

PREVENTIVE ASPECT OF NASAL DISORDERS – AN AYURVEDIC VIEW

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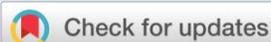
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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda gives special emphasis on the preventive aspect. In ancient texts, *Acharyas* have explained *Dincharya* (Daily Regimen), *Ratricharya* (Night Regimen), *Ritucharya* (Seasonal Regimen), *Sadvritta* (Ethical Regimen) etc. to follow to live a healthy disease-free life. Anyone is considered as *Swastha* (Healthy) who has *Prasanna indriya* means healthy normal functioning sense organs. The Nose is considered one important sense organ among the five. It works not only for olfaction and respiration but also as a drug portal. It is asked as the gateway to head as told by *Acharya* – “*Nasa hi Shiraso Dwaram*”. Rhinitis one common nasal disorder can have an effect on-ear, the sinuses, the lower respiratory tract, and other organs also. So, one should take care to prevent and promote nasal health care. In the present scenario, lifestyle has changed due to changes in the environment, daily routine habits, excessive work expectations, and luxurious lifestyles. Most of the people are taking unhealthy food in the form of junk food and spending maximum time in AC due to jobs. This has a direct effect on nasal mucosa ultimately leading to nasal diseases. For its prevention, *Aacharya* has described various procedures in the form of *Nasya* (Instillation of Nasal Drops) various *Yoga asanas*, *Neti pranayama*, wholesome & unwholesome diet, and routine.

Keywords: *Ghranendriya, Nasya, Pranayama, Swastvritta*

INTRODUCTION

The condition free from the disease is *Swastha* and the regimen followed to keep oneself healthy is *Swasthvrta*.¹ No creature in the universe is immortal, it is impossible to prevent death, but it is possible to prevent disease. So, one should try for that which is preventable². Ayurveda advises *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoidance of causative factors) as the first treatment principle. Regarding most nose disorders, environmental pollution is the main cause most of the nasal disorders. In some specific occupations, individuals have many adverse effects on nasal mucosa like working in a dry dusty area as a farmer or traffic police, or miner. Occupation cannot be left but someone should follow some regimens in daily routine to make Nose healthy.

JALA NETI - Pinch of salt is mixed in lukewarm water. It is taken in a *Neti* pot with a nozzle. The nozzle is introduced into one nostril, tilting the head to the opposite side. One should empty the water into the nostril. Automatically water comes out through the other nostril. It is very much beneficial for the eyes and in *Kapha* disorders of the nose as it washes out the dust particles etc adhered in the nasal mucosa.

Precaution – while performing this-

- One should breathe through the mouth, not through the nose during this period.
- After doing *Neti*, one should do *Kapala Bhati* 25-50 times to take out any remaining *kapha* or water³.

NASYA (Instillation of Nasal Drops) - It is a special therapy in which the medicine is administered through the nose, either in the form of Powder, Liquid, Oil, etc. It is an important therapy among *Panchakarma* (Five Purificatory Procedure) for the management of the diseases of E.N.T., Eye and Oro-Dental disease, and other Systemic disorders⁴. The drug administered through nostrils reaches *Srungataka marma* (Sira Marma) Then it is distributed in the *Murdha* (brain), *Siramukha* (opening of the vessels, etc.) of *Netra* (Eye), *Karna* (Ear), *Kantha* (Throat), etc. It scratches the morbid *Dosha* from the supraclavicular region and removes it completely. It works just like removing *Munjjia* Grass from its stem⁵. *Acharayas* have advised daily use of

Pratimarsha Nasya in a dose of 2 drops in each nostril with *Anu Taila* or simply *Mustard Oil* or *Go-ghrita*⁶. One who practices *Nasya* daily at the proper time will have many benefits as-

- Sight, smell, and hearing remain unimpaired.
- Clarified and greatly strengthened sense organs.
- Prevention from premature falling of hairs.
- Well-nourished vessels, joints, sinus, and tendons of his cranium.
- Highly beneficial for headache, facial paralysis, rhinitis, etc.
- Arrests premature aging.
- Prevention from a sudden invasion of any disease occurring in *Urdhwajatrugata Pradesh* (above the Clavicular region)⁷.

NASAL IRRIGATION (Nasal Lavage, Nasal Toilet, Nasal Douche)- It is a personal hygiene practice in which the nasal cavity is washed to flush out mucus & debris from the nose & sinuses, to enhance nasal breathing. Flushing of the nasal cavity can soothe inflamed tissue by removing irritants like allergens. Nasal irrigation can also refer to the use of saline nasal spray or nebulizers to moisten the mucous membranes. It gives many benefits as-

- Wash away the mucous crust, dirt, pollen, and other allergens from your nose.
- Increase the flow of mucous, allowing sinus passages to clear.
- Pull out fluid, shrinking swollen mucous membranes.
- Improve breathing, as swelling resolves.
- Prevents a sinus infection⁸.

