



Review Article

## DINACHARYA: THE ESSENTIAL DAILY ROUTINE FOR GERIATRIC CARE

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### ABSTRACT

The term Geriatrics is made by union of two Greek word first 'geras' (old age) and second 'iatros' (physician) and derived from Greek root "gergero- geronto" meaning old age or the aged or especially one receiving special care. Geriatrics is the branch of medicine that focuses on health promotion and prevention and treatment of disease and disability in later life. In India population of the elderly has been increasing steadily since 1961 as it touched 13.8 crore in 2021, growing faster due to decrease in death rate, according to a study by National Statistical Office (NSO). Ageing is the process in which structural and functional changes occur with passage of time. Thus study of all aspects of ageing including physiological, pathological, psychological, economical and sociological problems is termed as Geriatrics. With advancing age, several changes take place in the body, in the external appearance as well as in *Dosha*, *Dhatu*, *Mala*, *Agni*, *Oja* level, also on the mental functions. In *Ayurvedic* texts, there are many ways given for prevention and promotion of health, one of them is *Dinacharya* (daily regimen), which is most important part to maintain a healthy and happy life. The importance of appropriate daily routine cannot be underestimated. It set the wheels in motion for entire day, bringing a sense of calm and well-being. It gives the body, mind and spirit the chance to start afresh.

### INTRODUCTION

A long healthy life is most cherished wish since antiquity. Ageing is a normal phenomenon, one can't prevent it but it can be delayed through proper daily regimen (*Dinacharya*), diet regimen, healthy lifestyle, *Sadvritta Palana* and *Rasayana Sevana*. *Acharya Gangadhara* has clearly depicted that sequence of events in ageing are time bound phenomenon i.e. as the time advances, puberty phase turns into adulthood and after that old age which in turn ends in death of an individual. According to *Charak Acharya*, age has been divided into three parts viz. *Balyavastha* (young age), *Madhyamavastha* (middle age) and *Jirnavastha* (old age).<sup>[1]</sup> After 60 years of age one is called 'old'.

In old age there is a progressive diminution of *Dhatu*, strength of sense organs, vigor, masculinity, and bravery, power of understanding, retaining and memorizing, speech and analyzing facts. There is gradual diminution in the qualities of *Dhatu* also. Thus, the *Vridhdhavastha* is the last phase of life and is represented by the degeneration of body.<sup>[2]</sup> *Sushrut Acharya* has mentioned '*Jara*' under '*Swabhava balapravritta Vyadhi*' which is of two types viz. *Kalaja*, appearing at proper time even after proper protection and *Akalaja*, appearing before proper time due to improper care and prevention.<sup>[3]</sup> At old age person feels exhausted, languish, sleepy, drowsy and lazy. He loses vigor & vitality, enthusiasm & zeal and becomes incapable of performing physical and mental work. He loses his memory, intellect, and complexion and become an abode of diseases. Thus he cannot enjoy the total span of his life. Growth, development, and maintenance of the anatomy and physiology of the body are completely dependent on four factors: *Kala* (time), *Swabhava* (nature), diet (which should be excellent in the terms of nutrients), and absence of obstructive factors in the growth and development of the body. Among these, diet and

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healthy lifestyle plays very important role in the formation of *Dhatu*. This excellent form of *Dhatu* reflects in the terms of *Sara* (tissue excellence), which makes a person look youthful and pleasing. Unhealthy diet and lifestyle ultimately leads to *Akalaja Vriddhavastha* and these two are the cause of geriatric complications.

#### Common problems of old age

➤ Cardiovascular diseases	➤ Auditory problems
➤ Musculoskeletal diseases	➤ Anxiety
➤ Respiratory diseases	➤ Anger
➤ Gastrointestinal diseases	➤ Depression
➤ Genital-urinary diseases	➤ Delirium
➤ Ophthalmic problems	➤ Dementia
➤ Neurological disorders	➤ Grief
➤ Insomnia	➤ Fear
➤ Social & emotional insecurity	➤ Loneliness
➤ Lack of social network	➤ Lack of confidence
➤ Loss of independence	➤ Irritability
	➤ Low esteem etc.

#### MATERIAL AND METHODS

##### Dincharya for Geriatric care

Ayurveda offers multi-dimensional approach for the prevention of early ageing and management of diseases of old age. Principles of ideal lifestyle regimen laid down by the ancient *Acharyas* is the foremost step in the prevention of early ageing and disorders of old age. *Dincharya* (daily regimen) is concerned with the personal aspect of individual. Physical and mental health can be maintained by adopting these principles.

