

## ***Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam – Preventive Aspect in Ayurveda***

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### ***ABSTRACT***

*Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of medicine, places equal emphasis on prevention and cure. The concept of SwasthasyaSwasthyaRakshanam—the preservation of health in a healthy individual—forms the foundation of preventive medicine in Ayurveda. This approach emphasizes maintaining equilibrium of doshas (bio-energies), dhatus (tissues), and malas (excretory products), supported by balanced diet, lifestyle, and seasonal adaptation. Preventive measures such as Dinacharya (daily regimen), Ritucharya (seasonal regimen), Sadvritta (ethical conduct), and Rasayana (rejuvenation therapy) are designed to strengthen immunity and promote mental, physical, and spiritual well-being. Unlike modern preventive medicine, which focuses primarily on disease avoidance through vaccination and screening, Ayurveda integrates physical, mental, and spiritual domains for holistic prevention. This paper explores the preventive philosophy of Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam with classical references and discusses its contemporary relevance in promoting sustainable health.*

***KEYWORDS:*** *Ayurveda, Preventive Medicine, Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam, Dinacharya, Rasayana, Holistic Health*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The primary goal of Ayurveda, as stated by Acharya Charaka, is twofold: “Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam cha”—to protect the health of the healthy and to alleviate the disorders of the diseased (Charaka Samhita, Sutrasthana 30/26).

This statement underlines the preventive and curative dimensions of Ayurveda. The preventive aspect, *SwasthasyaSwasthyaRakshanam*, emphasizes the maintenance of health through self-discipline, balanced living, and alignment with natural laws.

Ayurveda considers health not merely the absence of disease but a state of complete balance—physical, mental, and spiritual. *Swastha* means one who is established in the Self (*Swa*) and maintains harmony among the body constituents. The preventive philosophy integrates the concepts of *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Nidra* (sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (celibacy or controlled sensory indulgence) as key determinants of health.

### CONCEPT OF HEALTH IN AYURVEDA

Ayurveda perceives health (*Swasthya*) not as a mere absence of disease but as a dynamic state of balance and harmony within the body, mind, and spirit. The term *Swastha* itself is derived from two Sanskrit words: *Swa* (self) and *Stha* (established or situated). Thus, *Swastha* denotes one who is established in his or her own true nature—physiologically balanced, mentally calm, and spiritually aware.

The classical definition of health given by *Acharya Sushruta* is foundational to Ayurvedic preventive and promotive healthcare:

**“SamadoshaḥSamāgniscaSamadhātuMalakriyāḥ |  
PrasannātmendriyaManāḥSvasthaItyabhidhīyate”**

*(Sushruta Samhita, Sutrasthana 15/41)*

This verse explains that a person is healthy when:

1. **Doshas** (biological humors—*Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*) are in equilibrium.
2. **Agni** (digestive and metabolic fire) functions optimally.
3. **Dhatu**s (tissues) and **Malas** (excretory products) are properly formed and eliminated.
4. **Atma**, **Indriya**, and **Mana** (soul, senses, and mind) remain in a pleasant and stable state.

## 1. Balance of Doshas

The *Tridosha* theory is central to Ayurvedic physiology.

- *Vata* governs movement, respiration, and nervous functions.
- *Pitta* manages digestion, metabolism, and transformation.
- *Kapha* provides structure, lubrication, and stability.

Health exists when these three forces are in natural balance according to an individual's *Prakriti* (constitution). When this equilibrium is disturbed due to improper diet, lifestyle, or mental stress, disease arises (*Vikriti*). Therefore, maintaining doshic balance is the key preventive principle of *SwasthasyaSwasthyaRakshanam*.

## 2. Proper Function of Agni

Ayurveda regards *Agni* (the digestive fire) as the root of health. It governs digestion, absorption, and assimilation of nutrients. Balanced *Agni* ensures efficient metabolism, while impaired *Agni* (*Mandagni* or *Tikshnagni*) leads to accumulation of toxins (*Ama*), initiating disease processes. Thus, dietary moderation, mindful eating, and following meal timings are essential for sustaining *Agni* and thereby maintaining health.

## 3. Stability of Dhatus and Malas

The seven *Dhatus*—*Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra*—constitute the structural and functional basis of the body. Proper nourishment and regeneration of these tissues ensure vitality and resistance to disease. Similarly, *Malas* (waste products such as feces, urine, and sweat) must be eliminated efficiently. Retention or obstruction of *Malas* disturbs the internal balance, leading to pathogenesis. Hence, regular bowel habits, perspiration, and urination are indicators of good health.

