

AYURPATRA

Your monthly health e-newsletter

Volume: 1- Diseases of - Above Shoulder region

SERIES URDHWAJATRUGAT XII –AUG 2005

We are delighted to present to you our monthly e-feature about Ayurveda and health. Our web site (<http://www.ayurplanet.com/>) has helped millions of people. This newsletter will be loaded with lots of information, events and happenings related to Ayurveda including featured articles, details of very useful herbs, beauty tips and various herbal products and health supplements. The aim of this Newsletter is to serve humanity from health aspect by natural means.

FEATURED HEALTH ARTICLE: EYE DISEASES – Continued from July issue.

Cataract

For most people, cataracts are a natural result of aging. This is usually seen in those people who are above 50 years of age.

A cataract is a clouding of a part of the eye known as the crystalline lens. The lens is a clear tissue located behind the pupil - the dark circular opening in the middle of the iris or colored part of the eye. The lens works with the transparent cornea, which covers the eye's surface, to focus light on the retina at the back of the eye. When the lens becomes cloudy, or cataractous, light cannot pass to the retina properly, and vision is blurred and decreased.

The lens is contained in a sealed bag or capsule. As old cells die they become trapped within the capsule. Over time, the cells accumulate causing the lens to cloud, making images look blurred or fuzzy. In Ayurveda this condition is known as "timira" or 'linga nasha'. Aggravated 'vayu' is said to be responsible for the manifestation of this disease. In old age vata is increased which effects other doshas to affect various layers of eye. When aggravated dosha reaches the fourth layer, they effect nucleus of the lens resulting in the diminished vision. Sunlight and malnutrition are also the two main causes of this disease.

In lingnasha(mature cataract) the circle is reddish , unstable and rough due to vata; due ton pitta it is bluish or pale yellow or yellow; due to kapha it is thick,glossy,pale white resembling moon; it is like white drop of water placed on a moving lotus leaf. The circle caused by Rakta is lustrous like coral and lotus leaf.

Herbs recommend for treatment of Cataracts:

Dusty miller (Cineraria maritima succus), Lavang (Cloves), Bilberry (Vaccinium myrtillus), Ginkgo (Ginkgo biloba), Lal chandan (Pterocarpus santalinus), Pundrika (Lotus), Draksha (Grapes), Nimbu (Lemon) Tulsi (Basil), Shunthi (Dry ginger), Yashtimadhu (Glycerrhiza glabra), Daruharidra (Berberis aristata), Manjishtha (Rubia cordifolia), Rason (Garlic), Punarnava (Boerhavia diffusa), Nirmali (Strychnos potatorum), Mamira (Coptis teeta).

Diabetic Retinopathy

Patients with diabetes are more likely to develop eye problems such as cataracts and glaucoma, but the disease's effect on the retina is the main threat to vision. Most people develop diabetic changes in the retina after approximately 20 years. The effect of diabetes on the eye is called diabetic retinopathy.

Over time, diabetes affects the circulatory system of the retina. The earliest phase of the disease is known as background diabetic retinopathy. In this phase, the arteries in the retina become weakened and leak, forming small, dot-like hemorrhages. These leaking vessels often lead to swelling or edema in the retina and decreased vision.

The next stage is known as proliferative diabetic retinopathy. In this stage, circulation problems cause areas of the retina to become oxygen-deprived or ischemic. New, fragile, vessels develop as the circulatory system attempts to maintain adequate oxygen levels within the retina. This is called neovascularization. Unfortunately, these delicate vessels hemorrhage easily. Blood may leak into the retina and vitreous, causing spots or floaters, along with decreased vision.

In the later phases of the disease, continued abnormal vessel growth and scar tissue may cause serious problems such as retinal detachment and glaucoma.

Signs and Symptoms

The effect of diabetic retinopathy on vision varies widely, depending on the stage of the disease. Some common symptoms of diabetic retinopathy are listed below, however, diabetes may cause other eye symptoms.

- Blurred vision (this is often linked to blood sugar levels)
- Floaters and flashes
- Sudden loss of vision

Useful herbs – Mamira (Coptis teeta / Golden thread root) for external application, Katak or Nirmali seeds for external use; Chakshushya or Chaksu seeds powder for external application; Grape seed extract, Bilberry

Dry eye syndrome is one of the most common problems treated by eye physicians. It is usually caused by a problem with the quality of the tear film (lubricates the eyes) maintained by Tarpaka kapha.

