

## AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE OF SUVARNA PRASHANA IN CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

In Present era, the emergence of number of various diseases poses a great danger to mankind. Increased pollution, climate change, global warming etc further increased diseases burden. Most of diseases not have permanent cure in modern medicine. Ayurveda provides various principles from ancient times to maintain health as well as prevent or cures various diseases. So in order to enhance immunity, the *Suvarna* is well known for its medicinal efficacy. Administration of processed gold is referred to as *Suvarna Prashana*, which is a unique method of enhancing immunity. It can be administered from first day of birth upto the age of 16 years on daily basis for a period of 1 to 6 months. It improves the intellect and enhances the nonspecific immunity of the body. It acts as *Rasayana* and without any adverse effects as reported

by various clinical and pharmacological studies.

**KEYWORDS:** *Suvarna Prashana, Gold, Rasayana.*

### INTRODUCTION

In Present era, the emergence of number of various diseases poses a great danger to mankind. Increased pollution, climate change, global warming, cold war etc further increased disease burden. Most of diseases not have permanent cure in modern medicine. Ayurveda provides various principles from ancient times to maintain health as well as prevent or cures various diseases. So in order to enhance immunity, the *Suvarna* is well known for its medicinal efficacy.

*Suvarna Prashana* has already gained so much popularity among the public and is being recognised as an immunity enhancer and being discussed as *Rasayana*, promoted by many *Ayurvedic* professionals and government of few states in India. The purpose of *Suvarna Prashana* is same as that of modern vaccination to prevent diseases by building immunity against bacteria and viruses. However, *Suvarna Prashana* has no specific indication like an individual vaccine, but it has a holistic approach, thus improving the overall immunity of children. Hence, this *Suvarna Prashana* is a unique method of immunity enhancing which is practised from ancient time.

Traditionally, *Suvarna Prashana* is done as cultural practice for more than hundreds of years in the field of *Ayurveda*. All ancient *Ayurvedic* texts, particularly *Kashyapa Samhita* described the procedure of *Suvarna Prashana* in detail.<sup>[1]</sup> *Acharya Kashyapa* coined the term *Suvarna Prashana* for administration of *Suvarna* (gold).<sup>[1]</sup> This unique formula has been explained wherein *Suvarna* (pure gold) should be triturated along with water, on a clean stone, facing eastern direction and then mix with honey and cow's *ghrita* and then made the infant (*shishu*) lick the same (*Kashyap Samhita Sutrasthan* page. 4)<sup>[1]</sup>

These days, *Suvarna Bhasma* is used in *Suvarna Prashana*, which has better safety profile and efficacy as compared to unprocessed gold. The process used for making *Suvarna bhasma* reduces the possible unwanted effects and increases its effectiveness. Studies show that by classical *bhasmikaran* process (calcinations) as described in texts of *Ayurveda*, there is reduction in particle size of gold dimension of about 56-57 nm.<sup>[2]</sup> The particles of *Suvarna bhasma* were reported as non-cytotoxic,<sup>[3]</sup>

### **Suvarna prashana as an integral part of lehana**

*Suvarna Prashana* in children can be mainly implicated in two contexts of *Ayurveda* i.e, *Lehana* and *Jatakarma Samskara*, where *Suvarna Prashana* under *Jatakarma Samskara* is a one time procedure as a part of essential newborn care as explained by *Acharya Sushruta* (*Sushruta Samhita Shareer Sathan* 10/15)<sup>[4]</sup> and *Acharya Vagbhat* (*Astanga Haridya Uttarasthana* 1/12-14).<sup>[5]</sup> Whereas *Lehana Karma* are the supplementary feeds which can be continued for a longer period of time as explained by *Acharya Kashyapa*<sup>1</sup> who is known to be a pioneer in the field of *Kaumarbhritya*. *Acharya Kashyapa* has devoted a whole chapter *Lehanadhaya* (page-1-6)<sup>1</sup> for this, in which he cited that the *Sukham* and *Dukham* i.e, health and disease status of a child is dependent on *Lehanaprakriya* (page-1)<sup>1</sup>. *Suvarna Prashana* is

the first formulation explained by *Acharya Kashyapa* in the context of *Lehana* (*Kashyapa Samhita Sutra Sathan* page 4).<sup>[1]</sup>

