



**ROLE OF AYURVEDIC CONCEPT OF AHARA AND ADJUVANT HERBAL THERAPY
IN THE MANAGEMENT OF IBS**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, as an integrative system of medicine, focuses on prevention and treatment of diseases utilizing its rationale principles. The basic theory of Ayurveda works towards the encouragement and sustenance of long and healthy life. This is fulfilled by following righteous living principles of Swasthviritta, balanced diet and wholesome lifestyle habits that contributed for longevity. While one part of Ayurveda is all about preventing diseases and living healthily, the other part specifically deals with the diagnosis and treatment of several diseases. In this way Ayurveda provides ways of managing several health issue including digestive problems like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). This disease is characterized by repeated bouts of abdominal pain, diarrhea, constipation and abdominal discomfort. The natural approaches of Ayurveda especially dietary and herbal regimen provides remarkable benefits in managing such types of conditions. This article explores role of Ayurvedic concept of *Ahara* and adjuvant herbal therapy in the management of IBS.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Ahara, IBS, Swasthviritta, Agni.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda as the oldest system of medicine defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease. All preventive and health-hygienic guidance in Ayurveda is contained within *Swasthavritta*, the science of everyday life. This includes *Acharya* and *Vihara*, which taken together support equilibrium and strength. For the ailing, Ayurveda dictates *Aaturavritta*, customized regimes and treatments for recovery. Apart from bodily routines, *Swasthavritta* also requires *Sadvritta*, a code of right behavior concerning personal, social, and spiritual conduct. In combining these components lifestyle, treatment and morality *Swasthavritta* provides a comprehensive guide to long-lasting wellness.^[1-4]

Irritable bowel syndrome persists as a significant clinical problem in current scenario, manifesting as a functional gastrointestinal disorder in a sizeable percentage of the population. It is characterized by recurring abdominal pain and changed stool frequency and consistency; it may be predominant with constipation or diarrhea. In

Ayurveda it corresponds to the similar condition of *Grahani Roga* caused by deranged *Jatharagni* and deposition of *Ama*, causing gastrointestinal flora derangement, reduced musculature and secretory output of GI and malabsorption. Imbalance of *Agni* and *Vata Dosha* disturbance are mainly involve as pathological factors in this condition. Dietary, lifestyle, mental and occupational factors play vital role towards the prevalence of this issue. Disease develops when *Doshas* get unbalanced or *Ama*, from undigested food build up as a result of impaired *Agni*. Treatment starts by purging *Ama* usually through a brief period of light diet and supportive treatments of herbal therapy to boost *Agni*. Contemporary medicine treats IBS with drugs and lifestyle modifications, complementary therapies like Ayurveda believe in the concept of *Swasthavritta* along with herbal remedies to relieve symptoms of IBS.^[4-6]

Role of Swasthavritta

Swasthavritta, ensure digestive wellness through the practice of healthy habits, dietetic principles and preventive measures. The core of this system lies in the

preservation of *Agni* and the elimination of *Ama*. Principles of *Swasthavritta* help to stimulate digestive power and relieve gastrointestinal upsets. Major factors of this habit are right dietetics (*Aharavidhi*) which includes consumption of *Ahara* according to the need and *Prakriti* of individual. The right timing of meal and avoidance of junk and process foods also helps to restore digestive health. *Swasthavritta* encourages concepts of *Dinacharya* and *Ritucharya*, emphasizing the need for a disciplined way of life with fixed time of sleep, exercise and seasonal adjustments to diet and habits in harmony with *Doshic* fluctuations. Proper hygiene habits, including oral hygiene and regular bathing are also part

of avoiding digestive upset and prevent diseases like IBS.^[5-7]

Herbs/Natural Drugs

Ayurvedic approaches alleviate IBS symptoms by reestablishing digestive equilibrium and balancing *Doshas*. Essential therapies consist of *Agnidipana*, which rekindles the digestive flame and cleanses the body's gastrointestinal tract. *Vatanulomana* therapy restores *Vata dosha* and *Manonukulata* approach used as soothing therapy that calms the mental and emotional irritants that exacerbate IBS. There are various herbs or natural drugs recommended for IBS as mentioned in **Table 1**.^[6-8]

Table 1: Herbs/Natural Drugs Suggested for IBS.