It comprises of symptoms occurring due to excessive vata absorbing the water and lubrication of eye making it dry and itchy..

Tears are comprised of three layers after the outermost mucus layer. The mucus layer (shleshma kala) coats the cornea, the eye's clear outer window, forming a foundation so the tear film can adhere to the eye. The first aqueous layer provides moisture and supplies oxygen and other important nutrients to the cornea. This layer is made of 98 percent water along with small amounts of salt, proteins and other compounds. It is said to be supported by tejas(Rakta) and jala(rasa) .The second one consist of muscles. The third layer is an oily film that seals the tear film on the eye and helps to prevent evaporation. This is fatty tissue (medas) layer. And the fourth one is of bones.

Tears are formed in several glands around the eye. The water layer is produced in the **lacrimal gland**, located under the upper eyelid. Several smaller glands in the lids make the oil and mucus layers. With each blink, the eyelids spread the tears over the eye. Excess tears flow into two tiny drainage ducts in the corner of the eye by the nose. These ducts lead to tiny canals that connect to the nasal passage.

In addition to lubricating the eye, tears are also produced as a reflex response to outside stimulus such as an injury or emotion. However, reflex tears do little to soothe a dry eye, which is why someone with watery eyes may still complain of irritation.

Dry eye syndrome has many causes. One of the most common reasons for dryness is simply the normal aging process when vata is generally raised. As we grow older, our bodies produce less oil – 60% less at age 65 then at age 18. The oil deficiency also affects the tear film. Without as much oil to seal the watery layer, the tear film evaporates much faster, leaving dry areas on the cornea.

Many other factors that brings you in direct contact with vata and makes the eyes dry are driving, hot, dry or windy climates, high altitudes, air-conditioning and cigarette smoke . Many people also find their eyes become irritated when reading or working on a computer. Stopping periodically to rest and blink keeps the eyes more comfortable.

Symptoms

- Itching, Burning, Irritation
- Redness
- Blurred vision that improves with blinking
- Excessive tearing
- Increased discomfort after periods of reading, watching TV, or working on a computer.

Cleansing the eyes with Triphla water and putting up the Maha-Triphladva ahrita

is beneficial in this.

Chalazion (stye) is a small lump in the eyelid caused by obstruction of an oil producing or meibomian gland. Chalazia may occur in the upper or lower lids, causing redness, swelling and soreness in some cases. It is similar to **Anjananamika** which is coppery, soft and small boil with burning and pricking pain with mild distress appearing on lid. It is caused by Rakta.

Signs and Symptoms

- Raised, swollen bump on the upper or lower eye lid
- Often red
- May be tender and sore

Common home remedy is rub your index finger over the other hand's palm till its quite hot and apply that finger over the stye – do it 10 times and it should be repeated 3-4 times a day. It really works. Putting and cleansing the eye area with Rose water also helps.

MANAGEMENT OF EYE DISEASES -

The treatment for eye diseases in Ayurveda can be divided into two:

- The treatments involving internal medication
- The treatments involving specific Netrakarmas.

The 'vata' prakriti among the three prakritis 'vata', 'pitta' and 'kapha' are said to be the cause of certain eye diseases. The symptomatology of vata diseases clarifies the point that it focuses not only the tissues but also the nerve function of the eye. So these diseases have a schedule of treatments of 'vathabhishyanda' which includes 'snehana', 'swedhana', 'sneha vicharana', 'vasti', 'snehaseka', 'snehenanasya', 'snaihika doomapana', 'sirovasthi' etc which in no way can be stated as to focus on the vatakopa alone.

Netrakarmas

These are the localized treatments of the eye. These are a set of treatments done on the eye to rid the patient off the particular disease. They are mainly of five types" Aschyotana, Seka, Anjana, Tarpana and Putapaka. Some authors add vidalaka and pindi to the list thus making it to a total seven.

Aschyotana

Aschyotana is the process of instilling medicinal drops into the eyes. This process is the first step in any eye ailment. Normally 1 to 2 drops is instilled at a time.

Seka

Seka is the continuous pouring of medicinal liquids - sneha, kwatha, ksheera etc on the eye for a specified time. Seka is more powerful than aschyotana in its potency.

