

x. dravya in accordance with karma and its uses in health and disease

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Overview: Dravya and Karma in Ayurveda

- 1. **Dravya**: A substance or entity (herb, mineral, animal product, etc.) that houses **guṇa** (quality) and **karma** (action).
- 2. **Karma**: The *therapeutic effect* or *action* exerted by dravya on the body—ranging from purgation and digestion to rejuvenation and aphrodisiac effects.
- Synergy: The net effect of a dravya is determined by its rasa (taste), guṇa (qualities), vīrya (potency), vipāka (post-digestive effect), and specific action (prabhāva).

Classification of Dravya by Karma

Ayurvedic texts offer multiple frameworks for grouping dravyas according to **dominant actions**. While broad categories like *samshodhana* (eliminative) and *samshamana* (pacifying) are well-known, numerous **subcategories** exist to describe more nuanced therapeutic effects.

Samshodhana vs. Samshamana (High-Level Division)

- 1. Samshodhana Dravyas (Purificatory)
 - o **Definition**: Expel aggravated dosas and toxins from the body.
 - Examples:
 - Vamana (emetics): Madana (Randia spinosa)
 - Virecana (purgatives): Trivṛt (Operculina turpethum), Devadālī (Luffa echinata)
 - Application: Pañcakarma procedures (vamana, virecana, basti, nasya, raktamokṣa).
- 2. Samshamana Dravyas (Pacifying)
 - **Definition**: Balance and neutralize dosas internally without forceful expulsion.
 - Example: Gudūcī (Tinospora cordifolia) alleviates pitta, supports immunity.

Common Pharmacological Karmas

- 1. Bṛṃhaṇa (Nourishing)
 - Action: Builds tissues, strengthens the body.
 - **Examples**: Aśvagandhā (Withania somnifera), Śatāvarī (Asparagus racemosus).
- 2. Lekhana (Reducing/Scraping)
 - **Action**: Scrapes out excess fat or kapha doṣa.
 - **Examples**: Guggulu (Commiphora mukul), Vacā (Acorus calamus).
- 3. Dīpana-Pācana (Appetizer-Digestive)
 - Action: Enhances agni (digestive fire) and/or digests ama (toxins).
 - o **Examples**: Trikațu (Pippalī, Marica, Śuṇṭhī) for both dīpana and pācana.
 - Subtypes:
 - Āma-pachana but no agnīdīpana → e.g., Nagakesara (Mesua ferrea), Mustā (Cyperus rotundus)
 - Agnīdīpana but no āma-pachana → e.g., Miśri (Sugar candy)
 - Both dīpana & pācana → e.g., Citraka (Plumbago zeylanica)
- 4. Stambhana (Astringent/Retentive)
 - o **Action**: Reduces excessive discharge (e.g., diarrhea).
 - o **Examples**: Kuṭaja/Vatsaka (Holarrhena antidysenterica), Tuṇṭuka (Psoralea corylifolia).
- 5. Rasāyana (Rejuvenative)
 - o Action: Promotes ojas, longevity, and overall vitality.
 - o **Examples**: Gudūcī (Tinospora cordifolia), Harītakī (Terminalia chebula), Guggulu (Commiphora mukul).
- 6. Vājīkaraņa (Aphrodisiac)

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- Action: Enhances reproductive tissues (śukra dhātu) and sexual vigor.
- o **Examples**: Nāgabala (Grewia hirsuta), Kapikacchu (Mucuna pruriens).

Extended Karma-Based Categories (Detailed Subclassifications)

1. Anulomana

- **Definition**: Breaks the bond of mala (waste) and expels downward, regulating bowel movements.
- Example: Harītakī (Terminalia chebula).

2. Srāmsana

- **Definition**: Loosens or liquefies mala.
- Example: Krtamālaka (a specific variety of amalaka or an herb known for mild laxative effect).

3. Bhedana

- Definition: Breaks compact mala (bound or unbound).
- Example: Kaţukī (Picrorhiza kurroa).

4. Rechana

- Definition: Completely liquefies mala (strong purgation).
- Example: Trivrt (Operculina turpethum).

5. Chedana

- Definition: "Uprooting" or "excising" doşas (especially kapha).
- Examples: Kṣāra (alkali preparations), Marica (Piper nigrum), Śilājatu (mineral pitch).

6. Grāhī

- **Definition**: Acts as dīpana & pācana but also absorbs fluids due to uṣṇa property.
- Examples: Śuṇṭhī (Zingiber officinale), Jīraka (Cuminum cyminum), Gaja-pippalī (Piper chaba).

