



EYE CARE THROUGH AYURVEDA –REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Visual impairment can limit people's ability to perform everyday tasks and can affect their quality of life and ability to interact with world. In the past few decades, prevalence of lifestyle related diseases has reached alarming proportions. In this fast and advanced life we rarely pay attention to the health of the most precious organ "Eyes". *Ayurveda* is an integral and most ancient form of medical stream which is primarily aimed at prevention of disease & promotion of positive health. Its holistic approach towards positive life style creates its inevitable significance in the present scenario. *Ayurvedic* ophthalmology aims at individual and the community level protection of eyes. In this article an attempt has been made to explore the procedures for Ocular health by means of *Dincharya (Netra Prakshalan, Anjana, Nasya, Nidra)* healthy *Diet* and Eye exercise.

KEYWORDS: *Netra Prakshalan, Anjana, Nasya, Nidra.*

INTRODUCTION

Eyes are one of the most important organs in the body. All five elements play a role in maintaining eye health.^[1] Earth (*Prithvi*) governs the muscular part of the eye, fire (*Tejas*) rules the blood vessels, air (*Vayu*) governs the color, water (*Aap*) dominates the white area, and space (*Akasha*) controls the tear ducts and channels. The eye is also governed by *Alochaka Pitta*, a subdosha of Pitta which becomes less balanced as we age. That's why it's important to care for your eyes throughout life. In this fast and advanced life we rarely pay attention to the health of the most precious organ "Eyes". Pollution of air, water, and food, radiation and chemicals affect the body; work pressure, mental trauma, sleeplessness, etc. are affecting the mind. The effect of all these is creating a bad pressure on the sense organs. Eyes, being the most precious organs, is ultra-sensitive and it can't always withstand these pressures when it goes above the limits. So, Prevention is always better than cure.

Ayurveda is an integral and most ancient form of medical stream which is primarily aimed at prevention of disease & promotion of positive health. Its holistic approach towards positive life style creates its inevitable significance in the present scenario. Thorough eye care is described under "*Shalaky Tantra*^[2]" (one of the eight branches of *Ayurveda*). *Vedic* science offers many safe, effective and simple techniques for maintaining visual health. These primitive approaches can be easily practiced in everyday life to prevent lifestyle related eye

disorders. *Ayurvedic* perceptions regarding maintenance of eye health and prevention of eye disorders are explored in this article.

Ancient Ayurvedic treatises on care and nurturing of eyes. *Vedic* science offers many safe, effective and easy techniques for eye care. These primitive approaches can be easily practiced in everyday life to overcome various lifestyle related ocular disorders. *Ayurveda* medicine is a system of medicine with historical roots in the Indian subcontinent. *Ayurveda* means "the science of life". The aim of this system is to protect health and prolong life, to prevent illness and to eliminate diseases. *Ayurveda* provides guidance on lifestyle like eating habits, daily routine, exercises and *Yoga*. It will play major role in giving strength to eye.

Morning Eye Routine

1. Each morning upon waking fill your mouth with water (*Gandush*) and hold for a few seconds with your eyes closed. Spit it out and repeat 2-3 times.
2. Splash your eyes and face with cool or slightly warm water 10-15 times. Repeat again in the evening when you return from work or school.

Netra prakshalana: After getting up from bed in the morning, washing eyes with the *swaras* of *Amalaki* or decoction of *Lodhra*.

Anjana^[3]: Application of *Ayurvedic* formulations along the inner surface of the eyelids. It is best simple procedure to prevent eye diseases.

Abhayanga^[4]: Daily application of medicated oil on head especially *Murdha* region, is a preventive measure for eye disorders. It acts as *Drishtiprasadana*.

Sheetodak shira snana^[5]: Hot water for head wash may adversely affect hair and eyes. Thus, cold water should be used for head wash.

Nasya^[6]: Instillation of *Ayurvedic* medicines through the nasal route to nourish the organs above clavicle. A person who regularly practices *nasya* can never suffer from diminished vision or loss of vision.

Padabhayanga^[7]: Regular massage of feet with oil is indicated as *Drishtiprasadana*.

Padaprakshalana^[8]: Washing and cleaning of foot also acts as *Drishtiprasadana*.

