



Chapter 5 - Purva Karma - Snehapana , Swedana Karma

Preparing the body for Panchakarma therapies

Panchakarma is a powerful therapy that can transform the body, mind, and spirit. However, before embarking on this journey, it is important to prepare the body for the cleansing process. This is the purpose of Purva Karma, a set of preparatory therapies that open the channels of elimination, soften the tissues, and nourish the body with oil. Purva Karma involves Pachana Karma, Snehana Karma and Swedana Karma.

The Role of Purva Karma in Panchakarma

Purva Karma plays a vital role in preparing the body for Panchakarma therapies. By opening the channels of elimination, softening the tissues, and nourishing the body with oil, Purva Karma ensures that Panchakarma can work effectively and safely.

Ayurveda practitioners will tailor Purva Karma recommendations to the individual's specific needs and goals.

Purva Karma is a vital part of any Panchakarma program. By preparing the body for the cleansing process, Purva Karma ensures that Panchakarma can work effectively and safely, leading to a more transformative and beneficial experience.

Pachana Karma (Digestion Therapy)

Pachana is necessary to facilitate snehana therapy. It pacifies Ama. The word Pachana means digestion. Here, in the treatment context, Pachana Karma means the treatment measures taken to digest the Ama and prepare the body suitable for Snehana Karma (Abhyangam or Sneha Pana).

Indications and contraindications of Pachana Karma

- Pachana is indicated in amavastha of many diseases.
- Those who are atyagni, atirooksha and emaciated of chronic ailments need not undergo pachana.
- Pachana is contraindicated in those emaciated of ailments, therapeutic procedures, alcoholism, excessive sexual indulgence and grief, those exhausted of bearing heavy weight, walking long distances and those suffering from uraksata (thoracic injuries), those who are ruksa (dehydrated), the weak, those who have increase of vata, the pregnant, the puerpera, small children the old and for all else the Grisma ritu (summer). [A.H.Su.14-8]

Commonly Practised medicines for Pachana Karma

Panchakola Choorna, Shaddharana Choorna, Shivaskhara Pachan Churna, Chitrakadi vati, Gandharva hastadi Kashaya, Sudarsana Choornam etc. are commonly used. Upavasa is also beneficial if 'Ama' is less.

Dietary and other guidelines restrictions

- Light, easily digestible food is to be used.
- Virudhasana, Adhyasana, Samasana, Vishamasana etc. have to be avoided.
- Food is to be taken at the appropriate time.

Duration of Pachana Karma

Pachana has to be done

- a) Till ama is removed Or
- b) Patient having good appetite Or
- c) Till nirama lakshanas are observed

Possible difficulties/complications/adverse reaction and their precaution & management -

Generally no complications are observed. General weakness, Burning sensation of abdomen, Flatulence, constipation etc. may develop during pachana procedure. Symptomatic management can be done.

Signs and symptoms of proper pachana [A.H.Su. 14-17)

- Clarity of senses Lightness of body
- Proper hunger
- Proper thirst
- Proper appetite Cleanliness of belching Clarity of voice Enthusiasm
- Freeness from lethargy

Follow up therapy

After proper pachana, patients can be subjected to appropriate shodhana procedure.

Snehana Karma (Oleation Therapy)



Snehana means anointing, lubricating, rubbing or smearing with oil, or unguents, unctuousness, an unguent, emollient.

It is defined as a thing which causes unctuousness, fluidity, softness and moisture. That process is named as snehana or oleation therapy.

4 Types of Snehana Dravya:

- Ghrita (ghee)
- Taila
- Vasa
- Majja

Ghee is the best among all these four sneha dravya. Snehana is the Poorva Karma of any Panchakarma Procedure. [A.H.Su.16 - 2]

Properties and indications of Snehana Dravya:

The medicines which are possessing Guru, Seeta, Sara Snigdha, Manda, Sookshma, Mridu and Drava properties are

considered as snehana dravyas. [A.H.Su.16 - 1].

