Agni** (digestive-metabolic fire), clear **Srotas** (channels), and a sattvic mental state that preserves **Ojas** (vital essence). This chapter gives you a practical blueprint for **Ritucharyā** (seasonal regimen), **Dinacharyā** (daily regimen), **Pathya-Apathya Āhāra** (diet), **Rasāyana** (rejuvenative strategy), and mind-body tools (Yoga, Prāṇāyāma, meditation) to keep cycles painless, timely, and fertile.

1. Ritucharyā (Seasonal Regimen) and Menstrual Health

Seasonal oscillations shift doṣa tides. Aligning lifestyle/diet with climate prevents **Agnimāndya** → **Āma** → **Srotorodha**, the common prelude to menstrual disorders.

1.1 Season-wise compass

Season (Ritu)	Doṣa tide (tendency)	Menstrual risks if unaligned	What to emphasise (Pathya)	What to limit (Apathya)
Grīṣma (Summer)	Pitta ↑ (heat drains Ojas)	Hot menorrhagia, irritability, acne flares	Cooling yet digestible foods (cooked gourds, rice, moong, ghee in moderation); steady hydration; shade	Very spicy/sour/fried foods; dehydration; intense sun workouts
Varṣā (Monsoon)	Agni ↓, Kapha-Vāta mix	Heaviness, leucorrhoea, bloating, irregular cycles	Light, warm, easily digestible meals; ginger-cumin water; movement to prevent stagnation	Raw salads, cold drinks, day sleep
Śarad (Early autumn)	Pitta residue	Mid-cycle spotting/heat, skin sensitivity	Mild bitters (cooked), pomegranate, coriander-fennel infusions; early dinners	Chillies, vinegar, alcohol; late nights
Hemanta-Śiśira (Late autumn-Winter)	Vāta ↑ with strong Agni potential	Spasmodic dysmenorrhoea, dryness, constipation	Warm, unctuous, nourishing foods; abhyanga; regular sleep	Crash dieting; iced drinks; late dinners
Vasanta (Spring)	Kapha liquefaction	Heaviness, mucous admixture, sluggish cycles	Lightening diet (barley/millet, steamed veg), brisk walks	Heavy sweets/dairy; oversleeping

Clinical pearl: When season switches, anticipate the likely doṣa flare and counsel proactively—e.g., begin Pitta-śamana food/hydration 2–3 weeks before peak summer.

2. Dinacharyā (Daily Regimen) for Reproductive Balance

Daily routine entrains **Apāna Vāta** and circadian hormones. Small, consistent choices outcompete episodic therapies.

2.1 The five anchors

- Wake near brāhma-muhūrta** (pre-sunrise): promotes bowel regularity, steadies Apāna, lightens mind.
- Eliminate urges without suppression:** urine/stool/flatulence/sneezing/tears etc.; suppression (**vega-dharana**) provokes Vātaja cramps and **Udāvarta** patterns.

3. **Abhyanga** (oil application) as suited: sesame oil for Vāta-prone, coconut in hot climates; improves pelvic tone, sleep, and pain threshold.
4. **Vyayāma** (exercise) to *bala-ardha* (half of one's capacity): brisk walk, yoga, light strength; avoid overexertion during flow.
5. **Nidrā** (sleep) discipline: lights out ~10 pm; a consistent sleep window is the cheapest Apāna stabiliser.

2.2 Cycle-aware adjustments

- **Peri-menses (Rajaḥ-srava)**: rest more, prefer gentle stretching and breath awareness; avoid high-intensity work, inversions, long travel.
- **Follicular (Ritu-kāla prep)**: build with moderate activity; schedule cognitively demanding tasks (mind clearer).
- **Luteal**: prioritise bowel regularity and stress buffering—short evening walks, screen curfew.

3. Pathya-Apathya Āhāra for Healthy Menstruation

Food is the fastest lever on **Agni, Doṣa, Dhātu**. A small change in timing/temperature often beats ingredient complexity.

3.1 Doṣa-oriented quick guide

Pattern	Pathya (favour)	Apathya (limit/avoid)
Vātaja (scanty, painful, delayed)	Warm, moist, mildly unctuous foods—soups, stews, khichri with ghee; sesame, dates, cooked apples; carminative sips	Raw/cold foods, skipping meals, excessive stimulants, very late dinners
Pittaja (hot, heavy, early)	Cooling yet digestible—cooked gourds, rice, moong, pomegranate; coriander-fennel water; steady hydration	Chillies, sour pickles, deep-fried foods, alcohol, working long in heat
Kaphaja (heaviness, mucous, prolonged)	Light, warm meals; barley/millet; moong/horse-gram; ginger-cumin-pepper judiciously; early dinner	Day sleep; heavy dairy & sweets; repeated snacking; cold drinks

3.2 Cycle-phase nutrition

- **Flow days (1-3/5)**: light, warm, easily digestible meals; small, frequent portions if appetite is low; avoid cold items.
- **Follicular**: slightly increase calories and proteins (digestible) to support endometrial rebuild; do not overload fats/sweets.
- **Luteal**: ensure bowel regularity (fiber from cooked greens/veg, ghee in moderation); curb excessive salt/sugar that worsens water retention and irritability.