## 4. Psychosomatic and Spiritual Well-Being

A distinctive feature of Ayurveda is its recognition of the mind (*Manas*) and spirit (*Atma*) as integral components of health. *Prasannatmendriyamanah*—the cheerful state of soul, senses, and mind—reflects inner harmony and peace. Emotional disturbances such as anger, fear, jealousy, or excessive desire are considered causative factors for disease. Therefore,

Ayurveda prescribes ethical conduct (*Sadvritta*), meditation, and control of the senses as psychological and spiritual preventive tools.

### 5. Holistic Interdependence

In Ayurveda, the body (*Sharira*), mind (*Manas*), and soul (*Atma*) are inseparable and interdependent. A disturbance in any one of these domains disrupts the overall equilibrium. For example, mental stress (*Manasika Bhava*) can disturb *Vatadosha*, leading to insomnia or digestive imbalance. Conversely, physical disorders can affect the mind. This psychosomatic unity makes Ayurveda’s concept of health truly holistic and preventive in nature.

### 6. Comparison with Modern Health Concepts

While the World Health Organization defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease,” Ayurveda extends this definition further by including the spiritual dimension. It emphasizes *Sattva* (mental purity), *Sama Agni* (digestive balance), and *Ojas* (vital essence) as markers of true health.

Modern preventive medicine primarily focuses on immunization, nutrition, and hygiene, whereas Ayurveda integrates internal and external factors—diet, environment, conduct, and consciousness—into one comprehensive system. This inclusive vision ensures not only disease prevention but also positive health promotion.

### 7. The Role of Ojas in Health

*Ojas* is described as the quintessence of all seven *Dhatu*s and the seat of vitality, strength, and immunity (*Vyadhikshamatva*). A person with strong *Ojas* possesses clarity, courage, and resistance against diseases. Every preventive measure in Ayurveda—whether *Rasayana*, *Dinacharya*, or *Sadvritta*—ultimately aims to preserve and enhance *Ojas*. Its depletion is viewed as the root cause of debility, premature aging, and vulnerability to infection.

**Table 1: Ayurvedic Model of Health and Its Preventive Significance**

Component	Description	Preventive Significance
<i>Tridosha Balance</i>	Equilibrium of Vata, Pitta,	Prevents physiological disorders

Component	Description	Preventive Significance
	Kapha	
<i>Agni (Digestive Fire)</i>	Regulates metabolism and assimilation	Prevents toxin accumulation ( <i>Ama</i> )
<i>Dhatu &amp; Mala Balance</i>	Proper nourishment and elimination	Ensures tissue strength and detoxification
<i>Prasanna Atma, Indriya, Manas</i>	Mental and spiritual stability	Prevents psychosomatic illnesses
<i>Ojas</i>	Essence of vitality and immunity	Maintains resistance and longevity

### **Integrative View**

Thus, the concept of health in Ayurveda is both preventive and promotive. It lays emphasis on living in harmony with natural cycles, maintaining internal balance, and cultivating mental peace. This ancient yet timeless understanding provides a comprehensive framework for preventive health management, blending physical well-being with emotional and spiritual equilibrium.

### **DINACHARYA (DAILY REGIMEN)**

Ayurveda emphasizes that daily routine, or Dinacharya, plays a vital role in preserving health and preventing disease. Acharya Charaka and Sushruta described a structured routine aligning human activity with the natural circadian rhythm. This synchronization promotes physiological balance and mental stability. The daily regimen begins at dawn and encompasses a sequence of cleansing, nourishment, and restorative practices.

#### **1. Brahma Muhurta Uttthana (Waking Up Early)**

Ayurveda recommends rising during Brahma Muhurta (approximately 1.5 hours before sunrise), when the atmosphere is charged with positive energy and oxygen levels are optimal. This time supports mental clarity, meditation, and inspiration. It aligns human consciousness with the calm rhythm of nature, helping maintain harmony between the body and environment.

**2. Dantadhavana and JihvaNirlekhana (Oral Hygiene)**

Cleaning teeth and tongue removes toxins and maintains oral hygiene. Modern research correlates these practices with reduced bacterial load and better digestion due to stimulation of salivary glands.