- Ghrita is the most Pittaghna (pacifies Pitta dosha) and Taila is most Kapha vataghna. Ghrita Comparatively laghu whereas Majja is guru. [A.H.Su.16 - 3]
- A combination of any two of them is called Yamaka. A mixture of 3 is called Trivrit and all the four of them together is called Mahan (Maha Sneha). [A.H.Su.16 - 4]

Indications of Ghrita, Majja, Vasa & Taila

- **Ghrita** is desirable for those who desire intelligence, memory, retention of memory and optimal metabolic fire. [A.H.Su.16 - 8]. Though specific effects are attributed to the various unctuous substances, the prime factor guiding the administration of sneha is the stage of the disease. Ghee is to be administered when kapha is manda and vata and pitta are predominant. Agni deepti and Pakvavastha of doshas are also taken into account. [A.H.Chi.1-1]
- **Taila** is desirable in those suffering from granthi (lumps/glandular swellings), nali (sinuses & Fistula), krimi (parasites), diseases due to involvement of kapha dosha, adiposity and vata dosha. It is further desirable in those aspiring for lightness and firmness of the body and those who are having krura koshtha (constipation). [A.H.Su. 16 - 91]
- **Vasa & Majja:** Those who suffer from tissue depletion due to exposure to wind, direct sunlight, long walk, bearing heavy load, sexual excesses and physical exercises and those who are dehydrated, capable of bearing strain, bulimic, and suffer from blockage of channels by vata are suitable for snehana by the other two fats (tallow and bone marrow). [A.H.Su.16-10]
- Vasa (muscle fat/ animal fat) finds specific indication in pain affecting joints, bones, marmas and in abdominal pain, besides in pain due to laceration, burns, blunt injury, prolapsed uterus, ear ache and headache. [A.H.Su.16 - 1]

Season, mode and time to use different Sneha dravyas

- The ideal season to use taila is pravrit (rainy season), to use ghee is after the end of rainy season (i.e. sarat ritu - autumn), and for the other two fats, it is madhava (vasanta ritu - spring).
- In normal seasons, it is advisable to use fats during day time when there is bright sunlight.
- When the disease condition demands, ghrita can be given at night in Ushnakala and the Taila at forenoon in Sheetakala. [A.H.Su.16 - 12]
- In emergencies, oil may be used in winter and ghee in summer. (However), in summer, ghee is to be used at night.
- In diseases due to vitiation of pitta and in vata-pitta diseases dominated by pitta, use of ghee is reserved for night only. If employed on the contrary, diseases oriented by vata and kapha may occur. If ghee is employed in daytime in pitta oriented diseases during summer, diseases due to vitiation of pitta are likely to occur.
- Sneha can be (advantageously) applied in combination with food, enemas, errhines, as embrocations (massage), for gargling, over the scalp, to fill the ears or as tarpana (retention) in the eyes.
- By observation, it is suggested that it is better to avoid achhapana (drinking pure sneha) in greeshma ritu (summer season).

Types of Snehana Karma:

According to mode of application -

- Abhyantara (Internal Oleation) / Sneha Pana
- Bahya (External Oleation)

According to dosage -

- **Achhapana** - Internal intake at more quantity of medicated sneha dravya without mixing with food.
- **Vicharana** - Less quantity of sneha dravya is used. May be added or mixed with Anupana/ food/ Liquid

Abhyantara Sneha (Sneha Pana)

(Internal Oleation Therapy)



Indications for Snehapana [A.H.Su.16/5 & Ch.Su 13/52)

- Persons who are about to undergo sudation therapy or elimination procedure.
- Those who are having roughness in the skin..
- Those who are indulging in physical exercise, wine and women.
- Those who suffer from mental strain.
- Those who are in old age.
- Those who are children.

- Those who are emaciated.
- Those who are very weak in blood and semen (shukra).
- Those who are in the habit of drinking Alcohol.
- Those who are suffering from vata disorders.
- Those who are suffering from conjunctivitis (Abhishyanda).
- Those who are suffering from cataract (Timira).
- Those who are not getting sleep even after excessive exertion.