Anjana

The application of drugs in the eyes using a 'shalaka' or with the clean fingertips is termed anjana. Three types of preparations are there for doing anjana karma. They are: 'Churna', 'Rasakriya' and 'pindi'.

In tarpana and putapaka, medicines in liquid are made to stand on the eye within a rim around the orbit made of 'Urad daal paste'. The drug used for each is different though 'ghrita' and 'putapaka rasa' are the methods used respectively.

Vidalaka

It is the external application of ground medicines on the eye lids

Pindi

Pindi is the medicated pad used for bandaging eye in certain conditions. All the procedures have specific schedules. There are a lot of conditions to be maintained during the application of these types of medicines. Other methods of treatment are also used according to the gravity of the disease.

[Akshi Tarpan](#) - Holding medicated ghee over eyes and surrounding areas for particular period.

BENEFICIAL SUBSTANCES FOR EYES

White butter, Cow's ghee, Buffalo and Goat ghee, Gomutra, Mustard oil, Karanj oil, Wheat germ oil, She horse milk, Goat milk, Honey, Glucose, Hirak (Diamond) bhasma, Manikya (Ruby) bhasma, Mukta (Pearl), Prawal (Coral), Chalk powder, Abhrak bhasma with honey and Triphla powder, Sphatika (Alum), Karpoor (Camphor), Intake of White pepper soaked in cow's ghee, Black cumin seeds, Rock salt, Hingu, Jal neti, Regular intake of Saptamrit lauha tablets.

[You may consult our Ayurveda experts through on line consultation](#) or personally.

Thanks to Dr. Kartar Singh Dhiman, MD (Ayu. Shalakyā) for his views in this issue.

HERB OF THE MONTH: GUDUCHI

Guduchi or *Tinospora cordifolia* is a large, climbing shrub. Guduchi is an important part of the Ayurvedic category of Rasayanas, or rejuvenative tonics. Human studies conducted on Guduchi's immune-boosting ability show it to be linked to enhancing the function of protective cells called macrophages. The plant is used to improve the immune system and the body's resistance to infections. The stem is used in dyspepsia, fevers, and urinary diseases.

The active principles and juice of the fresh plant possess a number of pharmacological activities. It is bitter, stomachic, antiperiodic, aphrodisiac. Guduchi is useful in chronic diarrhoea, to remove urinary stones (Calculi), as a diuretic, CNS depressant, hypoglycemic, antibacterial, antipyretic, anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, anti-allergic, analgesic, hepatoprotective, and to

reduce blood urea. The plant is used in Ayurvedic rasayanas to improve the immune system and the body's resistance against infections. It is used as an immunomodulator in immunosuppression of obstructive jaundice, hepatic fibrosis, peritonitis and sepsis. The plant has been found effective in preventing fibrous changes and promotes regeneration of the liver against CCl4 induced hepato-toxicity.

Guduchi has been proven to be effective in inhibiting the growth of bacteria and enhancing the buildup of immune resistance. Scientific research is now providing clues to Guduchi's immune-boosting ability to fight diseases. In a study using human white blood cells, Guduchi increased the killing ability of macrophages, the immune cells responsible for fighting invaders.

Guna: - Guru, Snigdha

Rasa: - Tikta, Kashaya

Veerya :- Ushna

Vipaka :- Madhura

ACTION

- Helps increase the effectiveness of protective white blood cells and builds up the body's own defense mechanism (immune system)
- Enhances the functioning of protective cells, macrophages, and improves body's resistance to infections.
- Useful as a diuretic, helps removes urinary stones and reduce blood urea
- Inhibits growth of bacteria and enhances the buildup of immune resistance
- Possesses antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, and anti-allergic properties

BEAUTY TIP – FOR DARK CIRCLES

- Place cotton wool swabs dipped in cold milk on closed eyes for removing dark circles and massage a few drops of Almond oil around the eyes.

For personalized beauty related queries mail to: beauty@ayurplanet.com

FORTHCOMING EVENT:

Event Name : INTERNATIONAL HEALTH CARE 2005

Date(s): 11 to 13 August

Venue: Pragati maidan , New Delhi

Organizer: NAM trade service centre

Contact: NAM trade service center Pvt.Ltd.

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News: Some Ayurvedic medicinal products reported to contain high levels of heavy metals

http://hc-sc.gc.ca/english/protection/warnings/2005/2005_09.html

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