

A Comprehensive Review of Basti Karma (A Medicated Enema)

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurvedic sciences, *Basti* Therapy is a crucial treatment modality comes under *panchakarmas* and its application should be considered for all age groups. *Basti Karma* is regarded as *Amritam* (similar to Divine nectar) by Aacharya Kashyapa. *Basti* is referred to as half treatment (*Ardha Chikitsa*) by some Vaidya's, while others consider it complete treatment (*Sampurna Chikitsa*). Panchakarma therapies are usually employed to eradicate the vitiated Doshas and aid in maintaining the equilibrium of these Doshas, which is the fundamental basis of health. Any of the five Panchakarma therapies may be employed, either individually or in combination, to prevent or treat a disease. This review study seeks to provide detailed information about Basti Karma.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Basti, Anuvasana Basti, Niruha basti.

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INTRODUCTION

Basti, an Ayurvedic therapy, involves administering medicines through the genitourinary tract using a *Basti-yantra*. It's considered a highly effective treatment, for all age groups, and is likened to nectar for its benefits in balancing *Vata Dosha*. The *Basti Karma* wherein the drugs administered through the anal canal reaches up to the *Nabhipradesha*, *Kati*, *Parshwa* and *Kukshi* region, churns the vitiated *Dosha* and *Purisha* (Morbid humors and fecal matter), spreads the oleation all over the body and is easily eliminated along with the churned *Purisha* and *Doshas* is known as *Basti*. *Panchakarma* therapies are very unique therapeutically because of its preventive, promotive, prophylactic and Rejuvenative properties, as well as providing radical cure in some cases. *Basti Karma* is a procedure that is applicable to all Diseases of *Vata* predominance. *Basti Karma* has the prime function of *Srotoshodhaka* (Cleansing of the channels) of the whole body. The rationale behind this is the concept of auto-intoxication or the idea that food enters the intestine to root. *Basti* consists of two

primary types: *Niruha* and *Anuvasana*. *Niruha Basti* contains a mixture of *Madhu* (Honey), *Saindhava Lavana* (Rock salt), *Sneha* (Oils), *Kalka* (Paste of drugs) and *Kwatha* (Decoction). These ingredients if just randomly added together forms an immiscible mixture, hence it must be carefully prepared.

Types of Basti:

I. Based on *Basti Dravya*:

Based on *Dravya* used in *basti* preparation classified in 2 types;

1. *Snehik Basti*:

The medicated drugs administered is in the form of *Sneha* (*Ghrita*, *Taila*, *Vasa*, *Majja*) through the anal canal into the colon. It is further subdivided according to the dose of *Sneha* administered as follows:

- ***Sneha Basti***: The administration of Six *Pala* (240ml) from *Sneha* is carried out.
- ***Anuvasana Basti***: Three *Pala* (120ml) of *Sneha* is administered.

2. *Niruha Basti*:

In this specific type of *Basti*, the primary component of the *Basti Dravya* is *Kwatha* (Decoction), which is mixed with *Madhu*, *Saindhava Lavana*, *Sneha*, and *Kalka*. Another name for *Niruha Basti* is *Aasthapana Basti*.

II. Based on *Adhithana*:

Based on location used for *basti* administration it is classified in 2 types;

1. *Pakwashayagata Basti*:

Basti drugs are administered through the anal canal into the colon. It can be either *Niruha* or *Anuvasana Basti*. This article focuses primarily on *Pakwashayagata Basti*.

2. *Uttara Basti*:

In males it is *Mutrashayagata Basti*, the medicated drugs are administered through the penis to enter the urinary bladder.

In females, it can be of two types. *Mutrashayagata* and *Garbhashayagata Basti*. The medicated drugs are administered either through the urethra to reach the

Basti Samuha & its indications acc. to *Dosha* and *Bala*:

Basti administered to a patient it may vary according to name of *basti*. Respective *Basti karma* is indicated according to *Dosha* Predominance and *Bala* of patient.

<i>Basti Name</i>	Quantity	(AB + NB)	Indication in <i>Dosha</i>	Indication acc. <i>Bala</i>
<i>Karma Basti</i>	30	18 + 12	<i>Vata Prabhuta</i>	<i>Prabhuta Bala</i>
<i>Kala Basti</i>	16 / 15	10 + 6 (Chakrapani) / 9 + 6 (Vagbhata) 12 + 3 (Kashyapa)	<i>Vata + Pitta</i>	<i>Madhyama Bala</i>
<i>Yoga Basti</i>	8	5 + 3	<i>Vata + Kapha</i>	<i>Alpa Bala</i>

Materials & Methods:

The materials and methods required varies according to the requirements of the patient, disease being treated and the type of *Basti* planned i.e., *Basti Yantra* (Enema Bag), *Basti Dravyas*, rubber catheter, plastic syringes etc. The method usually consists of *Purva Karma*, *Pradhana Karma* and *Paschat Karma*.

Preparation of *Niruha Basti*:

As per different Acharya, *Madhu* is incorporated first because it is a *Mangala Kaari Dravya*. Initially, *Madhu* is combined with *Saindhava Lavana*, being stirred carefully in one direction to preserve polarity. Once this is executed correctly, the mixture of *Madhu* and *Saindhava Lavana* appears somewhat frothy, at which point the *Sneha* is introduced and stirred again. Following this, the *Kalka* is added and mixed in. Finally, the *Kwatha* is gradually incorporated and stirred slowly to create a uniform mixture. Consequently, the mixture attains the physical characteristics of an emulsion.

urinary bladder or through the vagina to reach the uterus. This is based upon the disease condition and the attending Vaidya will prescribe the appropriate treatment accordingly.