Contra-indications for Snehapana or fat administration [A.H Su 16/6, Ch.Su 13/53, Su Ch.31/46]

The Snehana procedure must not be administered in the following conditions:

- Those persons who are fit to undergo rookshana therapy (drying or parched therapy).
- Those whose body is having excessive aggravation of kapha and fat (meda).
- Those who are having excessive secretion from the Mouth and Anus due to excessive aggravation of kapha.
- Whose digestion power is weak.
- Those who are suffering from thirst and fainting.
- The pregnant women.
- Those whose palate gets dried up.
- Those having aversion to food.
- Those suffering from vomiting, Abdominal diseases, diseases due to improper digestion as well as metabolism.
- Those suffering from gara type of poison (food poisoning)
- Persons who are weak and emaciated.
- Those who are having aversion to taking the unctuous substances.
- Those who are intoxicated.
- Those who have undergone errhine or inhalation (Nasya) and enema therapy (vasti chikitsa).
- Those who are suffering from acute fever. (Taruna jwara).
- Those who are suffering from indigestion (Ajeerna)
- Improper season.
- Those patients (women) who have recently delivered.
- Those patients who are having excessive digestive power (Atyagni).

Infrastructure facilities required for Sneha pana

- **Man power :** Physician, Nurse, Attendant
- **Space :** It can be given bedside where patient is admitted (Achapana should be performed as an IPD procedure)
- **Equipments & Materials:**
 - Sneha - Quantity sufficient
 - Measuring jar - 1
 - Glass-1
 - Cloth - 1
 - Lemon-1
 - Water Boiled with Shunthi - Quantity sufficient
 - Cotton - Q.S.
 - Gauze - 1

Duration of Sneha

The duration longs upto the appearance of Samyak snigdha lakshana. Achhapana of sneha (use of fat alone)should be done for 3 days in Mridu Koshta (persons of soft bowel), for 7 days in Krura Koshta (person with hard bowel) or till samyak snigdha laksanas (symptomatology of perfect unction) are seen. Beyond this period sneha (fat) becomes acclimatized (to the system, and hence does not produce the requisite effect). [A.H.Su.16 - 29]

- 3 days - in mridu koshta

- 5 days – in medium koshta
- 7 days – in krura koshta

Commonly used Abhyantara sneha drugs

Ghrita	Taila
Indukantha ghrita	Sahacharadi Taila
Shadpala ghrita	Valiya Sahacharadi Taila
Mahatiktakam ghrita	Mahamasha Taila
Sukumara ghrita	Dhanwantaram Taila
Dadimadi ghrita	Maha Narayana Taila
Gulgulu Tiktaka grita	Ksheerabala Taila
Tiktaka ghrita	Prabhanjana Vimardanam Taila
Vidangadi ghrita	Nirgundi Taila
Dhanwantara ghrita	Sahachara Taila
Kalyanaka grita	Dasamoola bala Taila
Mahakalyanaka ghrita	Bhadradarvadi Taila
Panchagavya ghrita	Jyotishmati Taila
Maha panchagavya ghrita	Jatamamsi Taila

Dosage Schedule of Sneha Pana [A.H.Su.16 - 17)

The quantity of fat digested in 2,4 and 8 yamas (one yama = 3 hours) is held to be its minimal, moderate and maximal dose respectively. Among these doses, the optimally minimal dose alone should be administered first, after assessing the status of doshas etc.

- **Maximum dose** - As soon as the food that has been taken the previous day is digested, achhasneha matra (maximum dose) for shodhana (eliminative) procedures should be executed.
- **Moderate dose** - When the food of the previous day is digested and when hungry, ananna sneha (fat without food, acha sneha pana) is to be taken in madhyama matra (moderate dose) for shamana procedures (palliative regimen).

In practice, generally Snehapana is started with 50 ml and increased by 50 ml daily up to 7 days. Dosage can be increased according to agnibala (digestive power).

Factors to be considered in finalising dosage and duration of Snehapana

- Dosage and duration are to be finalised according to Agni, Balam, Vayu, Satvam, Kalam, Prakriti, Desham, Dooshya, Satmya and Avastha of the disease and diseased person.
- In mridu koshta snehapana is to be carried out for 3 days and in Kroora koshta and for 7 days or till samyak snigdha lakshanas are obtained (maximum 7 days).

In practice, before deciding the dose for next day, following factors are considered -

- Time taken to digest sneha
- At what time food has taken
- Bowel movements
- Aversion towards sneha
- The symptomatology of rookshata
- Exhaustion

Sneha Matra (Dosage) & Pachan Kal (Time taken to digest) -

Sneha Matra (Dosage) & Pachan Kal (Time taken to digest) -

Purpose.



Dosage Type.



