



ORAL HEALTH CARE THROUGH AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT Oral cavity is considered as one of important organ among precious supraclavicular organs. Its importance is very much due to its two important functions, one is eating and other one is speaking. Proper eating keeps healthy, energetic and providing strength to fight off sickness. Speaking allow us to communicate with others making us socially active. The ability to progress in life would be nearly impossible without both of these functions. To keep these proper, the oral cavity should be healthy. Oral health is a key indicator of overall general health, well-being and quality of life. Poor oral health can also lead to a slew of systemic problems later in life. It is reported, that diabetes mellitus is linked with the development and progression of periodontitis. As lack of oral care awareness and unhealthy food habits due to busy life, the prevalence of oral diseases is going on increase irrespective of age. Common among them are dental caries, periodontal diseases and even oral cancer. Most of the oral diseases are preventable. The progression of these diseases can also be arrested with change in diet and appropriate oral hygiene. Regarding oral health maintenance, Ayurveda recommends proper aahar vihar, some daily use procedures like dantdhavan, jihvanirlekhana, pratisaran, gandoosha and use of some single drugs decoction as mouth rinse. One can keep healthy oral cavity by following all these procedures.

KEYWORDS : Oral health, Pratisaran, Dantdhavan, Gandusha, Aahar.**INTRODUCTION -**

Oral cavity diseases and dentistry are included in Shalakyta Tantra in Ashtanga Ayurveda. Dinacharya is considered as an important part for the cleanliness of oral cavity. All Acharayas have mentioned specific procedures and diet regimens to keep oral cavity healthy and disease free.

**Causes of oral ailments-
Improper intake of diet-**

The excessive use of Madhura, amla and lavana rasa, matsya masha, dadhi (curd), kshira, ikshu, ati-sheeta ambu (very cold water) sewan' can lead to various mukhgata rogas as all these can aggravate kapha.

Increase intake of sugar rich diet-

When sugar is consumed in form of sweets or sticky candies, it interacts with the bacteria within the plaque to produce acid. This acid is responsible for tooth decay, creating holes or cavities in teeth. Tooth decay can lead to tooth abscesses. Children are affected more with dental caries.

Lack of oral hygiene:

Dantdhavan dwesh² i.e., lack of oral hygiene is the primary risk factor. It is an important factor in highly susceptible individual. It leads to growth of microorganisms in oral cavity causing plaque, tartar deposition etc.

Improper tooth brushing-

It can lead to trauma to oral cavity³ and causing inflammation in tissue.

Consumption of alcohol:

Alcoholics are at high risk of developing dental caries, gingival disease and may suffer from oropharyngeal cancer. People addicted to alcohol are at increased risk of developing dental erosion. The alcohol acidification dissolves surface enamel and makes teeth surface more vulnerable to mechanical damage due to tooth brushing, teeth clenching, etc.

Nutritional deficiency⁴:

The nutrients that have been specifically associated with periodontal tissues are vitamin A, B complex, C and D, calcium and phosphate. So periodontal diseases are common in areas where protein calorie malnutrition and vitamin A deficiency is common.

Increase use of tobacco⁵:

Tobacco and cigarettes are one of the biggest risk factors for gum disease, chronic bad breath, stained or loose teeth, increased build-up of plaque and tartar on teeth, increased risk of leucoplakia and also for

more serious problem, such as oral cancer.

Drug causing xerostomia⁶:

Many drugs including diuretics, beta blockers, antidepressants antihistamines etc. cause xerostomia due to decrease production of saliva. Lack of saliva will make the oral cavity more prone to infection and disease due to marked changes in oral microbial flora.

Systemic diseases:

certain systemic diseases like diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis, endocrinal dysfunction disorders can cause some oral ailments.

Other factors-

Pan chewing, excessive intake of tea and coffee can also affect the oral health.

**Oral hygiene through Ayurveda
Dantapavan (Use of Datun)-**

It means cleaning the teeth by means of brushing. It should be done by kurchaka which is a soft tooth brush made from medicated plants. Common indicated stems for brushing purpose are Karanja, Arka, Khadira, Amra, Arjuna, Karvira⁷ etc. It removes the food particles and prevent the bacterial growth and pocket formation in teeth. It keeps the oral cavity healthy by cleaning and increase the taste⁸. So, it is essential to clean the teeth by datun in the morning after getting up, after lunch, and dinner or after eating anything⁹.

