



Review Article

## A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF AAHAR AND VIHAR IN POST COVID-19 COMPLICATION

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### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, a traditional healthcare system, emphasizes the importance of food and lifestyle in maintaining health and preventing diseases. Classics emphasize "Tryaupstambh" (Aahar, Nidra, Brahmacharya) as crucial factors for daily life, while the Charaka Samhita mentions "Sadvritta" as a code of good conduct for mental and social wellbeing and "Swasthavritta" for maintaining health and personal hygiene. Post- COVID-19 complications include cardiac, pulmonary, systemic, neuropsychiatric, tinnitus, acute kidney damage, renal failure, and thrombotic problems. Aahar or lifestyle is the ultimate medicine for health and prosperity. To promote mental health and prevent illness, living conditions and environments supporting healthy lifestyles are necessary. Regular Yoga and diet can help improve health and reduce the risk of complications. Ayurveda recommends immune-modulator regimes such as a healthy lifestyle, seasonal purification, and daily dietary and behavioural regimens. In this article, an attempt has been made to analyse the various measures and concepts of Aahar and Vihar described in a dispersed manner in different Samhitas will be helpful to manage the post Covid-19 complications and also for speedy recovery without any further complication of disease.

### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the root of all medical studies, highlights the importance of daily and seasonal routines in maintaining health and enjoyment. In today's frantic world, people often don't have time for health and lifestyle, which leads to unbalanced nutrition and lavish living. Ayurvedic regulations help to maintain Dosh balance, which can help prevent illness. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the medical system, leading to severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS-CoV-2) and widespread mortality. Symptoms include fever, coughing, exhaustion, difficulty breathing, and loss of taste and smell. Most individuals are asymptomatic, while a small percentage may develop life-threatening or fatal ARDS.

Post COVID-19 syndrome includes cardiac, pulmonary, systemic, and neuropsychiatric symptoms. These symptoms include myocarditis, arrhythmia, ischemia, bacterial pneumonia, exhaustion, headaches, body aches, and chest pain. Acute Post COVID syndrome lasts for more than three weeks after the original infection, whereas chronic Post COVID-19 syndrome lasts for more than three weeks after the main infection.<sup>[1,2]</sup>

As new ailments emerge, such as COVID-19, the emphasis has shifted away from diet and lifestyle to holistic inclusion. Understanding the importance of Aahar and Vihar allows the world to better grasp the challenges and benefits of Ayurveda in disease management and achieving good health.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To study the concept of Aahar in Ayurveda.
- To study the concept of Vihar in Ayurveda.
- To study the Ayurvedic prospective of COVID-19 and post COVID-19 and its complications (Upadrava).
- To study the post COVID-19 complications.

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- To study the role of *Aahar* and *Vihar* in post COVID-19 complications.

## MATERIALS

In light of the instructions given by the CCIM/ Government of India for preventing COVID panic, this study was started in 2021.

- The study of Ayurvedic principles related to *Aahar* and *Vihar* described in the *Bruhatriyi* and *Laghutrayi* of *Aahar* and *Vihar*.
- Study of COVID-19 and its complications related to Ayurvedic prospective.
- Study of post COVID-19 complications from the modern science.
- Study of research articles on similar topics in Ayurveda.

## Aahar

*Aahar* promotes basic dietary standards for health maintenance including appropriate foods, incompatible meal combinations, cooking methods, storage, dining environment, hygiene, and etiquette. *Aahar* is the best of all medicines and is considered one among the three sub-pillars of Ayurveda (*Trayo-Upasthamba*)<sup>[3]</sup>. Ayurveda has laid down the concepts of dietetics such as -

- *Ashta Aahar Vidhi visheshaayatan*<sup>[4]</sup> (eight factors of dietetics)
- *Aahar Vidhi Vidhan*<sup>[5]</sup> (dietary guidelines)
- *Viruddha Aahar*<sup>[6]</sup> (incompatible diet)
- *Rituanusaara Aahar*<sup>[7]</sup> (seasonal dietetics)
- *Hitakara* and *Ahitakara Aahar*
- *Nitya sevaniya dravya*<sup>[8]</sup> (regularly consumable food items)
- *Nitya asevaniya dravya* (regularly non-consumable food items)
- *Bhojana Krama* (food sequence) and sequence of consuming food as per *Rasas* (tastes).