Pachan Kal



1 Prahara = 3 hours

Anupana (material which is consumed along with food or medicine) of Sneha Pana

- After Achha Sneha pana - Ushnodaka (hot water)
- In case of Tuvarak and Bhallatak Taila - Sheet Jal (cold water)

Examination of the patient before sneha application

- As per indication of snehapana, ashtasthana pareeksha (8 types of examination), routine blood investigation (TC, DC, Hb, ESR, FBS, Cholesterol, Urea), Blood pressure, Pulse rate, Temperature etc. has to be carried out. Specific biochemical investigations like Blood sugar, Lipid profile, Blood urea, Creatinine are to be examined before and after Sneha pana.
- Counselling regarding achhapana is to be done before starting the procedure

Pre operative Procedure of Sneha Pana

On the previous day, the patient should be given food (vilepi) which is not atisighda or abhishyandi). The patient should sleep at night. Next morning his/her digestion must be assessed based on laghutwa, udgarasuddhi, vegotsarga etc. After the daily routine, the patient is prepared for snehapana. Patient's eyes must be closed with cotton and gauze.

Operative Procedure of Sneha Pana

Dosage of the sneha must be decided according to the age, health, prakriti, vikriti, dosha and agnibala. It must be in between 30-50 ml for ghrita & taila on the first day. The dose for the next day should be fixed after assessing the time taken for digestion.

Within half an hour of sunrise, the patient should be seated in a comfortable position and Sneha should be given an empty stomach. After giving the sneha, eye bandage should be removed and then warm water should be given as anupana.

Shunti jala (ginger water) should be given as anupana. Then the patient should wash the face and mouth with hot water to remove the taste of sneha. When thirst occurs, hot water can be given. Same procedure is followed in the following days.

Duration of Sneha pana:

Snehapana may be continued till samyak snigdha lakshanas like vatanulomana, agnideepiti, unctuous and unformed stool, snehodvega, softness and snigdhata of body parts are seen, i.e. usually from 3 to 7 days. If they are not seen even after 7 days, snehapana should be stopped. After 1 to 3 days of rookshkana, it can be started again.

Post operative procedure

Patients should take rest during the snehapana period but he/she should not sleep during the day time. Warm vilepi should be given to eat when the sneha is completely digested and good appetite occurs.

Dietary and other restriction during snehapana period

- For the one who is to be subjected to sneha pana the next day, who is on sneha pana and who have just completed sneha pana; the food shall be predominantly in liquid form, warm, non-secretary, not too unctuous, not mixed with many varieties of substances and shall be in appropriate quantity.
- The patient should use hot water for all his needs and should maintain celibacy.
- The patient should sleep well at night and should not suppress the natural urges of the body.
- The patient should avoid exercises, anger, grief, snow, sun and strong wind.
- Travel either in vehicles or by walking long distances, being talkative, sitting continuously at the same place (planting oneself), use of pillows either too thick or too thin, day sleeping, smoke and dust - all these are to be avoided during the days and that much days after snehapana.

Practically, light rice gruel is given when a patient feels hungry. Luke warm shunti water is to be given to enhance digestion.

Sneha vyapat (complications of Sneha pana)

If executed in the wrong dose, of the wrong nature, at the wrong time and with wrong diet and regimen; intake of fats produce oedema, piles, lethargy, akinesia, unconsciousness, pruritus, skin diseases, fever, excess secretions, abdominal pain, tympanites, giddiness etc. [A.H.Su.16 - 321]

Sneha Vyapat management

Withstanding hunger, thirst, vomiting, sudation; non-unctuous drinks, food and medicine, Takrarista (beverage prepared with buttermilk), khala (a prepared food item), uddala (a paddy variety), yava (Barley - Hordeum vulgare), samyaka (Little millet-Panicum sumatrense), Kodrava (Kodo millet - Paspalum scrobiculatum), Pippali (piper longum), Triphala (powder of fruits of Terminalia chebula - chebulic myrobalan, Indian gooseberry - Emblica officinalis, Terminalia belerica - Beleric myrobalan), honey, pathya (Terminalia chebula - chebulic myrobalan), cow's urine and guggulu (resin of Commiphora mukul) along with treatment of specific symptoms may be given accordingly to manage Sneha Vyapat. [A.H.Su.16 - 34]

Signs & symptoms of proper snehana and end points for snehana procedure

The symptomatology of samyak snighata (perfect unction) is - movement of vata in the proper direction, ignited digestion, smooth and soft bowels, aversion towards fat and exhaustion. [A.H.Su.16-30]

Follow up after Sneha Pana

Snehana being a poorva karma procedure, swedana and necessary panchakarma procedure has to be carried out.