Jihvanirlekhana-

It is also a part of cleaning of oral cavity. It is cleaning of tongue. A thin plate of gold, silver, copper, or leaf or a thin wooden plate may be used for scrapping of tongue. It should be soft smooth with rounded edges. It helps to get rid of waste products of food and to reduce foul smell of mouth¹⁰. It also improves taste sensation.

Gandoosh & Kaval-

Both are variety of gargling. Gandoosh is a procedure to hold medicine in liquid form in mouth. It should be held until mouth is filled with kapha and tears and nasal watery discharge starts. But in kaval the medicine in liquid form can move within mouth. It helps to remove impacted food particles, heal the ulcer and gives nutrition to gingival, periodontal tissue, and oral mucosa. The use of different liquids like honey, til taila, ghee, milk, cow urine, luke warm water, or medicated decoction according to dosha is indicated for both procedures.^{11,12}

Pratisaran-

Great emphasis has been given to pratisaran in the management of mukhgata rogas. The medicine in form of kalka, rasakriya, coarse powder or powder applied on teeth, tongue, and buccal cavity¹³. It can

be done either by rubbing the medicine in form of powder or by applying in form of paste. This procedure gives mukhshuddhi, samyak lalasarava, samyak rasa gyana. Drugs like trijata, trikatu, taila, sanidhav¹⁴, madhu, lodhra, musta can be used. Commonly used powder for pratisarn is dashansanskar chooran.

Nasya-

Nose is the gateway of urdwajatrugata organs. So nasya is also considered as useful treatment modality for mukhgata rogas¹⁵. In this procedure the medicine is administered through nose. Pratimarsha nasya of anu taila after toothbrush makes the teeth strong.¹⁶

Mukh prakshalan¹⁷-

Washing of mouth with decoction of amla or with cold water should be done daily. It cures dryness of mouth and disease produced by rakta and pitta.

Medicated dhoompana-

In this procedure the smoke of medicine is inhaled via mouth. It alleviates the kapha and makes the mouth clean. It cures the obstruction of throat, weakness of teeth, toothache, lockjaw, excessive salivation etc.¹⁸

Danta Dhauti- It is advised as¹⁹

- Dantamula Dhauti - Rub the teeth with catechu powder or pure earth till the dental impurities are removed. It should be done daily in the morning by the Yogins in order to preserve the teeth longer.
- Jihva sodhana- Index finger, middle finger, and ring finger are joined together and used to clean the root of tongue. Tongue should be rubbed till kapha is removed. Tongue is washed and rubbed with butter and milk again and again.

Tambool sevan-

Keep in mouth the fruits of jati katuka, puga, and lavanga; kakola auspicious leaves of betel, exudate of camphor, and fruits of smaller cardamum. It will keep the mouth clear, relish and fragrance in mouth.²⁰

Nidana parivarjana²¹-

The etiological factors for oral cavity disorders as ati-sheeta, ati-snigdha, ati ushana ahara, non-vegetarian diet should be avoided.

Proper diet intake- One should take

- Fibre rich fruits and vegetables keep the teeth and gums clean (as said by American Dental Association)
- Cheese, milk, plain yoghurt, and other dietary products
- Sugarless chewing gums
- Foods with fluoride

Pathya Apathya-

Pathya	Apathya
Drink more water	Intake of sticky starchy, sweet foods that can stuck in mouth
Limit between meals and snacks	Carbonated soft drinks
Eat sugary foods with meals only	Use of tobacco, alcohol smoking
Intake of sugar less chewing gums.	Substance that dries out the mouth
Brushing teeth twice daily	Day long sipping of sugar containing drinks
Floss the teeth once a day	Sharing of toothbrush
Recognize symptoms of oral disease early	Opening of bottles with teeth.

CONCLUSION-

It is essential to take care of oral cavity by maintaining good oral hygiene. Ayurveda full fill this aims by describing dincharya ritucharya, dietic regimens and swastvritta practices. So, there is a need to broaden the scope of this speciality in Ayurveda and to make it more practical.

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