##### 1. *Brahma-Muhurat Jagrana*- (Waking up early)

One should always analyze about the digestion of food taken last night before getting up early in the morning. At least 6 hours sleep is necessary for an old age individual, after that one should get up in *Brahma-Muhurat*. (14<sup>th</sup> *Muhurata* of *Ratri*-1hr 36 min before sunrise)<sup>[4]</sup>

This time of day is good for *Sukshama Vyayama* (light exercise & stretching), *Asana*, *Pranayama* & *Shatkarma* practice. During this time of the day environment is pollution free, pleasant, and free of noise pollution and sunrays are very beneficial for skin and bone health, mind is fresh and there are clarity of thoughts. This is a great time to connect body and mind to higher self (*Paramatama*). It is the most fresh and clean time of the day that provide us clean oxygen.<sup>[5]</sup>

##### 2. *Ushapana*- (Drinking of water)

1-2 glasses (640ml) of water kept in copper utensil for whole night should be consumed before sunrise in *Brahma-Muhurat*.<sup>[6]</sup>

Drinking plenty of water early in the morning reduces the risk of renal calculus, constipation, piles etc.

*Nasajalapana*- Is beneficial for wrinkles, blemishes, greying of hairs, cough etc.

##### 3. *Malotsarga*- (Defecation)

One should eliminate natural urges daily. Holding the *Adharniya Mala-Mutra Vegas* leads to vitiation of *Vata Dosha*, this will cause further complications.<sup>[7]</sup>

##### 4. *Dantadhawana*- (Brushing)

Twig (12 *Angula* length & thickness should be tip of one's little finger) of *Arka* (*Calotropis procera*), *Vata* (*Ficus Benghalensis*), *Khadira* (*Acacia catechu*), *Karanja* (*Pongamia pinnata*), *Kakubha* (*Terminalia arjuna*) can be used for teeth brushing.<sup>[8]</sup>

In old age teeth & gums are very fragile in nature, so one should proper crush or chew the twig from front side and use it carefully without harming.

One should also use *Dantashodhana Churna* in the place of twig to avoid any such injuries. *Trikatu*, *Trijata*, *Tejovati*, honey, *Saindhav* & *Tila Taila* can be used as a *Dantaprasadana Churna*.<sup>[9]</sup>

It brings freshness, takes away bad breath (halitosis) and coating on teeth.

##### 5. *Jihvanirlekhana*- (Tongue Scraping)

Tongue cleaning should be done with the help of *Jihvi* (tongue scraper) which is flat, 10 *Angula* in length and made up of silver, gold or iron.

It removes bad breath, takes away coating of tongue and gives taste.

##### 6. *Anjana*- (Collyrium)

One should apply collyrium made of Antimony (*Soviranjana*) every day in old age for protection of eyes.<sup>[10]</sup>

It gives clear vision, lightness, proper functioning, purity & alleviation of diseases. One should not apply collyrium in condition of fever, ocular conditions like *Timira* (Cataract), pain, swelling etc.

##### 7. *Kavala and Gangoosha*- (Oil Pulling)

Material (Medicated paste/ *Kalka*) used moves easily in the mouth in *Kavala*.

In *Gandoosha* mouth is completely filled with *Gandoosha Dravya* (liquid) and kept without moving inside the mouth.<sup>[11]</sup>

In old age oil pulling is ideal procedure for maintenance of oral health.

Practice of *Kavala & Gandoosha* enhances strength of mandible, resonance of voice, nourishment of face, taste perception. It prevents dryness of throat, cracking of lips, decay of teeth & makes teeth strong.

### 8. *Nasya*

*Pratimarsha Nasya* with *Anu Taila* is ideal for all *Ritus*. Practice of *Nasya* prevents diseases of eyes, nose and ear. It prevents greying of hair and hair fall. It cures stiffness of neck, headache, stiffness of jaws, rhinitis etc.

In old age sensory organs become weak naturally, by regular practice of *Nasya* they can be strengthened.<sup>[12]</sup>

### 9. *Dhoomapana* (Medicated smoke inhalation)

Inhalation of medicated smoke is good for vitiated *Kapha & Vata*.<sup>[13]</sup> In old age *Vata* is always in Predominant state, so at that point *Prayogika Dhoomapana* can be used to prevent *Vata* related problems.