Herbs/ Natural Drugs	Properties	Benefits
<i>Aloe vera</i>	Antibacterial and anti-inflammatory	Calms gut lining, relieve diarrhea and reduces abdominal pain.
Ginger	Anti-inflammatory and Digestive stimulant.	Reduces intestinal inflammation and prevents acid reflux.
Fennel seeds	Carminative	Eases cramps and bloating
Licorice root	Colon cleanser, antimicrobial	Calms the colon, fights against the harmful microorganism of the digestive system
Peppermint	Smooth muscle relaxant	Restores gut motility, relieves cramps and bloating.

Role of Ahara

In Ayurveda, *Ahara* is considered as greatest medicine that provides nourishment and restore overall health by preventing disease. Intake of incompatible food in its processed form and irregular meal times damped the *Jatharagni*, causing the accumulation of *Ama* and the development of symptoms of IBS.

According to Ayurveda light and wholesome daily regimen that included easily digestible *Ahara* can provide relieves from the symptoms of IBS. Ginger and lemon both known to stimulate *Agni*, thus can be used in such types of conditions. Balanced dietary habits offer *Deepana* effect thus boost *Agni*, encouraging metabolic transformation by imparting *Pachana* effect and binding loose bowels by virtue of their *Stambhana* effect. Buttermilk (*Takra*) pacifies *Dosha*, offers lightening and digestive properties. *Ajmoda* is indicated to calm cramps, alleviate gas and modulate *Vata*. *Bilwadi* alleviate diarrhea, gastrocolic spasms and dyspepsia, etc. **Figure 1**, depicted properties of Ayurvedic drugs & *Ahara* which helps to combat against IBS.^[8-10]

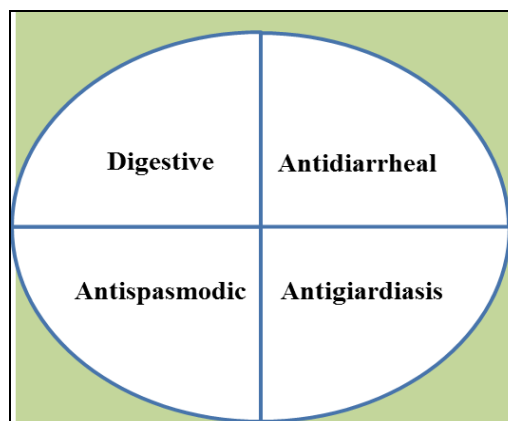


Figure 1: Properties of Ayurvedic drugs & Ahara which helps in relieving symptoms of IBS.

Pathya Ahara

- ✓ *Puran Shali, Yava, Godhuma, Mudga, Raktashali.*
- ✓ *Gau Dugdha and Aja Dugdha.*
- ✓ *Patola and Kushmanda.*
- ✓ *Dadima and Amalaki.*
- ✓ *Ghee and honey.*

CONCLUSION

A foundational principle of Ayurvedic therapy is the elimination of causative factors, as imbalances of diet and lifestyle upset the *Doshas* leading to the IBS. *Ama* along with vitiated *Vata & Pitta* leads symptoms of IBS. With the integration of specific dietary changes and proper herbal and therapeutic modalities, it is possible to directly break up the disease process. Ayurveda stresses

a holistic understanding of health, founded in balance and wellness rather than the mere lack of illness. *Swasthavritta* addresses everyday lifestyle, dietetic, and moral guidance to promote such balance. For diseases such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome therapy aims at restoring digestive fire (*Agni*), eliminating *Ama* and balancing *Doshas*. Herbal treatments, food regulation and lifestyle-based living are central factors in symptom reduction and overall digestive wellness.

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