Merit of snehana

The one who uses Sneha Pana lives a hundred years blessed with profound digestion, clean gut, fresh tissues, physical strength, good complexion, stable senses and slow ageing.

Swedana Karma

(Sudation Therapy)

Sweda is defined as the process by which the sweat or perspiration of the body will be produced. It relieves stiffness, heaviness and coldness of the body. It is otherwise called Fomentation Therapy

Generally, swedana dravyas possess Guru, Teakshna and Ushna guna.

Types of Swedana

Sweda is of four types [A.H.Su.17-1]

- Tapa (application of dry heat)
- Upanaha (Poultice)
- Ushma (Steam fomentation)
- Drava (heat transmitted through liquids)

Tapa sweda

Tapa is executed by heated cloth, plates, palm of the hand etc. Tapa is the application of dry heat. This can be done with any heated dry objects. Usually substances like heated clothes, broken roof tiles etc. are classically suggested through valuka (heated sand) is the easiest available to impart dry heat. (A.H.Su.17-1)

Upanaha sweda

Upanahasweda (a variety of poultice) is done in kevala vata (diseases caused by involvement of vata alone) by Vacha (Acorus calamus), Kinva (toddy sediment), Shatahva (Antheum) Deodar, Rasna (Alpinia galangal), Eranda (castor), Jatamamsi (Nardostachys jatamansi), meat etc, grounded with fats, vinegar, buttermilk, milk etc. affluent with salt.

- In vata associated with kapha, Upanaha (poultice) can be done with Surasadi gana.
- In vata associated with pitta the medicines repeatedly used may be of Padmakadi gana or Salavana yoga (where the quantity of lavana/ salt is more).
- Bandaging can be done by smooth, soft, leather of ushna virya (hot potency), devoid of stale odour. If leather is not available, leaves having Vatahara property (property to alleviate vata), silk etc. can also be used. When bandaged at night, it can be released in the morning, and when bandaged in morning, it can be released at night. [A.H.Su.17-2]

Ushmasweda

Ushmasweda can be done by using utkarika (steamed rice balls), loshtha (lump of earth), Kapala (fragmented clay tiles), Upala (crushed stones), pamsu (clay powder) and by chopped leaves, grains, and also by powdered cow dung, sand, bran of rice according to locality and seasonal variations after being heated in various modes. [A.H.Su. 17-6]

Dravasweda

It is the Sweda where steam is administered by boiling the decoction made up of various indicated dravya (material).

The chopped leaves of Shigru (Moringa oleifera), Varana (Crataeva magna), Eranda (castor), Karanja (Pongamia pinnata), Surasa (basil), Ariana (Osmium basillicom), Shirisha (Albizia lebbeck), Vasa (Adhatoda basics), Vamsa (bamboo), Arka (Calatropis), Malati (jasmine), Dirghavrinta (Oroxylum indicum) etc., medicines such as Vacha (Acorus calamus), aforesaid

meat of animals of Anupa desha (marshy locale and of those residing in water); Dashamoola (the 10 medicinal roots) etc. are taken each or together and with apt fats for the condition, is made into decoction prepared in beer, vinegar, water or milk. These are taken in vessels like kumbhi (earthenware pot), galanti (bronze water pot with spout – kindi in Malayalam), nali (tubular vessels) etc. and poured in comfortable warmth over the painful body parts after oleation and covering the region with a cloth. (A.H.Su.17-8]

The same decoction can be filed in large (wide mouthed) basins and used to give immersion baths to those suffering from vitiation of Vata all over the body, painful piles, dysuria etc. [A.H.Su.17-11]

