



## AYURVEDIC APPROACH TOWARDS OBESITY – A REVIEW ARTICLE

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### ABSTRACT

Obesity is common lifestyle disorder in this era. Obesity specifically refers to an excessive amount of body fat. Obesity is defined as an excessively high amount of body fat or adipose tissue in relation to lean body mass. Obesity results from an energy imbalance that involves eating too many calories and not getting enough physical activity. Obesity is a condition in which the natural energy reserve, stored in the fatty tissues of the body, is increased to a point where it is associated with certain health conditions or increased mortality obesity (Sthaulya) is the most common metabolic disorder in affluent societies caused by excessive eating, lack of exercise and is a direct result of the modernization combined with lifestyle changes. Acharya Charaka has included Asthathool in eight varieties of impediments, which are designated as 'AsthaNindita Purusha'. He categorizes this problem under Santarpanjanita Vyadhi. Pranayama is very important technique in yoga which is control and extension of Prana or Vital energy or Life force. Pranayama helps in management of this energy. These Pranayama techniques increase the lung capacity and help burning fats. Regular practice of Pranayama brings balance in the system in terms of Physical and Mental functions.

**KEYWORDS:** Dietary Habits, Lifestyle, Pranayama.

### INTRODUCTION

Obesity is defined as an excessively high amount of body fat or adipose tissue in relation to lean body mass.

Sthaulya is described as excessive & abnormal increase of meda dhatu along with mamsa dhatu resulting in pendulous appearance of buttocks, belly and breasts, however increased bulk is not matched by corresponding increase in energy.

It is most common nutritional disorder in affluent society, mainly due to absence of physical activity. Other causes may be sleeping during the day, intake of Kapha aggravating diets (heavy, sweet, cool, unctuous food in excess), over intake of food and heredity. The weight charts for men and women according to their height (body mass index) are only rough indications of the state of overweight or obesity. The obesity is described as 'Medoroga' in Ayurveda and said that, comparatively it is easy to help an underweight person rather than an overweight. The obesity can either be due to an actual increase in fat component (medo dhatu) or due to malfunctioning of fat metabolism. Body is made of seven dhatus i.e: rasa, rakta, mamsa, meda, asthi, majja, shukra but obese are nourished excessively by meda dhatu and other remaining dhatus get malnourished, kapha gets

accumulated in between. When kapha increases in abnormal fashion, fat metabolism is hampered and person becomes obese.

Most commonly used definition based on Body Mass Index (Kg/m<sup>2</sup>) provide the following values:

Less than 18.5 is underweight

18.5 - 24.9 normal healthy

25.0- 29.9 overweight

30.0 - 34.9 grade 1 obese

35.0- 39.9 grade 2 obese and

40.0 or greater is grade 3 obese/ morbidly obese.

Obesity is an increased fat content in the body and now major health problem in India. Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in India in the 21st century, affecting 5% of the country's population. India is following a trend of other developing countries that are steadily becoming more obese. Unhealthy, processed food has become much more accessible following India's continued integration in global food markets. Indians are genetically susceptible to weight accumulation especially around the waist. Recent survey shows 60% middle aged, working class Indians in Mumbai were overweight and 30% children in Delhi's elite schools were in the same category.

The location of adipose (fatty) tissue in the body should also be considered, fat distributed in the abdominal region poses a greater health risk compared to fat deposited at the thigh and buttocks.

### Hazards of Obesity

- National Institute of Health, USA has issued an alert labelling obesity a "Killing disease".
- Commonly 60 to 70 percent Cardiac patients die of Obesity. Obesity is implicated most strongly in coronary disease. Overweight also contributes to the development of diabetes, hypertension, and elevated blood lipid levels, kidney and gallbladder disorders. Obesity has been implicated in increased incidence of some types of cancer like cancer of colon, pancreas, breast, uterus, kidney and gallbladder.
- Overweight persons suffer from OsteoArthritis that is Joint Pain which acts as an Obstacle for mobility.
- Many Divorces took place because of Obesity as the sexual drive may not be fully satisfied by both partners.
- More chances of menstrual irregularities.
- Colleagues may hate you because Obesity may accompany bad body odour.
- Heavy weighing persons are the common targets of comments & taunts which may damage psychological health.

### Prevention of Obesity

Prevention is better than cure. You must take precautions rather following treatment after increase in weight. Once you are obese it is difficult to treat yourself.

- "Avoid excess eating, eating during indigestion or just after taking previous meal.
- "Avoid day sleeping; sleep in the night after one hour of your dinner.
- "Do regular exercise like brisk walking (at least), running, swimming etc. avoid sedentary and lethargic lifestyle.
- "Avoid eating excess sweets. Have lowfat / skim dairy products. Avoid product like chocolates, ice creams, cheese, paneer, sugar etc.
- "Take non-vegetarian food like chicken, fishes, eggs, meats etc. in moderate quantity. Remove fat from meat & skin from chicken.
- "Try to minimise excess oil & ghee in cooking, use a non-stick pan for cooking. Avoid hydrogenated vegetable oils, instead of frying things try to consume roasted things & change your cooking techniques a little. Grill or bake food instead of frying, cook vegetables without fat by steaming and boiling.
- "Use lowfat spreads and chutney on bread instead of butter and cheese.
- "Don't consume excess alcoholic drinks or water on empty stomach.
- "Avoid aerated drinks and excess water after meal.
- "Intake of fat and carbohydrates should be restricted.