**3. Abhyanga (Oil Massage)**

Self-massage with medicated oils balances Vatadosha, nourishes tissues, improves circulation, and imparts a sense of calmness. It delays aging and strengthens muscles and joints. It also enhances Ojas, the essence of vitality.

**4. Vyayama (Exercise)**

Regular moderate exercise stimulates metabolism, improves muscle tone, and enhances immunity. Acharya Charaka advised that physical exertion should be performed to half of one's capacity to prevent exhaustion. Excessive exercise, he warned, may aggravate Vata and cause debility.

**5. Snana (Bathing)**

Bathing refreshes the body, improves circulation, removes fatigue, and uplifts the mind. It is considered both purificatory and preventive, as it maintains personal hygiene and thermoregulation.

**6. Ahara andBhojanaVidhi (Dietary Habits)**

Taking meals at fixed times with mindfulness is central to Dinacharya. Food should be warm, fresh, balanced in all six tastes (Shadrassa), and compatible with the body's constitution. Proper diet supports Agni (digestive fire) and prevents accumulation of toxins.

**Preventive Essence:**

Dinacharya cultivates discipline, enhances digestion, regulates hormonal balance, and stabilizes the nervous system. By following a structured daily routine, the body's internal clock synchronizes with natural cycles, reducing the risk of metabolic, digestive, and stress-related disorders.

**RITUCHARYA (SEASONAL REGIMEN)**

Ritucharya represents the seasonal adaptation of lifestyle and diet to maintain doshic balance. Ayurveda recognizes six distinct seasons (Ritus), each influencing the physiological state of the body. Changes in temperature, humidity, and sunlight cause fluctuations in Doshas, requiring specific preventive measures to avoid seasonal diseases.

**1. Hemanta and Shishira (Winter Seasons)**

During winter, Agni is strong due to the cold environment. Heavy and nutritious food such as ghrita, milk, and meat soup are recommended. Warm oil massage, exercise, and avoidance of cold winds preserve strength and immunity.

**2. Vasanta (Spring)**

In spring, Kaphadosha accumulates and liquefies, causing allergies and respiratory issues. Light food, honey water, and dry therapies (Udvardana) are beneficial. Avoiding daytime sleep prevents Kapha dominance.

**3. Grishma (Summer)**

Summer increases Pitta and depletes Ojas. Cooling diets including rice gruel, milk, ghee, and water-rich fruits are ideal. Avoiding heavy physical activity and exposure to heat prevents dehydration and fatigue.

**4. Varsha (Monsoon)**

During monsoon, digestive fire weakens. Light, sour, and salty food is beneficial. Boiled water and hygienic food prevent gastrointestinal infections. Avoiding raw food and excess sleep is essential.

**5. Sharad (Autumn)**

Autumn increases Pitta dosha due to residual heat. Ghee, milk, and bitter-tasting herbs like Guduchi and Neem pacify Pitta. Bloodletting (Raktamokshana) is suggested as a seasonal detoxification measure.

**Preventive Essence:**

Ritucharya builds adaptability, strengthens immunity, and prevents seasonal disorders. It reflects Ayurveda's preventive wisdom of living in harmony with the environment, ensuring continuous internal stability amidst external variations.

### **SADVARTTA (CODE OF CONDUCT)**

Sadvritta or the ethical code of conduct addresses the moral, social, and psychological dimensions of health. It encompasses self-discipline, mental control, compassion, and proper behavior towards oneself and society.

#### **1. Personal and Mental Discipline**

Ayurveda advises moderation in speech, control over anger, avoidance of greed, and compassion towards all beings. Positive emotions nourish the mind, whereas negative ones disturb Vata and Pitta, leading to psychosomatic disorders.

#### **2. Social and Ethical Behavior**

Truthfulness, cleanliness, respect for elders, and helping the needy are regarded as preventive virtues. These practices promote social harmony and mental peace, reducing anxiety and conflict-driven ailments.

#### **3. Environmental Hygiene**

Living in a clean environment, avoiding pollution, and maintaining sanitation align with Sadvritta. This ensures not only individual but also community health.

#### **Preventive Essence:**

Sadvritta prevents mental stress, promotes social cohesion, and maintains emotional stability—important determinants of immunity and longevity.