*Acharya Kashyapa* said that *Aahar* is *Mahabhaisajya*<sup>[9]</sup>. He also mentions that health is dependent on food<sup>[10]</sup>. These *Nitya sevaniya* and *Aahar dravya* are those which can be taken regularly in healthy condition for maintenance of health because of their specific properties.

During COVID-19, it appears that the new struggle for individuals is self-isolation in order to keep their health and combat the pandemic by building their immunity. *Agnideepak*, *Laghu Aahar* and nutritious foods should be consumed to enhance immunity. A well-planned diet can help an individual's physical and mental health.

## Vihar

*Vihar*, the second pillar of Ayurveda, is crucial in combating lifestyle-related diseases like diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of practicing a healthy *Vihar* such as *Dinacharya*<sup>[11]</sup>, *Ritucharya*<sup>[12]</sup> and *Sadvritta*<sup>[13]</sup>, *Aachar Rasayana*<sup>[14]</sup> to maintain and improve physical, mental and social health. This leads to improved quality of life, symptomatic improvement and aids in illness prevention and management.

- *Dinacharya*- Ayurveda's *Dinacharya* regime includes 24-hour activities for physical and mental health, beginning with *Bramhamuhurtya*, followed by *Malotsarga*, *Dantadhawana*, worship of gods and elders, *Anjana*, *Nasya*, *Gandusha*, *Tambulla*, *Abhyanga*, *Vyayama*, *Udwartana*, *Snana*, *Bhojana*, and *Sadvritta*. *Abhyanga* is beneficial to one's health by increasing skin blood flow, assisting with lactate elimination, and recovering from muscle weariness. *Vega dharana*, which has been related to disease, because it slows gastric emptying and raises blood pressure.
- *Ritucharya* - Seasonal regimens are described by *Ritucharya* as food and lifestyle adaptations in order *Agni*, *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala* to be balanced, these adjustments are crucial. These are the entities that determine an individual's healthy state; hence *Ritucharya* adjustments are necessary for maintaining health. If a person is disease-free, it indicates that they have good immunity. It plays a vital part in the COVID-19 viral illness. Dietary and lifestyle changes are vital for immunity and *Ritucharya* influences this.
- Practice daily *Yoga*, *Asanas*, *Pranayama* to improve their lifestyle. Physical exercise improves strength and digestion and also emphasises the value of meditation, sleep and *Satvik* cuisine in leading a calm existence and treating disorders such as COVID-19.

## Ayurvedic Perspective of Covid-19

Corona virus is a new disease entity for the Ayurveda which can be correlated with *Janapadodhwamsak Roga*, *Aupasargika Vyadhi*, *Abhishangaja Jwara*, *Agantuja Jwara*.

*Aupasargika Vyadhi*<sup>[15]</sup>, a concept in *Sushruta*, discusses contagious diseases and their transmission methods, including physical contact, inhalation, dining together, sleeping together, sitting together, and exchanging dirty linens and garlands. COVID-19 can be considered as *Aupasargika Vyadhi* or *Sankramaka Roga*, as it involves engaging in *Adharma* and similar behaviours that lead to harm and destruction from various beings, including *Rakshasas*, which can be seen as demons or germs.

**Modes of transmission** [16] include

- Close physical contact (*Prasangat*)
- Touching the affected person (*Gatra Samsparsha*)
- Exhaled droplets in air (*Nishvasat*)
- Sharing bed with the affected person (*Saha shayya*)
- Eating together or sharing food with the affected person (*Sahabhajanat*)
- Sitting together/closely with the affected person (*Saha aasanat*), using clothes, ornaments, etc.

Learning about *Aupasargika Roga* contributes to the prevention of diseases on an individual basis and in the context of epidemics and pandemics.

