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Management of Haemorrhoids (*Arsha*) with Yogic Life Style

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ABSTRACT

'*Arsha*' (haemorrhoids) is an ailment that affects all economical groups of population. Though the disease is within the limits of management, it has its own complications like severe haemorrhage, inflammation and thrombosis, by which a patient gets severe pain and is unable to continue his routine work. Haemorrhoids are inflamed and swollen veins around the anus and lower part of rectum. They usually occur as a result of altered dietary pattern, altered life style, genetics, and pregnancy. One of the most common ailments of the rectum, affecting as much as half the population by the age group of 50. Suffering from haemorrhoids is not only painful but embarrassing as well. They may be classified as either internal or external. Many not only want to know how to heal haemorrhoids but how to heal them fast and naturally. The authors review the role of Ayurveda in the management of haemorrhoids (*Arshas*). It has been proved by scientific studies that botanicals improve microcirculation, capillary flow and to strength of the surrounding connective tissues of anus and lower rectum. Purpose of this article is to create the awareness regarding modification of life style for the prevention of *Arshas* / piles by regular practise of *Yogic Asanas*, following strict *Pathya Ahara* and *Viharas* according to *Ayurveda*.

Key words: *Arsha, Haemorrhoids, Yogasanas, Yogic Lifestyle, Ksharasutra, Piles.*

INTRODUCTION

"*Arsha*" is one of the lifestyle disease which is increasing at an alarming rate in our society but everyone overlook it due to busy schedule, western lifestyle, modern civilization. The growing tendency to intake artificial foods, increase mental tension, lack of rest and careless attitude towards responding to natural urge such as suppression of defecation and

urination also intensify the process of disease.^[1]

In Ayurveda *Acharya Susruta* (the father of ancient surgery) mentions this disease under the heading of *Mahagadas*.^[2] The etymology of the term "*Arsha*" is "*Arivat*", i.e. like an enemy. "*Srnathi*" gives trouble, i.e. just as an enemy it torments a person. Sprouts of muscles give trouble by obstructing the anal canal.^[3]

NIDANA OF ARSHA (AETIOLOGY)

Aharaja Nidana: Dietic indulgence like incompatible diet, excessive or less intake, irregular intake and lacks of fibre etc., which will interfere with digestive power leading to poor digestion and constipation.^[4] Dietic indulgence like consumption of de-composed and incompatible substances (*Jirnanna, Virudhahara*)^[5] that will also lead to *Vibandha*. Excessive less irregular intake of food i.e. (*Atyashana, Pramitasana* and *Adhyasana* in Ayurveda)^[6] which will interfere with digestive power (enzyme secretion) leading to poor digestion and constipation. Eating meat of cow, goat, pork and fish,^[7] it also suppress the normal dietic

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power i.e. cause *Mandagni* (hypo function of metabolic and digestive enzyme)^[8] contribute the *Nidana* of *Arsha Roga*.

Viharaja Nidana: Procedures that would vitiate *Vata Dosha* e.g. excessive sexual indulgence (*Ati Vyavaya*), suppression of natural urges (*Vega Dharana*) etc.

Sexual indulge (*Ati Vyavaya*): Sexual indulge means unnatural sex which includes sodomy, which causes *Kshata* in anal canal and leads to *Arsha Roga*.

Preventing natural urge (*Vegavarodha*): This leads to *Mandagni* and vitiation of *Apana Vayu* resulting in stasis of faecal matter in *Guda* causes development of pathological changes in *Guda Vali* and finally leads to *Arsha*.^[9]

Lack of physical exercise and sleep (*Avyayam, Divaswapna*): Day time sleep, lack of physical exercise and lack of sleep, these affect the rest of mind in the form of sleep at night and such people are most prone to get constipated.^[10]

Mental tension: Conditions of mental tension affect the digestion.

Pressure and irritation in anal canal: Defective sitting, sitting on haunches, soft place or uneven, hard and irregular pressure, riding on vehicles for long duration, excessive travelling, excessive intake of alcohol and continuous straining during defecation. It causes increase in intra-rectal pressure and it certainly aggravates and possibly precipitates *Arsha Roga*.^[11]

Agantuja Factor: Irregular and improper use of *Basthi Nethra*, repeated deliveries, abnormal deliveries play an important role in causing *Kshata* to the anal canal as in case of women. Later this injury repeatedly irritated with the contact of soiled clothes, undigested food stuff, grass, stones, small herbs causes friction and finally results in *Arsha Roga*.^[12]

Piles are abnormally enlarged and dilated blood vessels (mainly veins), balloon kind of swelling in the veins around the back passage or anus. Piles are also known as "haemorrhoids". It occurs in both men and women most often between the ages of 20 and 50. Piles is a stubborn disease. Dietary disorders and

intake of more spicy food is its root cause. Symptoms of this disease aggravate in absence of physical work or exercise. Improper cleansing of bowels and putting extra pressure during evacuation creates a strain over the sphincter muscles situated therein. The undue pressure causes the accumulated toxic blood ooze out.