### **RASAYANA (REJUVENATION THERAPY)**

Rasayana therapy is one of the most profound aspects of preventive Ayurveda. It aims at rejuvenation, longevity, cognitive enhancement, and immunity building (Vyadhikshamatva). Rasa means essence or nourishment, and Ayana means path—thus, Rasayana literally means the “path of nourishment.”

### **1. Types of Rasayana**

AacharaRasayana (Behavioral Rejuvenation): Ethical conduct, calm mind, meditation, and positive thoughts act as mental Rasayanas that enhance immunity and psychological health.

Aushadha Rasayana (Medicinal Rejuvenation): Herbal preparations like Amalaki, Guduchi, Haritaki, and Ashwagandha nourish tissues and enhance Ojas.

AharaRasayana (Dietary Rejuvenation): Inclusion of milk, ghee, honey, and fresh fruits provides rejuvenation through diet itself.

### **2. Mechanism and Preventive Role**

Rasayana therapy improves tissue metabolism, delays degeneration, and maintains youthfulness. By promoting Agni and enhancing Ojas, it protects against infection, stress, and premature aging. It also strengthens memory and reproductive health.

#### **Preventive Essence:**

Rasayana fortifies immunity, ensures longevity, and sustains vitality—serving as the biological foundation for SwasthasyaSwasthyaRakshanam.

## **NIDRA AND BRAHMACHARYA**

### **1. Nidra (Sleep)**

Nidra is considered one of the Trayopastambha—the three pillars of life along with Ahara (diet) and Brahmacharya (celibacy or control). Acharya Charaka states that proper sleep imparts happiness, nourishment, strength, and life, whereas improper sleep leads to lethargy, diseases, and premature aging.

Adequate sleep restores Dhatus, balances hormones, enhances cognitive function, and regulates immunity. Ayurveda recommends sleeping at night for seven to eight hours and avoiding daytime sleep except in summer or for the elderly and weak individuals.

## **2. Brahmacharya (Controlled Conduct)**

Brahmacharya refers to the disciplined use of physical and mental energy. It does not merely denote celibacy but emphasizes moderation in sexual activity and sensory control. Conservation of ShukraDhatu (reproductive essence) contributes to vigor, memory, and spiritual clarity.

### **Preventive Essence:**

Together, Nidra and Brahmacharya restore vitality, mental stability, and endocrine balance. They prevent fatigue, emotional instability, and lifestyle-related disorders.

## **CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE**

In the modern age, lifestyle disorders such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and stress-related illnesses are increasingly prevalent. The Ayurvedic concept of SwasthasyaSwasthyaRakshanam provides a sustainable preventive framework to address these challenges through balance, awareness, and daily discipline.

### **1. Alignment with Lifestyle Medicine**

Modern lifestyle medicine emphasizes diet, exercise, and stress management. Ayurveda goes further by integrating spiritual and mental health. Practices like Abhyanga, Yoga, and Pranayama improve parasympathetic activity and reduce oxidative stress, validated by contemporary research.

### **2. Immunity and Public Health**

Post-pandemic awareness about immunity (Vyadhikshamatva) has renewed global interest in AyurvedicRasayanas. Herbs like Guduchi, Ashwagandha, and Tulsi are now recognized for their immunomodulatory and adaptogenic properties.

### 3. Environmental Adaptation

Ritucharya offers guidance for adapting to climate changes—an urgent need in the context of global warming and seasonal disease outbreaks. Its preventive strategies support sustainable living and ecological harmony.

### 4. Mental Health and Ethical Living

The ethical code of Sadvritta and the behavioral principles of Aachara Rasayana provide timeless solutions for mental health, reducing anxiety, depression, and social unrest by encouraging mindfulness, compassion, and self-restraint.

#### Preventive Essence:

Ayurveda's preventive doctrines are timeless, adaptable, and evidence-compatible. They empower individuals to take responsibility for their well-being rather than depending solely on medical intervention, thus embodying the true spirit of health preservation—Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam.

### CONCLUSION

SwasthasyaSwasthyaRakshanam is the cornerstone of Ayurvedic preventive medicine. It emphasizes a holistic approach to health maintenance through proper diet, routine, ethics, and rejuvenation practices. The Ayurvedic lifestyle fosters resilience, balance, and self-regulation—qualities essential for true wellness. Reviving these principles in modern healthcare can bridge the gap between prevention and cure, promoting a sustainable model of health rooted in individual responsibility and harmony with nature.

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