**Janapadodhwamsa** [17]- An Ayurvedic term for epidemics or pandemics, refers to communicable diseases that affect a whole country or planet. These diseases are caused by various factors, including air currents, seasonal irregularities, and disturbances in land and water ecology. *Adharma*[18], or unrighteousness, is the root cause of these factors, which can lead to diseases like COVID-19. The major pulmonary involvement of COVID-19 can be attributed to the similarity of *Pranavaha Srotas* vitiating variables to *Vata* and the increasing prevalence of these in modern lifestyles. COVID-19 can be understood as a pandemic due to *Vikriti* of *Vayu* and *Desha*, with contaminated air causing diseases like cough, breathlessness, vomiting, common cold, headache, and fever irrespective of *Desha*, *Dosha*, and *Prakruti* [19]. These elements also influence the whole community, leading to inescapable infection causation known as *Janapadodhwamsa Rogas*.

**Agantuja Jwara and Abhishangaja Jwara** are external diseases caused by *Bhoota Abhishangaja* (virus), which aggravates all three *Doshas*. *Bhoota* is a type of microorganism that can aggravate the *Doshas* when entered into the body. These microbes, including bacteria and viruses, are considered external causative factors for producing *Agantuja Vyadhi*. *Bhuta* means *Visha*, *Krimi*, or virulent organism, and *Krimi* can be *Sahaja* (natural) or *Vaikarika* (pathogenic) organisms. SARS-COV-2 falls under *Vaikarika Krimi*. COVID-19 is considered a type of *Sannipata Jwara*, with symptoms such as fever, tiredness, dry cough, aches, pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, and diarrhoea.

*Abhishangaja Jwara* which is one of the forms of *Agantuja Jwara* is the term for those caused by the contact of the poisonous air or toxic plants or other such toxins (*Visha*).

However, this *Abhishangaja Jwara* later may complicate with involvement of multiple tissues and organs. Thus, *Abhishangaja Jwara* can be correlated with COVID-19.

**Anukta Vyadhi** [20] in Ayurveda

*Anukta Vyadhi* are diseases caused by lifestyle changes, dietary habits and environmental changes. *Acharyas* predicted these diseases, and *Samhitakara* explains diagnosis and treatment methods. *Trividha Bodhya Sangraha* predicts new diseases.

**Ayurvedic correlation of COVID-19 and Post COVID-19 complications**

The symptoms of COVID-19 are comparable to *Vata kapha pradhan Sannipataj Jwara*, according to Ayurvedic principles, and there would be *Agnimandya Avastha* and *Dhatu- Kshaya* post COVID-19 infection.[21] Post COVID problems are manifestations of *Vata prakopa*. The classics state that either *Avarana* or *Dhatu kshaya* might cause *Vata Vyadhi* to manifest. Therefore, *Dhatu kshaya* and *Avarana* have a correlation with symptoms of post COVID-19. In chronic *Sannipataj jwara*, incorrect *Chaya upchaya* leads to *Dhatu kshaya* and partial loss of all *Sapta Dhatus*. Lastly, *Dhatu kshaya* results in a reduction in immunity (*Ojakshaya*). The subsequent *Dhatu's* development may be hindered when *Dhatvagni* declines. *Agnimandya* also leads to *Ama* (undigested and improperly formed food) formation which causes *Srotoavrodh*. In COVID-19 there is obstruction in the *Pranavaha Srotas*, causing vitiation of *Kapha-Vata dosha*, which, in turn, disrupts the normal physiology of breathing.

**Post COVID-19 Complications (Upadrava)**

According to Ayurveda, post COVID-19 complications can be considered as *Upadrava* of this disease. *Upadravas* are those which develop after the manifestation of main disease or during the disease process itself, which implies *Upadrava* manifests in the disease process itself but at the end of it.[22]

The post COVID-19 complications and their probable correlation with Ayurveda nomenclature is as follows –

1. Fatigue
2. Dyspnoea
3. Decreased exercise tolerance
4. Chest pain
5. Gastrointestinal symptoms
6. Olfactory dysfunction
7. Gustatory dysfunction
8. Cardiac arrhythmias
9. Elevated Blood pressure-