7. Śukra-Related Actions

- Śuklakara (enhancing semen quality/color): Aśvagandhā, Muśalī, Śarkarā, Śatāvarī
- Śukra Pravartaka & Janaka: (promoting semen flow/production): e.g., Dugdha (milk), Māṣa (black gram), Bhallātaka phala majjā, Āmalaka
- Śukra Rechaka (expelling): e.g., Brhatī phala
- Śukra Stambhaka (astringent action on semen): e.g., Jātīphala (Myristica fragrans)
- Śukra Śoṣaka (drying semen): e.g., Harītakī
- Śukra Janaka: e.g., Jīvaka, Ŗşabhaka
- Śukra Śodhana: e.g., Kuṣṭha (Saussurea lappa), Uśīra (Vetiveria zizanioides)

8. Lekhana

- **Definition**: Scraping out doṣas or excessive dhātus.
- Examples: Kṣaudra (honey), Uṣṇa-jala (hot water), Vacā (Acorus calamus), Yava (barley).

9. Pramādhi

- Definition: Eliminates doşas from subtle channels (srotas), can also disturb the mind if misused.
- Examples: Marica (Piper nigrum), Vacā (Acorus calamus).

10. Abhişyandī

• **Definition**: Causes heaviness and stickiness, leading to obstruction.

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• Example: Dadhi (curd).

11. Sūksma

- **Definition**: Extremely subtle, penetrates minute channels.
- Examples: Saindhava (rock salt), Kşaudra (honey), Nimba taila (neem oil), Eranda taila (castor oil).

12. Vyāvāyī

- **Definition**: Spreads quickly throughout the body *before* complete digestion.
- Examples: Bhangā (Cannabis sativa), Ahiphena (Opium).

13. Vikāsī

- **Definition**: Loosens the joints or body tissues.
- Examples: Kramuka (Betel nut), Kodrava (Paspalum scrobiculatum).

14. Madakārī

- **Definition**: Intoxicating substances altering mind or senses.
- Examples: Madya (alcoholic beverages), Surā (fermented liquor).

15. Prāņahara

- Definition: Life-threatening if misused; often have sūkṣma, vyāvāyī, vikāsī properties.
- Example: Vişa (poisons)—various plant or mineral toxins.

Dravya in Health Maintenance

1. Preventive Use

- Rasāyana dravyas (e.g., Gudūcī, Harītakī) for overall vigor and immunity.
- o Mild dīpana-pācana dravyas (like cumin, coriander) in daily meals to maintain digestive health.

2. Seasonal Adaptation

 Incorporate or avoid certain karmas based on ritu (season). E.g., in hot seasons, use cooling or stambhana dravyas if needed; in cold windy seasons, prefer unctuous, warming substances.

3. Balanced Diet

• Utilizing a combination of tastes (rasa) and karmas ensures doṣas remain stable over time, preventing disease onset.

Dravya in Disease Management

1. Stage-Specific Intervention

- o In early disease (with āma), strong dīpana-pācana or mild bhedana may be necessary.
- o In chronic disease with tissue depletion, bṛṃhaṇa or rasāyana dravyas help rebuild.

2. Customized to Dosa

- Vāta disorders → warm, oily karmas (Anulomana, Vatanulomana).
- Pitta disorders → cooling, bitter dravyas (Śamana, Prāṇa rakṣa, etc.).
- Kapha disorders → pungent, hot karmas (Lekhana, Chodana).

3. Pañcakarma Protocols

- Virecana with purgatives (e.g., Trivrt) for pitta-based disorders,
- $\circ\,$ Vamana with emetics (e.g., Madana) for kapha-based disorders.

4. Poly-herbal Formulations

Combining multiple karmas ensures synergistic effects while mitigating adverse reactions. E.g., *Triphala* (Harītakī, Bibhītakī, Āmalakī) exerts lekhana, rasāyana, and mild anulomana simultaneously.

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Practical Considerations

1. Individualization

 A dravya's karma is tailored to each patient's prakṛti (constitution), vikṛti (imbalance), age, strength, and environmental factors.

2. Dosage and Anupāna

• The *medium* (e.g., honey, ghee, water) and *time* of administration can enhance or alter a dravya's karmic expression.

3. Safety and Contraindications

- $\circ \ \ \text{Potent karmas like strong bhedana or madak\bar{a}r\bar{\imath}\ require}\ \textbf{careful dosing}\ \text{and professional supervision}.$
- Viruddha (incompatible) combinations can cause new imbalances.

4. Integration with Other Therapies

 Dravyas often complement yoga, lifestyle modifications, mental well-being practices to achieve holistic healing.

Conclusion

In Ayurveda, each **dravya** is distinguished by its **innate karmas**—ranging from mild pacification (śamana) to intense purification (śodhana). By systematically classifying these karmas—*dīpana-pācana*, *anulomana*, *bhedana*, *rasāyana*, *vājīkaraṇa*, etc.—clinicians can **precisely target** doṣic imbalances, metabolic blocks, and tissue deficiencies. This **karma-based approach** ensures that **health-promoting** measures (for prevention) and **disease-alleviating** strategies (for treatment) remain rooted in the fundamental Ayurvedic principle: restoring harmony between the individual's internal environment and the external world.

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