3.3 Timing & combinations (the overlooked rules)

- **Regular meal timing** is more important than “superfoods.”
- Prefer **freshly cooked** warm meals; minimise leftovers.
- Keep combinations **simple** (e.g., avoid fruit + milk; heavy curd at night).
- Hydrate as **steady sips**, not large cold gulps.

4. Rasāyana for Menstrual Health

Rasāyana = measures that enhance longevity, strength, cognition, complexion, and **Ojas**. In menstrual care, Rasāyana stabilises rhythms, supports **Rasa-Rakta-Artava** nourishment, and buffers stress reactivity—**only after** Agni is balanced and channels are clear.

4.1 Deployment windows

- **Preconception** (after Āma clearance): enrich Rasa-Rakta, steady sleep and mood; plan gentle courses between

cycles.

- **Inter-cycle rebuilding** (for thin endometrium/low vitality): select light, unctuous dietary Rasāyana with routine discipline.
- **Perimenopause**: Vāta buffering, bone support, sleep/cognition steadiness.

4.2 Practical Rasāyana planning

Target	Aims	Ajasrika (daily) Rasāyana ideas	Guardrails
Rasa-Rakta	Colour/volume vitality	Warm ghee in moderation; cooked greens; stewed dates/raisins; pomegranate	Start after Agni normalises; avoid heavy combos
Artava essence	Ovulatory quality, luteal steadiness	Warm, simple, mildly unctuous meals; bowel regularity; early nights	Clear Āma first; avoid drying regimens
Majjā-Manas	Anxiety/sleep	Night milk if compatible; nut-seed pastes; ghee; evening screen curfew	Track sleep latency; reduce stimulants
Asthi	Bone resilience	Sesame (til), cooked greens, sunlight, ghee	Avoid iced drinks and crash diets

Key principle: Rasāyana works when **timed** right; in evident Āma states (coated tongue, heaviness, foul odour), first do **Dīpana-Pācana**.

5. Yoga, Prāṇāyāma & Meditation for Menstrual Regulation

Ayurveda values mind–body practices as **Vāta-Pitta** moderators. You will prescribe them **adjacent** to diet-regimen, not as substitutes.

5.1 What to do and when

A. Late luteal (PMS window):

- *Asana*: Supported forward folds, Supta Baddha Koṇāsana (with bolster), gentle cat-cow, pelvic rocking (5–10 mins).
- *Prāṇāyāma*: **Nāḍī-śodhana** with elongated exhalation (no breath holds), **Bhrāmārī** (5–7 rounds).
- *Meditation*: 10-minute body-scan or mantra japa before bed.

B. During flow:

- *Asana*: Restorative shapes, supine twists with support; avoid strong inversions/strenuous core.
- *Prāṇāyāma*: Soft diaphragmatic breathing, **Bhrāmārī** for pain relief.
- *Meditation*: Quiet breath-counting; short yoga-nidra if fatigued.

C. Follicular (rebuild):

- *Asana*: Moderate vinyasa or brisk walking (20–30 mins), gentle strength/hip mobility.
- *Prāṇāyāma*: Easy Nāḍī-śodhana.
- *Meditation*: 5–10 minutes morning mindfulness—sets appetite/mood tone.

D. Luteal (implantation-friendly if trying to conceive):

- *Asana*: Keep intensity moderate; prioritise walks and mobility.
- *Prāṇāyāma*: Exhalation-lengthening breath; avoid strong retentions.
- *Meditation*: Evening Bhrāmārī + gratitude journaling (reduces Pitta-irritability).

5.2 Safety notes

- Individualise with respect to fitness, pain, and obstetric status.
- During pregnancy, **avoid** strong heat practices, deep twists, jumps, forceful breath retentions; follow obstetric guidance.



- Pain that increases with movement → rest and reassess.

6. Putting It Together — Two-Week Menstrual Reset (Clinic-ready Template)

Week 1 (reset):

- Wake pre-sunrise; warm water; elimination without suppression.
- Breakfast: warm porridge with ghee; Lunch: rice + moong + cooked veg; Dinner (early): soup/stew + soft grain.
- Hydration: small warm sips through day.
- Exercise: 30–40 min brisk walk or yoga, *not* on heavy-flow days.
- Evenings: Bhrāmarī (5 min) + screen curfew last 60 min.
- No iced drinks; no late dinners; avoid complicated food combos.

Week 2 (stabilise):

- Maintain timing; tune per season (section 1).
- Add 2 servings cooked greens/day; one stewed fruit snack (not with meals).
- Keep bowels regular (ghee in dal, cooked fiber).
- Luteal: add nightly Nāḍī-śodhana (5 min) + gratitude journal; review irritant foods (chilli, vinegar, deep-fried).