*Klama*

*Shwasa kashtata Vyayama ashatwa Urah Shoola Avipaka*

*Gandha adnyana*



Arasadnyata

Hrudrava

Dhamani pratichaya

10. Sleep disorders- *Anidra*

11. Mental disorders- *Vaichitya*

12. Neurological disorders- *Vatavikara*

13. Cerebrovascular disorders- *Raktavikara*

14. Irreversible hearing loss- *Badhiryā*

15. Ischemic stroke- *Hrudroga*

**Some people may be more at risk for developing Post COVID-19**

- People who have experienced more severe COVID-19 illness, especially those who were hospitalized or needed intensive care.
- People who had underlying health conditions prior to COVID-19.
- People who experience multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS) during or after COVID-19 illness.

**Pathya-Apathya**

Diet and lifestyle are critical components of the Ayurvedic medical system, as they are required for both health and sickness. The *Pathya Sevana* is an important pillar for disease management since correct eating prevents and reduces recurrence. *Pathya* and *Apathya* are the name given to the *Aahar* and *Vihar*, which are both helpful and nutritious to the body and offer happiness to the mind. Wholesome foods and regimens improve mental contentment, mental strength, and happiness while decreasing sickness. *Acharya Harita* stressed that if a person does not acknowledge the concept of *Pathya-Apathya* and consumes *Apathya* (unhealthy), illness will never leave the body.<sup>[23]</sup> *Pathya* has been explained in terms of *Dushya*, *Prakriti*, *Dosha*, and *Vyadhi*. When we select a *Pathya Kalpna* based diet for a disease, we are pacifying vitiated *Doshas*, enhancing the action of *Aushadhi*, fighting infections, and clearing the *Srotas*. Unwholesome foods can be detrimental depending on characteristics such as location, timing, combination, potency, frequency and amount. Consistent eating of unwholesome diets can result in vitiated *Doshas* and increased susceptibility to major illnesses.

**DISCUSSION**

Post COVID Complications Symptoms	Pathya	Apathya
1. Fatigue ( <i>Kalam</i> )	<i>Kashaya Varga: Jivaniya mahakashaya, Shramahara mahakashaya, Manda, Peya,</i>	Oily and fried food, junk cold food and beverages
	<i>Vilepi, Yavaagu</i> with various <i>Shukadhanya</i> and <i>Simbidhanya</i> ○ <i>Musta, Mishi (Pachana of Ama), milk, Amalaki</i> ○ <i>Yoga, Pranayama, transcendental meditation,</i> ○ Exposure to sunlight ○ <i>Abhyanga: Shathdhoutagrita, Chandanadyataila,</i> ○ <i>Udwartana</i> and <i>Swedana</i>	Jealousy, hatredness, back biting etc. ○ Physical exertion ○ Being overweight ○ Emotional stress ○ Consuming alcohol, over caffeine regularly etc worsen the condition and hence they are to be avoided.
2. Headache ( <i>Shirashoola</i> )	○ Excessive use of <i>Ghrita, Taila, Vasa, Majja, Jangala Mansa Rasa, milk with sugar, Patola, Amalaki, coconut water, Takra, Kanji, Ghevara, sweet dishes. Shiro Basti, Nasya, Abhyanga, Shirodhara, Swedana, Snehana, Nadi Shodana, meditation, Yoga, Sitali Pranayama</i> etc.	Skipping meals ( <i>Upvasa</i> ), eating during indigestion, suppression of natural urges, excessive sexual acts, day time sleeping, direct exposure to bright sun and cold air, beverages like coffee, cold drinks, junk foods, chocolates, pickles etc.
3. Shortness of breath ( <i>Dyspnoea</i> )	○ Consuming red varieties of rice, kulattha, wheat, barley, rabbits, peacocks, chickens, parrots, old <i>Ghrita</i> , goat milk, liquor, radish leaves, lemons, date fruits, cardamom, <i>Puskaramula</i> , hot water, herbs, cow urine.	○ Excessive consumption of dry, cold, heavy, incompatible food, irregular food intake, black gram, beans, sesame, and aquatic animal meat, colouring agents, preservatives.