Chatra dharana^[9]: Use of umbrella while going out has *Chakshushya* effect as it protects eyes from dust, sunshine and heat.

Netra-tarpana^[10]: It is a restorative *Ayurvedic* treatment that bathes the entire eye socket in a pool of lukewarm *ghrita*, this helps to nourish dry eyes, cleanse and soothe eyes. *Ghrita* cools the *Pitta* and lubricates *Vatadosha*. It is recommended for many ocular disorders. Moreover, it provides nourishment to ocular tissues.

Yoga Asanas for healthy Eyes^[11]: *Yogic* eye exercises, if done daily, are a gentle and effective way to prevent vision problems from developing. They are especially recommended for children, but adults can help prevent farsightedness from developing in middle age, and even people who wear glasses can prevent their vision from getting worse.

Trataka and eye exercise help to improve vision and prevent eye disorders. *Shirshasana* and *Suryanamaskara* are another important *Asanas*, which are proven to be very beneficial for eyes. These *Asanas* boost circulation to the blood vessels and capillaries, relax the eyes, and over a period of time, are reported to even improve vision.

Palming (for releasing stress from the eyes)

1. Rub both palms together quickly for 8-10 seconds. This friction creates a mild heat.
2. Close the eyes and gently place the left palm over the left eye and the right palm over the right eye for one minute. Do not press the eyeballs with the palms — just let them gently rest there. Breathe in and out slowly to release stress.
3. Repeat 2-3 times.

4. Other poses that strengthen the eyes include the *Bhujangasana* (snake pose), *Surya Namaskara* (sun salutes), and *Shavasana* (rest pose).

Role of Diet and Nutrition and Holistic Lifestyle in Preventive Ocular Primary Care
The main problem with which a person seeks the attention of an ophthalmologist is Blurring of vision. According to *Ayurveda* and other Vedic literatures, we can see an extensive reference of drugs and foods which are mentioned by *Acharyas* for the protection of vision and preventing blurring of vision in cases like diabetic retinopathy, ARMD, Computer vision syndrome, Glaucoma, or dry eyes. Preventing Vit A deficiency in child hood is very important for the perseverance of night vision which can be best done through the administration of *Pathya chakshushya aahara*.

❖ Choose Eye-Healthy Foods and Drinks

In general, follow your individual diet for your constitution and imbalances as recommended by *Ayurveda*.

Healthy Diet (*Hitakara Aahara*) - Proper food is an important factor in growth and development of human. The improper food or deficiency of nutrition will lead to several eye diseases. Raisins- Antioxidant, protect eyes from a weakening vision.

Pomegranate- Antioxidant, anti inflammatory, anti bacterial, anti fungal properties.

Mudga (*Phaseolus radiates*, Linn.)- Antioxidant, source of vitamin A, alleviates *kapha*, *Pitta* and blood.

Shatavari (*Asparagus racemosus*, Willd.) Balances *Vata* and *Pitta dosha*, anti ageing property, improve vision.

Ghee- Balances *Tridosha*, acts as good *Rasayan*, rich in antioxidant, improve strength of eye. *Honey*- Antioxidant, anti inflammatory, anti bacterial, it protect eyes from macular degeneration.

Vit A-Increase dietary intake of Vitamin A rich food. Vitamin A useful for scotopic vision means dim light vision and colour vision. Vitamin A play major role in prevention of age related macular degeneration, stargardt disease. Vitamin A with lutein and zeaxanthin prolong vision in retinitis pigmentosa.

Vegetable sources- Dark green leafy vegetables, spinach, carrot tomato, pumpkin etc.

Animal sources- Liver, meat, cod and shark liver oil, egg yolk etc. Fortification of dietary items like milk, sugar, tea, cereal grains etc.

CONCLUSION

Various lifestyle exposure are found relate closely to eye diseases. The prevention modalities advocated in

Ayurveda such as *Dincharya- Gandush, Abhyang, Netra prakshalan, Anjana, Padabhayanga Padaprakshalana, Chatra dharana, Netra-tarpana and Hitkara Ahara* can help considerably in reducing the impact of Ocular diseases. And thus leading to Healthy Eyes.

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