DHOOMPANA (Medicinal Smoking) - *Dhoompana* is the inhalation of smoke or vapor. It is a part of *Dincharya*⁹. It is mentioned under *Nasya Karma*. It is indicated in *Basant Ritu* (Spring Season). Before this season the *Kapha* gets accumulated due to *Sheeta guna* (Cold Quality) of *Hemanta Ritu* (Pre-winter Season). The heat of the Sun in *Basant Ritu* liquifies the accumulated *Kapha* and gives rise to various diseases¹⁰. To prevent it, one should take *Dhoompana* this season as it eliminates the accumulated *Kapha Dosha*¹¹. It opens and enters the smallest channels, with *Ushna* (Hot) and

Tikshna (Quick) *Guna* (Property). It liquifies and eliminates the *Doshas* from their nearer routes. To perform this, the patient should sit straight, attentive, with his mouth open and inhale the smoke through each nostril alternatively, closing one nostril while inhaling through the other. Smoke should be inhaled through the nose first if *Dosha* located in the nose and head are moving from their sites. If they are not moving but adhering, inhalation should be done first through the mouth to make them move. Inhalation should be done first by the nose and later by mouth if *Dosha* is located in the throat¹². Proper intake of *Dhoompana* -

- Cures heaviness of head, pain in the eyes, ear, cough, obstruction of the throat, discharge from nose, ear & eyes, etc.
- Strengthens hair, skull bones, sense organs & voice.
- Prevents from *Vata- Kapha* disorders occurring above the shoulders¹³.

Precaution- The inhaled *Dhuma* from the nose or mouth should be let out only through the mouth. If it is let out through the nose, this contrary movement may destroy vision^{14,15}.

PRANAYAMA - *Pranayama* as the fourth limb of *Patanjali's ashtanga's of yoga*. It can be understood as a pause in the movement of breath. *Patanjali* describes *Pranayama* as a pause in inspiration or expiration. The four phases of *Pranayama* are-

- Retention after expiration (*Rechaka*), is called outer retention (*Bahya Kumbhakar*)
- Retention after inspiration (*Puraka*), called inner retention (*Abhyantara Kumbhakar*)
- Retention made at once
- Retention after many inhalations and exhalations.

The last two forms of retention are called *Kevala Kumbhakar*. Thus, the action of *Pranayama* consists of four phases:

1. Inspiration - *Puraka*
2. Inner retention- *Abhyantara Kumbhaka*
3. Expiration- *Rechaka*
4. Outer retention- *Bahya Kumbhaka*

Pranayama should be performed by closing alternate nostrils after sitting in *Padmasana*, *Sidhasana*, or any comfortable seated pose. Then the right palm is spread

out first. The index and middle fingers are turned down. The other two fingers and the thumb remain extended. Now the thumb and extended fingers are placed on the bridge of the nose, the thumb on the right side, and the extended fingers on the left. Then alternately extended fingers are used to close the right and left nostril for *Pranayama*¹⁶.

YOGASANAS

Yoga is mainly to achieve the psycho-spiritual goal of life or liberation, but it has not neglected the importance of maintaining health in the process of pursuing it¹⁷. *Asana* can be understood as which gives stability to the body and mind. *Yogasana* should aim at giving flexibility to the body¹⁸. Some *Yogasana* is specially indicated for maintenance of nasal health as explained below.

ANULOMA VILOMA- It is a specific type of controlled breathing in the practice of *yoga*. It is done in a meditation sitting pose by keeping the spine and neck straight and eyes closed. Then right nostril is closed with the right thumb and the air is inhaled through the left nostril slowly and deeply until the lungs are full. Thumb is released and the left nostril is closed with the ring finger. Air is exhaled slowly through the right nostril. The process is then reversed and repeated for 5 minutes. It provides many benefits as it-

- Lowers stress and improves cardiovascular function
- Improves lung function
- Promotes well-being¹⁹.

BHUVANGASANA (Cobra pose)- It is a reclining back bending asana in hath yoga. It is commonly performed in a cycle of *Asana* i.e. 7th pose of *Surya Namaskar*. To do this, lie down with your face downward touching the ground with your forehead. Let your palms touch the ground just near your shoulders. Raise your hand and neck and start inhaling. Go on raising the chest and abdomen to your navel. Give maximum curve to chest and abdomen. Stay in this position for a few minutes, then come back to the original position, exhale keep your left cheek on the ground and leave the body in a relaxed state. It helps in abundant blood flow. Glands of the neck and tonsils get influenced and the body gets youthful elasticity by performing this²⁰.