Commonly used Swedana procedures

- Patrapinda sweda
- Choorna pinda sweda
- Jambeerapinda sweda
- Shashtikasali pinda sweda
- Valuka sweda
- Kukkudpinda sweda
- Busapinda sweda
- Karesha pinda sweda
- Dhara
- Kaya sekam (Pizhichil)
- Dhanyamla dhara
- Avagaha sweda
- Ksheeradoom
- Vasana sweda
- Upanaha
- Annalepana
- Kativasti
- Bashpa Sweda, also spelled as Vashpa sweda

Detailed description follows in separate chapters

Indications of Swedana Karma

Sudation may be carried out in conditions like – asthma, cough, running nose, belching, tympanites, constipation, weakness of voice, diseases due to vitiation of Vata and kapha, ama condition (metabolic stagnation leading to toxic effects), stambha (stiffness) and heaviness, body pain, hip pain, pain in the sides of trunk & back, belly and lockjaw, swelling of the scrotum, in khalvi (a very painful musculoskeletal condition – carpal tunnel syndrome), spasticity, vatakantaka (sever pain of the heel- plantar fasciitis), dysuria, arbuda (tumours), granthi (nodular lumps), diseases causing seminal obstruction, adhya vata (extreme pain with immobility of the thighs), arterial or venous thrombosis, appropriately using apt medicines. (A.H.Su. 17-25)

Contraindications of Swedana Karma

Sudation is contraindicated in the obese, dehydrated weak, those who have giddiness, those who are going to be treated with stambhana chikitsa, who are weak after injury, those who have consumed poisons (toxins), liquor, those who have diminished vision, ascites, cellulitis, skin diseases, oedema, urustambha, those who have just consumed milk, curd, fats and honey; who have just undergone elimination therapy, prolapsed rectum or after ano – rectal cauterisation, depression, anger, sorrow and fear; those who have starved, thirsty, jaundice, anaemia, diabetes, who are affected with diseases due to vitiation of pitta. The gravid, women in periods and in puerperium. If sudation is to be employed in all of the above conditions (due to gravity of disease) it should be employed minimally. (A.H.Su.17-22)

Infrastructure required for Swedana Karma

- Man power: 3 Panchakarma Technicians/ Attendants
- Panchakarma Theatre: Size: 12 x 12 ft with attached toilet and bathroom
- Floor: Mat finished tiles
- Exhaust fans: 2
- Sufficient light & ventilation, Hot water facilities

General instructions recommended for Swedana Karma

- Vital data should be noted before the procedure.
- Food should be taken at least 2 hours before the procedure.

- Easily digestible food should be preferred.
- Hot water should be used for all purposes.
- Day sleep should be avoided; take proper sleep at night.
- Avoid exposure to the breeze, sunlight and cold atmosphere.

Duration and method of swedana karma

Depending upon the mode of Swedana Karma, it varies. Described in detail in separate chapters.

Dietary and other guidelines

Dietary and other guidelines described in sneha prakarana are to be followed.

Samyak Swinna Lakshana (Signs & symptoms of proper Swedana) [A.H.Su. 17-15]

- Coldness in the body will be stopped.
- Alleviation of pain. Stiffness of the body will disappear.
- Heaviness of the body will be reduced.
- Softness of the body will be seen.
- Appearance of sweating will be visible.
- Signs and symptoms of the disease will decrease or disappear.
- Patients will have a liking towards cold things.

Atiswinna Lakshana (Signs and symptoms of excessive sudation) [A.H. 17-16 & Ch.Su.15- 12]

- Aggravation of pitta
- Fainting
- Perspiration
- Thirst
- Burning Sensation
- Weakness of Voice
- Weakness of limbs
- Pain in the joints
- Production of sphota (eruptions or cracks)
- Aggravation of pitta and rakta
- Fever
- Circular eruptions having bluish red colour

Treatment of Atiswinna Lakshana

- The treatment that is being adopted in Greeshma ritu (summer season) must be adopted here i.e. Administration of sweet, cold, fluid and unctuous food.
- Application of lepa on the body
- Spending the time in places near the river.
- Other treatments must be done for pitta and rakta doshaas like vasti (enema), Nasya (errhines), rakta mokshana (Bloodletting) etc.

Clinical vital data

It is better to record body temperature, blood pressure, pulse, respiratory rate etc. before and after the procedure. Biochemical and Pathological investigations are to be carried out during the procedure.

Follow up therapy

Swedana being a poorvakarma, pradhanakarma has to be followed as indicated.