III. Based on *Samuha*:

Basti Samuha means the quantity or numbers of *Basti* administered to a patient. It may vary according to name of *basti*. It is categorized in 3 types;

1. *Karma Basti*:

A total of 30 *Basti* are administered in which there are 18 *Anuvasana* and 12 *Niruha Basti* alternately.

2. *Kala Basti*:

According to Acharya Chakrapani, it includes total 16 *Basti*. In this, 10 are *Anuvasana* and 6 are *Niruha Basti*. But according to Acharya Vagbhata, it is a total of 15 *Basti*, 6 being *Niruha* and 9 being *Anuvasana*. Yet, according to Acharya Kashyapa, 12 *Anuvasana* and 3 *Niruha* are administered.

3. *Yoga Basti*:

A total of 8 *Basti* treatments are given, consisting of 5 *Anuvasana* and 3 *Niruha Basti*.

Properties and Action of *Basti* Ingredients:

Ayurvedic texts indicate that hot honey (*Madhu*) is detrimental and should be avoided. Nevertheless, the *Charaka Samhita*, in the *Kalpa Sthana* section, mentions that hot *Madhu* can be utilized in *Vamana Karma*, and it is also used in *Basti Kalpana* where honey is combined with hot *Kwatha*. *Madhu* is regarded as the optimal *Anupana* (Vehicle) due to its various components that enhance its ability to carry drugs. Its primary characteristic is *Yogavahi*, which signifies that it amplifies the properties of the substances it is combined with. Additionally, *Madhu* aids in creating a uniform mixture with *Saindhava Lavana*, and it contains predigested sugars that facilitate digestion and absorption by the body. *Saindhava Lavana* (Rock salt) possesses qualities such as *Vishyandi*, *Sukshma*, *Tikshna*, and *Vataghna*, which promote the evacuation of the bladder and rectum. Thanks to its *Sukshma Guna*, it penetrates the body's micro channels, while *Tikshna Guna* assists in breaking down morbid matter in *Mala* and *Dosha Sangha*, and its irritant property aids in the

elimination of the *Basti*. *Sneha* encompasses *Ghrta* (Ghee), *Taila* (Oils), *Vasa*, and *Majja* (Bone marrow), each with distinct properties that the attending Vaidya must evaluate and administer. Generally, *Sneha* is *Vatahara* and *Malanam Vinihanti Sangam* (removes blockages in the body's channels). It also imparts unctuousness to the body due to its *Snigdha Guna*, which is crucial for the smooth elimination of *Doshas* and *Malas*. Furthermore, *Sneha* safeguards the intestinal mucous membrane from any negative effects that the *Basti Dravya* may have, highlighting its significance. *Kalka*, *Kwatha*, and *Avapa Dravya* collectively perform the role of *Utkleshana* or *Doshahara*. These are typically chosen by the attending Vaidya based on *Dosha*, *Dushya*, and *Srotas*. Their primary purpose is to facilitate the action of *Samprapti Vighatana* concerning the ailment being treated.

Basti Karma: Basti Procedure:

Basti Karma is performed under 3 terms as follows:

1. *Poorva Karma*:

- Preparation of *Basti Dravyas*
- *Snehana*
- *Swedana*

2. *Pradhana Karma*:

- Patient is asked to lie down in *Vama Parshva* (Left lateral) position.
- The *Basti Netra* is introduced into the *Gudamarga* (Anus) and the *Basti Dravya* is administered in a manner that is neither too fast nor too slow.

3. *Paschat Karma*:

- Patient is allowed to rest in a supine position for a few minutes.
- *Snana* (Bath)
- *Samsarjana Krama*

Importance of Left Lateral Position for Basti Administration:

As the *Grahani* (organs responsible for digestion, including the duodenum and the upper section of the small intestine) and *Guda* (rectum) are situated on the left side of the body, administering the *Basti Dravya* while the patient is positioned on their left side provides beneficial effects and ensures that the *Valayas* (mucosal folds) remain immersed in the adjacent musculature. Therefore, *Basti* should consistently be given when the patient is in this position to ensure optimal absorption and the greatest efficacy of the *Dravya*.

Discussion:

Basti is a powerful Ayurvedic treatment that benefits the entire body, from head to toe. It is especially effective in balancing *Vata dosha*, which is thought to

be the underlying cause of numerous ailments. Indeed, some ancient texts indicate that there is no superior remedy for *Vata dosha* imbalance than *Basti*. *Basti Karma* transcends the common perception of being merely an enema therapy. The various facets of it have been discussed above, revealing its complex scientific foundation as noted by several Ayurvedic Acharyas. For *Anuvasana* and *Niruha Basti*, the appropriate schedule for administration has been specified, including *Karma*, *Kala*, and *Yoga Basti*. Most importantly, the characteristics of the ingredients used in the preparation of *Niruha Basti* are carefully chosen to eliminate the morbid *Doshas* that have built up in the body. *Basti* activates the *Pakwashaya*, thereby expelling the *Doshas* through the nearest exit, which is the anal canal, along with feces and the morbid *Doshas*. Another crucial point highlighted is the administration of the *Basti Dravya*, which should ideally be performed in the *Vama Parshwa* (Left lateral) position. This position, due to the anatomical layout of the intestines, allows for optimal absorption and minimal discomfort for the patient during administration. Since *Basti Karma* is not an isolated procedure, it is essential to strictly follow the *Poorva*, *Pradhan*, and *Paschat Karma* to maximize the benefits of the *Basti Karma* process.

Conclusion:

Basti is an effective *Panchakarma* therapy that nourishes all bodily tissues (*Dhatu*) and organs (*Avayava*), enhancing overall health and immunity. It focuses on essential organs, improving vitality and revitalizing the body. It is evident that *Basti Karma* serves as a comprehensive treatment approach. Not only is it therapeutic, but it also plays a role in disease prevention and health promotion.

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