KAPALBHATI- It is one of the procedures for cleansing the nasal passages in the head²¹. One should sit comfortably with an erect spine for this. Then place the hands on the knees with palms open to the sky and take a deep breath in. During exhale, pull the navel back towards the spine and keep the right hand on the stomach to feel the abdominal muscles contract. As the navel and abdomen relax, the breath flows into the lungs automatically. 20 such breaths should be taken to complete the round. Relax with closed eyes and observe the sensations in the body. In this procedure, retention is not to be done. This enhances the capacity of the lungs and clears the *Nadis*²².

BHASTRIKA PRANAYAMA- It is characterized by quick expulsion of the breath producing a sound like a bellow²³. To perform this, take in a deep breath and breath out forcefully through the nose, without any strain. Immediately, breathe in with the same force. Inhale and exhale repeatedly, deeply, and thoroughly, using the diaphragmatic muscles with vigor. The abdomen moves out during inhalation, while the diaphragm descends. The converse happens while exhaling. The above movements should be slightly exaggerated. A strong nasal sound will accompany such breathing. The process should be rhythmic and controlled, maintaining the speed as per capacity. Do ten cycles to complete 1 round of *Bhastrika Pranayama*. It oxygenates the blood increasing the vitality of all the organs and tissues. It also gives strength to the entire body and calms the mind²⁴.

USTRASANA (Camel pose)- It is a deep backward bending pose. For this *Asana*

- Stand on your knees. Keep the thighs fully straight.

- Keep the knees and feet together. But if one feels more comfortable with maintaining a little distance between them, they may do so.
- Lean in the backward direction. Slowly move more backward. Reach the right heel with the right hand, and the left heel with the left hand. Avoid straining the body.
- Push the hips in the forward direction. The thighs should be kept vertical.
- Then bend the head and the spine as backward and as further as possible without straining.
- Relax the body and the muscles of the back.
- Support the body weight equally on the legs and arms.
- Keep the arms in such a way that they anchor the shoulders to maintain the back arch.
- Stay in the same position for as long as you find it comfortable.
- Then release the hands from the heels one by one and return to the starting position. Relax and take a deep breath.

It is beneficial for curing diseases related to the respiratory system such as Asthma etc. It also stimulates the functioning of the thyroid gland.

Precaution- All *Yogasana* and *Pranayama* procedures should be done on an empty stomach & in a cool, comfortable environment. Practice 3 times *Ustrasana* must be followed by a forward bending *Asana* such as *Paschimottanasana*²⁵.

PATHYA-APATHYA (Wholesome- Unwholesome)
26,27,28

Table 1: Pathya and Apathya for nose

PATHYA (Do's)		APATHYA (Don'ts)	
AAHAR (Diet)	VIHAR (Lifestyle)	AAHAR	VIHAR
<i>Katu</i> (Pungent)- <i>Amla</i> (Sour)- <i>Lavana</i> (Salty)- <i>Ushna- Snigdha</i> (unctous) – <i>Laghu</i> (Light) <i>bhojana</i> .	<i>Snehana</i> (Oleation) , <i>Swedana</i> (Mild Fomentation), <i>Nasya</i> etc.	<i>Ati-sheet</i> , <i>Ruksha</i> (Non-unctousness), heavy food.	<i>Snana</i> (Bath), <i>Krodha</i> (Anger) <i>Grief</i> , <i>Worries</i> , etc.
<i>Puranayavashali</i> (Old barley) <i>Kulatha</i> (<i>Oryza sativa</i>) <i>Mudga</i> (Horse gram), <i>Yusha Gramya jangala mamsa rasa</i> (Soup prepared from kidney	Frequently wash your hands.	<i>Nava Shali- anna</i> (New barley).	<i>Vatadi</i> <i>Ve-gadharana</i> (Suppressing the urge of

beans or meat obtained from wild/domestic animals).			feces-urine and flatus).
<i>Shigru</i> (Drumstick Plant), <i>Balmulakam</i> (Soft turnip), <i>Lashuna</i> (Garlic), <i>Dadhi</i> (Curd) <i>Varuni</i> & <i>Trikatu</i> .	Keep the nose moist with nasal saline sprays.	Intake of cold items - Water, Ice- cream, etc.	<i>Bhumishyaya</i> (Lying on the ground) Windy places etc.
Intake of plenty of water.	Maintain a healthy lifestyle with a <i>Daily regimen</i> and <i>Yoga</i> .	Freshly prepared wine.	Nasal irritants such as Pollution, Smoke, etc.

CONCLUSION

The nose is a very important first and foremost organ of respiration. It filters the air and traps the dust particle preventing the lungs or passing the dust particle to the stomach. It also warms and moistens the air preventing the lungs to dry out. The healthy nasal mucosa is important not only for the lungs but for overall health. So one should be aware of nasal health and should follow the Daily regimen prescribed by our ancient scholars.

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