Yogic life style for *Arsha*

Yoga can be very beneficial in relieving bowel troubles. As a first line of defence, it might be useful to focus *Asana* on the mid-section of body. Piles may cause back pain in several individuals because of its critical position in the body. *Yogasana* can help greatly in the management of piles and the back pain caused because of it.

The stretch and strain provided as a part of *Yoga* helps to regulate the body and provide freedom from the acute pain caused in the body. Also adding some of the elements of a yogic lifestyle may help in clearing bowel difficulties. One of the key elements of the yogic lifestyle is strictly following *Yoga* by *Asana, Pathya Ahara* and *Vihara*.

Management of *Arshas* (Fourfold management)^[13]

1. *Bheshaja Chikitsa*
2. *Kshara Karma*
3. *Agni Karma*
4. *Shastra Karma*

The natural evolution of haemorrhoids is benign it tends to get worse over time, and it should be treated as soon as it occurs.^[14] The best treatment is always prevention.^[15] Despite thousands of years and millions of patients with pain, discomfort and perceived embarrassment of haemorrhoids, exact natural cause of haemorrhoids is yet not clear.

DISCUSSION

Various *Asana* can be practised in treating piles and a few which have guaranteed results like *Sarvangasana* (shoulder stand), *Tadasana* (mountain pose), *Surya Namaskar* (sun salutation) and a few quite challenging poses like *Shirshasana* (head stand). *Ushtrasana*

(camel phose), *Naukasana* (boat phose), *Ardhakati Chakrasana* (half moon phose), *Chakrasana* (wheel phose), *Parvathasna* (mountain phose), *Padhahasthasana*, *Paschimottanasana*, *Vajrasana* (diamond phose), *Mayurasana*, *Pavanamuktha Asana* (wind removing), *Halasana* (plough phose), *Padhmasana* (lotus phose), *Matsya Asana* (fish phose), *Ashwini Mudra*. *Yogic Kriya* like *Jalaneti* and *Vamanadhouti* and *Asana* such as *Viparita Karani*, *Halasana*, *Gomukhasana* are also useful.^[16]

Tadasana: "Taala" means "palm tree" in Sanskrit. In this posture, the body is held upright like the trunk of a palm tree. Hence the name. By practicing this *Asana*, the body becomes well-stretched, well-proportioned. It expands the ribcage and increases the capacity of the lungs such that improves oxygenated blood suply. It firms up the respiratory muscles, the muscles of neck, lower back, abdomen and pelvis hence improves blood circulation to all over the body.

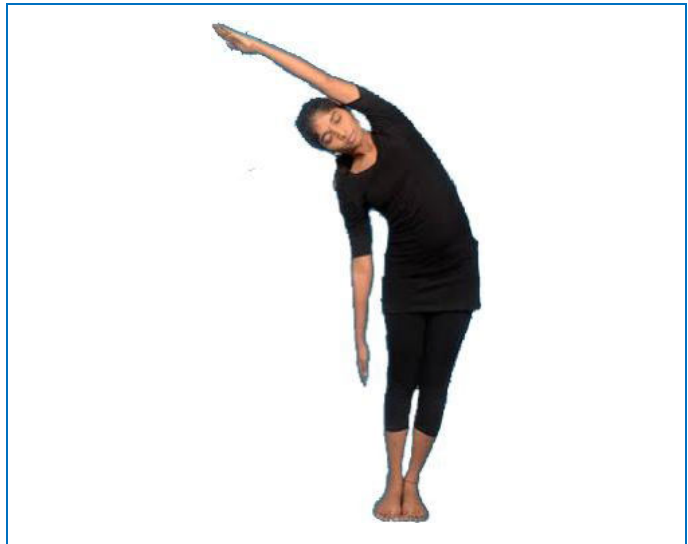


Fig. 2: *Ardha Kati Chakrasana*

Sarvangasana (Shoulder stand pose): The Shoulder Stand stimulates and rejuvenates entire body. In this exercise, we can build up both power in back and we can relax tension in well-known stressed areas like the neck and the lower back. This *Asana* is very useful in treating piles,^[18] The muscles of the lower back get stronger, the chest and shoulders can move more freely and the back gets straighter. This *Asana* is very good for the thyroid gland. This *Asana* improves the reproductive organs in both men and women. It also helps in relieving bronchitis, dyspepsia, and varicose veins and increases digestive capacity. It stimulates the thyroid and Para-thyroid glands and influences the brain, heart and lungs, and improves blood circulation. *Sarvangasana* is especially beneficial as it drains stagnant blood from the anus.