(Use as a counselling handout; adjust for Vāta/Pitta/Kapha dominance.)

Summary (Rapid Revision)

- **Ritucharyā** anticipates seasonal doṣa tides; prepare the diet-routine 2–3 weeks in advance to prevent cycle flares.
- **Dinacharyā** acts as Apāna’s metronome: brāhma-muhūrta rising, urge-hygiene, abhyanga, moderate exercise, and disciplined sleep.
- **Pathya-Apathya** focuses on **timing, temperature, simplicity** more than exotic items; tailor to Vāta/Pitta/Kapha patterns and cycle phase.
- **Rasāyana** stabilises rhythms and Ojas **after** Agni correction; choose ajasrika (daily) measures first.
- **Yoga-Prāṇāyāma-Meditation** are safe, powerful regulators when matched to phase and constitution; avoid intensity during flow and pregnancy.

Assessment

A. Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs)

1. The **single most impactful** Dinacharyā anchor for Apāna-Vāta rhythm is:
A. Long weekend sleep-ins
B. Brāhma-muhūrta waking with regular sleep-wake timing
C. Skipping breakfast to “lighten” Agni
D. Performing inversions during menses
Answer: B
2. In **Varṣā (monsoon)**, an unadjusted routine most commonly leads to:
A. Dry Vātaja cramps only
B. Āma accumulation with Kapha stagnation and irregular cycles
C. Sudden Pitta menorrhagia due to heat
D. Immediate amenorrhoea
Answer: B



3. During **Rajah-srava**, the dietary stance is best described as:
- Raw salads for enzymes
 - Light, warm, easily digestible meals in small, frequent portions
 - High-fat feast for energy
 - Ice-cold drinks to reduce cramps
- Answer: B**
4. **Rasāyana** for menstrual health should begin:
- During overt Āma states
 - Only at menopause
 - After Agni and channels are balanced/clear
 - Only in pregnancy
- Answer: C**
5. A **Kaphaja** menstrual pattern is best addressed first with:
- Heavy dairy at dinner
 - Daytime naps to recover
 - Dīpana-Pācana and early, light dinners
 - High chilli intake to “burn” Kapha
- Answer: C**
6. Appropriate **Prāṇāyāma** during flow includes:
- Kumbhaka with strong retentions
 - Kapālabhātī in a hot room
 - Soft diaphragmatic breathing and Bhrāmarī
 - Vigorous bhastrikā
- Answer: C**
7. The **follicular** phase benefits most from:
- Heavy fried foods
 - Slight increase in digestible proteins and steady hydration
 - Skipping lunch
 - Cold smoothies at night
- Answer: B**
8. A key sign that **Manda-Agni** is sabotaging cycles is:
- Clear tongue and sharp appetite
 - Heaviness after meals, coated tongue, mucous admixture in flow
 - Immediate hunger after meals
 - Night sweats without heat exposure
- Answer: B**
9. The **winter** (Hemanta-Śīśira) menstrual risk is mainly:
- Pitta burns
 - Vātaja cramps and dryness
 - Kapha liquefaction
 - None; winter is risk-free
- Answer: B**
10. Late-luteal mind-body support for PMS is:
- Hot-room power yoga
 - Supported forward folds + Nāḍī-śodhana with long exhale + Bhrāmarī
 - Caffeine late evening
 - All-out sprinting
- Answer: B**

B. Case Vignettes (Applied)

Case 1 — Monsoon Irregularity with Heaviness

A 25-year-old reports prolonged spotting after menses, pelvic heaviness, daytime sleep, and frequent cold drinks during monsoon. Tongue coated, appetite dull.



Tasks:

1. Identify the seasonal doṣa-Agni pattern.
2. Outline a 10-day Ritucharyā-aligned plan (diet + routine).
3. Mention two objective markers to track improvement.

Case 2 — Vātaja Dysmenorrhoea in Winter

A 21-year-old hostel resident has 35–40 day cycles with day-1 cramping relieved by warmth, late dinners, and irregular sleep. She skips breakfast and drinks iced beverages.

Tasks:

1. Map doṣa and Agni status.
2. Give a one-week Dinacharyā reset with specific meal timings and bedtime.
3. Add a micro-routine of Prāṇāyāma/meditation for evenings.

Case 3 — Pitta-Heat Menorrhagia in Summer

A 30-year-old chef works long hours near heat, eats chilli-rich food, and drinks little water. She reports bright-red heavy flow for 6–7 days with burning and irritability.

Tasks:

1. Identify the pattern and immediate dietary corrections.
2. Propose a hydration and cooling regimen for four weeks.
3. State when (and why) Rasāyana could be considered afterward.

End of Unit 2 — Health & Lifestyle in Menstrual Well-being