	<p>○ <i>Dhoopana, Divaspana, Swedana: Aktam Lavana Tailam, Nadi Prastara Sankaraihi Nasya: Grutamanda and Saindhava, inhalation with Karpoora and Nilgiri taila</i></p>	<p>○ Exposure to cold water, dust, smoke, wind, excessive exercise, and suppressed natural urges, stress. Vigorous exercise particularly on cold and dry day.</p>
4. Cough	<p><i>Salidhanya, Sasthi rice, wheat, Syamāka, Yava, Kodarva, seeds of Atmagupta, Urada, Mudga and Kulattha, flesh of goat, domestic animals, water animals, buffalo from marshy regions and animals living in deserts, Vastuka, Makotha, brinjal, radish, Kāsaundi, Jivanti, Siriari, lemon, Kamalakanda, Aduṣā, cow urine, garlic, Harada, Trikatu, lukewarm water, honey, and paddy poppy, Kantakari Gritha</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Kavala: Yashtimadhu Phanta, warm salt water.</i></li> <li>• <i>Haridra Varti, Manashiladi Dhooma, liquor, old Ghrita, goat's milk and Ghrita</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breathing bad odour</li> <li>• Doing acts where dust gets into mouth and nose</li> <li>• Excessive walking and walking in sand</li> <li>• Taking <i>Vidahi</i> and <i>Ruksa</i> types of meals, rice, fish, <i>Kanda</i>, potato, leaves of mustard, <i>Tumbiphala, Upodikā</i></li> <li>• Holding the flow of vomit, <i>Kasa</i>, belch and excretion.</li> <li>• Consuming old rice and water, excessive eating</li> <li>• Eating heavy and cold rice and drinking water.</li> </ul>

Since there is no specific treatment for COVID-19 recovery, all patients in recovery need a holistic approach to their well-being and ongoing care. By using its comprehensive approach, Ayurveda can play a bigger role in halting the progression and easing symptoms in such a situation. *Dhatuposhana, Balya and Brimhana, Deepana, Pachana, Rasayana chikitsa, Pathya Aahar, Yoga, Pranayama*, and meditation can all be utilised to correct *Dhatukshaya* and *Agnimandya*.

#### Probable Mode of Different Action of Aahar and Vihar used in Post Covid-19 Complications

- **Nasya** with *Anutaila* improves local immunity and fights viruses. Different types of *Nasya*, like *Churna, Sneha*, and *Kwātha*, affect higher brain areas, helping with nasal congestion and headaches. Nasal Rhinase clears viral colonies during infection, acting as a barrier between the virus and nasal epithelium.
- **Gargling** with antimicrobial/antiviral medicines like *Tankana Bhasma*, salt water, turmeric water, and *Triphala* powder can reduce intraoral viral load in COVID-19 patients, aiding in a better immune response and improving symptoms. Gargling acts as an early viral clearance method, controlling virus replication, and producing hypochlorous acid for antiviral activity. Post-treatment, gargling with turmeric and salt is recommended. According to Ayurveda, gargling can be considered as *Gandusha*, which is used to prevent decay, loss of appetite, bad taste, dirt, and excess salivation.
- **Dhumapana** is a treatment for various nasal pathologies, including headaches, rhinitis, migraines, and other issues. It can be used with

medicinal smoke to reduce sneezing, drowsiness, and hypersomnia. *Dhumapana Kalpa* uses anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and bronchodilator drugs like *Katu-tikta rasa, Ushna virya*, and *Vata-kapha shamaka*. COVID-19 patients often experience chest pain, tightness, and pressure.