Fig. 1: *Tadasana*

Ardha Kati Chakrasana (Half Moon Pose): In this posture semicircle is formed at the waist by lateral bending. Enhances flexibility and digestive power.^[17] Hence is helpful to remove any digestive difficulties which are reasons for causing piles.

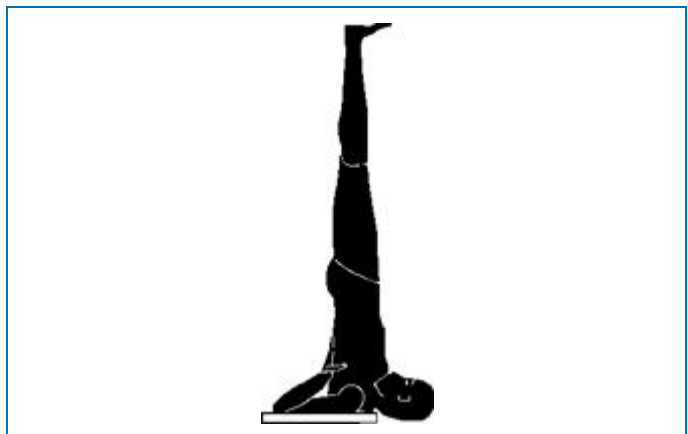


Fig. 3: *Sarvangasna*

Ustrasana (Camel pose): By practising this *Asana* one can feel the stretch in the spinal cord, neck, abdomen, and on the shoulders. This *Asana* is also beneficial in people suffer from back ache,^[19] also focuses on *Vishudhi* and *Svadhishthan Chakra*.



Fig. 4: Ustrasana

Paschimottanasana: The literal translation of *Paschimottanasana* is intense stretch-of-the-waist. *Paschimottanasana* (Seated Forward Bend) is a main stay of an *Asana* practice. The pose stretches the spine, hamstring muscle and shoulders, encourages the free flow of the breath and stimulates the liver and kidneys. As a deep forward bend, *Paschimottanasana* encourages relaxation, calms anxiety and teaches us to work with the breath; the soft exhaling breath should be used to ease gently into the pose. It also helpful in relieving constipation, flatulence and diabetes.^[20]



Fig. 5: Paschimottanasana

Vajrasana: Those who sit in this *Asana* have a quite steady and firm pose. They cannot be easily shaken. The knees are rendered very hard. *Merudanda* becomes firm and strong. This *Asana* resembles more or less the *Namaz* pose (prayer). It is a good meditative pose for those who are suffering from severe low back problems^[21] and sciatica which are most common in *Arshas*.



Fig. 6: Vajrasana

Mayurasana: In Sanskrit *Mayur* is known as Peacock. Therefore in this *Asana* the whole of the body is held like a stick on both of the elbows assuming the shape of a peacock during this *Asana* so it is known as *Mayurasana*. In this *Asana* entire body weight is concentrated on abdomen such that abdominal organs get stimulated and get relieved from many abdominal disorders.



Fig. 7: Mayurasana

Pavanmuktasana: *Pavana Muktasana* strengthens the abdominal muscles and liver, spleen, pancreas and stomach. It releases excess gas from the abdomen. Persons suffering from constipation must do this after drinking lukewarm water (limited quantity) for proper evacuation of bowels in the morning. This is the best *Asana* to expel gas by compression of the abdomen. This *Asana* is particularly useful for removing Constipation and flatulence^[22] which are the major causes of the *Arshas*.



Fig. 8: Pavana Mukthasana

Halasana: Halasana is a yogic exercise of more or less same variety as *Sirsasana* and *Sarvangasana*. The stretching movement gives an additional benefit in making us flexible and strengthen our spine and back muscles which relieves back ache because of arshas. It is helpful in curing indigestion, dyspepsia, various abdominal ailments like constipation²³ and acid reflux which is very common and very irritating disorders and cant let us to perform our work normally.



Fig. 9: Halasana

Padha Hastasana: It benefits in strengthening abdominal organs, it eliminates possibilities of bloating of abdomen (tones up all abdominal organs), constipation, indigestion and other gastric problems.^[24] Which are the major reasons for causing piles, It make spine more flexible and straight, thus this *Asana* removes any spinal ailments (low back ache) caused because of piles, It burns extra fat from abdomen region such that helpful in avoiding any digestive difficulties causing piles.