*Dhoomapana* cures heaviness of head, headache, rhinitis, cough, hiccups, dyspnea, blockage of upper airway, weakening of teeth, anorexia, toothache, stiffness of neck, greying of hairs, hair fall. It strengthens hairs, sense organs and voice.

### 10. *Samvahana* (Light massage)

*Sushruta Acharya* mentioned a type of massage known as *Samvahana*. *Samvahana* is gently pressing (*Mardan*) the body from foot to waist which produces *Sukha* (Pleasure). It is a massage suitable to promote blood and lymphatic circulation and to induce deep relaxation. It is also very beneficial for relieving pain and fatigue which is very common in old age because of *Vata Dosha*.

### 11. *Abhyanga* (Ayurvedic massage with oil)

In this procedure warm oil is applied to the entire body, from the scalp to the soles of the feet's. It nourishes the entire body, decreases the effect of ageing, lubricates joints, increase circulation, beneficial for deep sleep, increases moisture for softer skin, reduces wrinkles, and pacifies *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha*.<sup>[14]</sup>

Coconut oil or sesame oil can be used according to season and condition of the person.

*Padabhyanga* (foot massage) prevents diseases like sciatica, cracking of foot and stiffness.

*Siroabhyanga* (head massage) prevents balding, greying of hair and hair fall. One gets good sleep after head massage.

### 12. *Vyayama* (Exercise)

Exercise is best among strength promoters. Regular physical activity like *Suksham Vyayama*,

*Yogasana* and *Pranayama* can prevent many of the health problems that seem to come with age.

- *Cankramana* (walking) increases life span, strength, *Agni* and perceptive power of sense organs.<sup>[15]</sup> Brisk walking for 10-15 minutes a day is beneficial for older adults.

- Muscle strengthening activities like *Suksham Vyayama* and *Yogasanas* on 2 or more days a week. *Yogasanas* like,

- a) *Parvatasana* (Mountain pose)
- b) *Trikonasana* (Triangle pose)
- c) *Katichakrasana* (standing spinal twist)
- d) *Bhadrasana* (cobblers pose)
- e) *Marjariasana* (cat stretch pose)
- f) *Bhujangasana* (Cobra pose)
- g) *Shalabhasana* (locust pose)
- h) *Pawanmuktasana* (wind relieving pose)

- Chair *Yoga* for senior citizens- Neck roll, seated forward bend, seated spinal twist etc., helps alleviate tension and fatigue, increases flexibility, improves sense of balance, increases overall muscle strength.

- *Pranayama* (Breathing exercise) and *Dhyana* (meditation) help to gain a steady mind, strong will power, enhances perception, beneficial to treat stress. *Anulom-Vilom* (15-20minutes), *Bhastrika* (3-5minutes), *Bhramari* (10-15 rounds), *Kapalbhati* (5-10minutes) can be performed in old age to prevent many diseases.

### 13. *Snana* (Bath)

Taking bath enhances virility, longevity, strength, compactness & *Oja*, at the same time cures tiredness, sweat and impurities of the body.<sup>[16]</sup>

Hot water bath excluding head is beneficial in old age as it enhance strength and destroys *Vata Dosha*.<sup>[17]</sup> Taking head bath with hot water is injurious for eyes & cold water is good for eyes. But taking head bath with very cold water during winter season leads to aggravation of *Kapha & Vata Dosha*. Likewise taking bath with very hot water during summer season leads to aggravation of *Pitta & Rakta*.

### 14. *Aahara* (Diet)

Ageing itself is inevitable, there are ways to reduce or delay the pathological effects of ageing. *Aahara* is another important factor that influences ageing. *Apathya* (unwholesome) *Aahara* vitiates three *Doshas*, leading to pathological changes and reduced lifespan.

*Sattvika Ahara* is considered pure and ideal for promoting *Sattva Guna* in the system. *Sattvika Aahara* includes- vegetables, fruits, whole grains, milk & ghee, nuts, cold pressed oils, coconut, sesame,

honey, red rice (unpolished), *Panaka* (health drink), saffron, herbs like *Brahmi*, *Amla*, *Satavari*, etc., which are health promoting and beneficial for old age.

### CONCLUSION

According to Ayurveda there is no magical remedy for healthy living. The *Dincharya* makes one to lead a healthy and disciplined life. In addition it purifies the body and mind. Therefore, these strategies indicated by Ayurveda with respect to health care of people in all phases of life especially ageing population should be strictly followed by spirit. All these strategies can contribute in a big way for healthy and happy old age. The *Dincharya* regime if followed properly helps to attain physical, mental and spiritual well-being of an individual.

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