- **Urah Basti**, a subcutaneous treatment, soothes nerves, enhances blood circulation, relieves muscle tension, relaxes and strengthens muscles, and alleviates pain, with anti-inflammatory drugs also used.
- **Vaspa Sweda** is a medicated decoction used to reduce viral load in the nasal cavity, reducing the virus's entry route. Steam inhalation, a natural sweating process, can be used as an adjuvant therapy for COVID-19 management. *Swedana Karma's Ushna Guna* stimulates the sympathetic nervous system and produces vasodilatation, slackening the mucus and outer fat layer of the virus, and reducing symptoms.
- **Nadi Swedan**, a COVID-19 treatment, helps patients with chest pain, cough, and breathing difficulties by relaxing skeletal muscles, improving blood circulation, and acting as a bronchodilator.
- **Nasal Irrigation**, also known as nasal lavage or nasal douche, is a personal hygiene practice that flushes out mucus and debris from the nose, improving nasal breathing. According to Indian Ayurveda, *Jala Neti*, or cleansing the nose with saline water, can reduce lower respiratory tract infections, reduce nasal congestion, sinusitis, common cold, catarrh, tonsillitis, sore throat, bronchitis, bronchial asthma, and improve

mucociliary clearance.

- **Yoga** can reduce stress responses and improve immunity against infections, particularly in COVID-19. It increases vagal stimulation and promotes better cellular immunity. *Yoga* also helps manage stress by down-regulating the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis response, improving parasympathetic activity. It promotes effective oxygen extraction by peripheral tissues and may indirectly have an antiviral effect due to its anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidation, and immune-enhancing features. *Yoga* intervention increases amygdala and frontal cortex activation.
- **Pranayama**, a yoga component, is beneficial for COVID-19 patients for dyspnoea relief and psychological well-being. Consistent practice improves lung function, vital capacity, heart rate, and blood pressure. *Bhramari*, a prolonged exhalation with a buzzing sound, relieves stress, manages depression, anxiety, and insomnia. *Anuloma-Viloma*, alternating breathing through the nostrils, balances breath flow, and decreases heartbeat and blood pressure.
- **Shadanga Paniya** is a polyherbal formula made from six herbs, including *Musta*, *Parpat*, *Usheer*, *Chandan*, *Udeechya*, and *Nagar*. It is used in early stages of fever, reduces excessive thirst, and increases appetite. It also has antipyretic, antibacterial, and antimicrobial effects. To improve energy requirements and further boost immunity, we can consume herbal teas like *Kadha* (an indigenous drink prepared from a mix of spices and herbs), ginger tea, green tea and other herbal spices.
- **Peya**, **Yavaagu**, and **golden milk** are essential for post COVID-19 management. *Peya* supports vitality and is rich in carbohydrates, protein, fat, and micronutrients. Golden milk, with its ingredients like ginger, cinnamon, and turmeric, has anti-inflammatory properties and can help fight infections.

Ayurveda, a traditional medicinal system, has been proven effective in managing epidemics and strengthening immunity, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It emphasizes the importance of a healthy lifestyle and food in preventing and slowing illness progression. This research focuses on the characteristics of *Aahar* and *Vihar* that are critical for controlling post COVID-19 problems and promoting quick recovery. Ayurveda offers various therapeutic methods to improve immunity to respiratory infections, such as herbal decoctions, drinking hot water, gargling with medicated water, and inhaling steam. Ayurvedic lifestyle guidelines, such as

*Dinacharya*, *Ritucharya*, *Aahar Vidhi*, *Rasayana Chikitsa*, *Vyayama*, *Pranayama*, and *Yoga*, are beneficial in strengthening the immune system. Environmental changes during seasonal changes impact the body's interior environment, affecting mental health and immunological function. Implementing these approaches on a large scale can improve mental health and immunological function by altering neuroimmune pathways. Traditional practices can improve psychological well-being and reduce disease risk. A stress-free lifestyle with a holistic perspective, a healthy diet, *Yoga*, *Pranayama*, *Aachar Rasayana*, and *Sadvritta* can help treat post COVID-19 complications effectively. Dietary and lifestyle modifications balance *Agni*, *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, and *Mala*, ensuring good immunity and preventing disease-related complications.

## CONCLUSION

The post COVID syndrome can be effectively managed by adopting Ayurveda modalities. Still there is a need to conduct further research studies on it to prove efficacy of Ayurveda therapy in the management of post COVID syndrome. The integrative approach of Ayurveda for healthy lifestyle based on a healthy dietary regimen, proper seasonal regimen, and the adoption of a code of conduct may efficiently overcome the current pandemic situation by maintaining good immunity and minimising morbidity and mortality rates.

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