#### **The most important purposes of *lehana karma* are**

- To satisfy the nutritional requirements of infants and results in enhancing intellect and immunity. It is contraindicated in seriously ill children and also on daily basis (*Kashyapa Samhita Sutra Sathan* page 4).<sup>[1]</sup>
- These *Lehanas* are a supplementary food for an infant which fulfil the indication criteria (*Kashyapa Samhita Sutra Sathan* page 3-4).<sup>[1]</sup> and complements required micronutrients and energy providing substances and are responsible to optimize the growth, intellect, immunity and understanding of children.

#### **Significance and Safety of *suvarna***

*Suvarna* (gold) is well acclaimed for its therapeutic efficacy in *Ayurvedic* texts. Gold is always considered as the most loved and most valued metal on Earth. It is precious because of its uniqueness and wide applications. The use of gold in medicine is seen throughout the history of civilisations, especially in Indian and Chinese medicines. Gold is one of the noble metals being used in continuity to increase the vitality and immunity. Zahoor et al study in albino rats suggests potentials for gold preparations in cerebrovascular diseases as reported by restoration of free radical induced damage to brain.<sup>[6]</sup> According to recent studies pure gold (twenty four carat) is chemically inert and are directly absorbed via sublingual route into the blood stream.<sup>[7]</sup> Toxicity studies shows that chronic administration of *Suvarna bhasma* is non-toxic as judged by various laboratories and histological parameters.<sup>[8]</sup> Pharmacological studies showed specific and nonspecific immune responses, which were modified in a positive manner in *Suvarna* – treated mice. It also had a stimulatory effect on peritoneal macrophages, which may be helpful to fight against infections.<sup>[9,10]</sup>

#### **Administration of *suvarna***

In *Ayurvedic* text, it should be administrated after birth as one of the procedure of new born care<sup>5</sup>. It is also recommended to use on daily basis for 30 days to 6 months. According to *Kashyapa Samhita* for the desired effect on immunity and intelligence, obviously, the regular use will be more effective than single dose. Textual reference (*Kashyapa Samhita Sutra Sathan* page 4)<sup>[1]</sup> says that if administred for one month, the child will become *param medhavi* (extremely intelligent) and *vyadhibirna cha drushyate* (will not be affected by any

disease) and if administered for a time period of 6 months, the child will become *shrutdhara*<sup>[1]</sup> (will be able to retain information what so ever he heard). Coming to the dosage of *Suvarna Prashana*, it is not specified in classic text, however in infants dosage should be kept minimal as much as possible because of immaturity of the systems.

## DISCUSSION

Administration of *suvarna* (pure gold) has been advised in Ayurvedic texts in infants and children. Clinical and pharmacological studies show immunomodulatory, nootropic as well as therapeutic effects of *Suvarna Prashana*. This requires administration as early as possible as the capacity to build immunity against various diseases and infections is higher in early childhood and about 90% of brain development takes place by the age of five. Therefore, it would be good to give *Suvarna Prashana* in early ages as this period until one year is considered to be the most vulnerable time for infections due to an immature immune system. By considering its indication, it can be said that *shaisavastha* is the right period from which it can be commenced. That is why, *Suvarna Prashana* may be accepted as first Ayurvedic immunization of a child.

## CONCLUSION

*Suvarna Prashana* can help in achieving optimum physical growth, cognitive development and healthy maturation of the immune system. By preventing common childhood illnesses like recurrent respiratory tract infections, it can help a child in reaching its maximum potential of growth and development. *Suvarana Prashana* acts at the level of nutrition, digestion, metabolism, physical strength, immunity, complexion and improves intelligence. Above all, it makes the child healthier. Children taking *Suvarna Prashana* doses regularly can be easily distinguished from their remarkably outstanding physical and mental ability. Due to the myriad therapeutic qualities of gold nano particles used in *Suvarna Prashana* has a tremendous scope as a preventive and curative therapy. So, there must be more stress to conduct clinical and experimental studies which further elaborate *Suvarna* (gold) efficacies and any side/ adverse effects so that it may be included in the Indian Immunization Schedule.

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