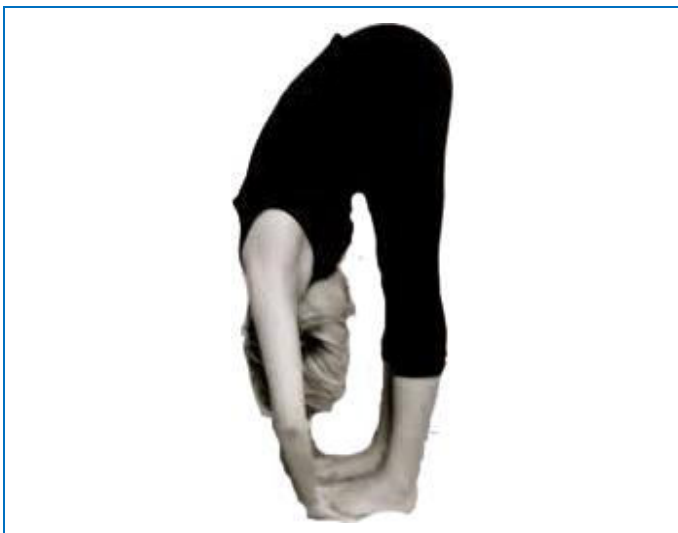


Fig. 10: Padha Hasthasana

Padmasana (Lotus Pose): is an important meditative *Asana*, since the blood is made to flow more towards pelvic region, coccygeal and sacral region, so that all nerves will gets toned up, Enhance blood circulation in lumbar and abdominal region. Such that it is helpful in healing piles.

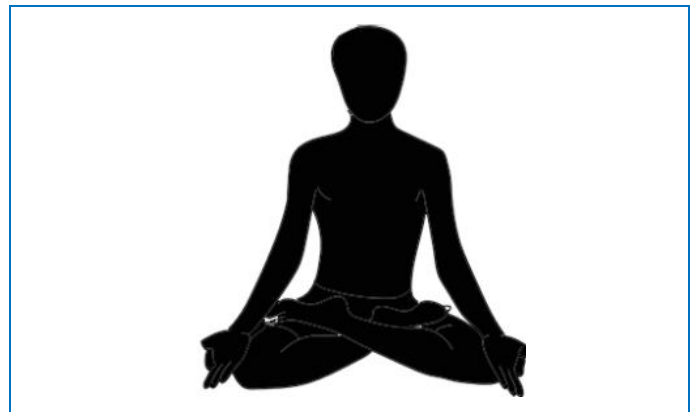


Fig. 11: Padhmasana

Mudra: Among all *Mudras*, *Ashwini Mudra* (contraction and relaxation of anal sphincter / muscles for 5-10 minutes, at least 6-10 times per day) is considered to be most beneficial in prevention and cure of *Arshas*.

Apathya in Arsha^[25]

Ahara: *Guru, Vishtambhi Ahara, Vidahi Dravyas* like Chilies, *Katu Pradhana Ahara* Spices, food stuffs made of rice, fried food, *Maida* product, excessive intake of *Taila* (oils), *Adhika Mamsa Sevana, Adhika Dadhi Sevana*, etc.

Vihara: *Avyayama, Diva Swapna*, Constant sitting on hard objects, Excessive riding, straining during defecation etc.

Pathya in Arsha^[26]

Ahara: *Ksheera, Takra (Mathitha), Godhuma, Go Gritha, Shaaka Varga* etc.

Vihara: Strictly following *Pathya, Vyayama, Samyak Nidra*, etc.

Preventing Hemorrhoids^[27]

If an individual's stools are always soft, the chance of developing haemorrhoids is greatly reduced. Risk of haemorrhoids can be reduced in the following ways:

- **Nutrition** - eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, as well as whole grains, means stools will nearly always be soft. Similarly, drinking plenty of fluids helps keep stools soft (this does not include alcohol). Fibre supplements also ease constipation.
- **Straining** - when using the toilet, try not to strain, this creates pressure in the veins in the lower rectum. Hence evacuation of bowel when there is urge is important, early in voiding (irregular bowel habits) makes the stool more dry in nature.
- **Physical Activity** - sitting or standing still for long periods puts pressure on the veins.
- **Maintaining Body Weight** - Being overweight significantly raise a person's risk of having haemorrhoids, hence always try to maintain body weight in control.

CONCLUSION

As *Arsha* is a problem related to lifestyle, age, occupation and dietary factors, It is a very terrible condition, patient is afraid of defecation because of pain with bleeding per rectum. Moreover, patient becomes very anxious after observing pan full of blood. Thus, *Ayurveda and Yoga* definitely has immense potential to manage all stages of *Arsha* successfully without any complications. Hence Piles can be successfully managed by *Nidana Parivarjana* (avoiding causative factors), Regular practise of *Yoga* and *Pranayama*, Strictly following *Pathya* and Avoiding *Apathya*.

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