Ayurvedic management of Obesity

- 1) Pranayama
- 2) Yoga
- 3) Natural herbal treatment

### 1) Bhastrika Pranayama

It is necessary to make a balance between Kapha (phlegm), Pitta (bile) and Vata (wind) the three culprits in our body which is the root of all diseases. This yoga helps in balancing them. Bhastrika pranayama is mainly a combination of Kapalbhata and Ujjayi. Bhastrika is a sanskrit word which means 'bellows'. Rapid succession of forcible expulsion is a characteristic feature of Bhastrika.

### Procedure of Bhastrika Pranayama

Pranayama starts with sukhasana or padmasana posture, so one should sit in sukhasana posture with back straight and eye closed like meditation, hand should be straight placed over the respective knees. Now there should be maximum exhalation and then inhalation through nostrils with full force and this should be done till one feel tired. Pattern should be rhythmic that is time for inhalation and exhalation should be more or less equal.

During inhalation the lung should expand and go back to original position during exhalation.

- Abdominal expansion should be minimum.
- Duration of performing Bhastrika Pranayama.
- The whole process should be done 30-40 times, it should start with 10-15 times and gradually be increased.

### Benefits of Bhastrika Pranayama

This yoga is very much useful in Muscular Dystrophy and Oxygen deficiency disorders. It balances Vata (wind), Pitta (bile) and Kapha (phlegm) as mentioned above. It supplies pure air thus helps in purification of blood. This yoga is helpful in countering obesity, asthma and lowers blood pressure. It also counters anxiety and depression.

### Precautions taken while doing Bhastrika Pranayama

This yoga should be avoided in pregnancy and should be performed slowly by those who are suffering from high blood pressure and migraine. They should not give full effort. At initial stage or beginners should start slowly and increase the force gradually.

### 2) Yoga

Obesity is supposed to be a gift of modern lifestyle and it's a breeding ground for so many diseases. Yoga through yoga poses like asanas, pranayama, meditation- and relaxation techniques are helpful for weight loss, reducing obesity, lessening of body fat and weight management. Shedding of excess fat and attaining ideal body can be achieved by practicing yoga. Yogic exercises or therapy is highly effective in the control and management of obesity. The different yogic practices and yoga tips for treatments of obesity are:

- **Sarvangasana** (the shoulder stand pose) improves the efficiency of the thyroid glands, which is responsible for correcting body weight and normalize the endocrine system that too control obesity
- **Padahastasana** (the forward bending asana) improves metabolic process of the body by acting on thyroid and pituitary gland, thus control obesity.
- **Dhanurasana** (the bow pose) helps to burn excessive fat in the body.
- **Paschimottanasana** (the back stretching pose) helps to remove excess fat in the abdominal region tones all the abdominal organs.
- **Ardha-Matsyendrasana** (the half spinal twist pose) treat ailments like diabetes, indigestion, obesity and constipation.
- **Bhujangasana** (the cobra pose) massages the abdominal organs, increases the flexibility of back and also regulate the thyroid gland.
- Good for childhood obesity.
- **Pavan Muktasana** (the wind releasing pose) reduces abdominal fat.
- **Viparita Karni** relieves the disorders related with thyroids and parathyroid glands.
- Practice **Kunjil and Shankha Prakshalana** are quite effective in curing of obesity.
- Regular practice of, Kati **Chakrasana, Halasana, Matsyasana** and **Ushtrasana** along with **Surya Namaskara** is highly beneficial for such patients.
- Such patients should start their daily routine early morning with brisk walking.

### 3. Natural herbal treatment to cure obesity by balancing the body

- Guduchi helps in the proper canalization of fats in the body thus used as effective ayurvedic obesity treatment.
- Guggulu reduce fat accumulation in the body and give a leaner physique by curing obesity.
- Amla, haritaki is also quite effective.
- Indian Gooseberry contains vitamin C that disintegrates fatty buildup in the body.
- Devadaru, musta, triphala, takrarishta and honey is recommended as a natural herb cure for obesity.
- Green gram and horse gram.
- Example of ayurvedic remedy.
- Powder of yava and amalaki is an excellent formulation for reducing obesity.
- Shilajita along with the juice of Agnimatha works well.
- Take honey water early in the morning.
- Use powder of Vidanga, Sunthi, Aamalaki and Loha.
- Mix parts of turmeric, triphala, trikatu and honey is also useful.
- Weight control, Triphala (3-5 gm) or Aloe gel can be used

- Consuming 2 tea spoon of honey + 1 glass herbal tea can be used as herbal remedy for obesity and weight reduction.
- 1 tsp guggulu + Ginger + Honey, an ayurvedic alternative for obesity.
- 1/2 teaspoon of chitrak + kukti + trikatu is used as ayurvedic medicine for weight reduction.
- Fresh pineapple juice, hot peppers juice and pimentos must be used to get the benefits.

### DISCUSSION

According to National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES-III) data about 55% of US adults of age 20 years and older are either overweight or obese. According to Ayurveda in madhya-awastha (30-60 years) paripurnata of all sharira dhatus take places.

Females have tendency to develop obesity due to some factors like less physically active, emotionally unstable, pregnancy, use of oral contraceptive pills, & prone to hypothyroidism, and ultimately produces the obesity. The combination of excessive nutrient intake and sedentary life style are the main cause of obesity in the last quarter of 20th century. According to Charaka, sthula purusha have kapha dominant prakriti. Charaka also mentioned the role of nidra in sthaulya. Obese patients are always fond of eating & have satmya to all type of rasa. Madhura, guru, snigdha & sheeta properties aggravate kapha as well as meda on the basis of sarvada sarva bhavanam samanyam vridhhi karanam Kapha & Meda are main dosha and dushya respectively in samprapti of sthaulya. According to western system of medicine the diet containing sweet, heavy, unctuous, cold properties have always high calorie value and excessive indulgences of high calorie diet is well established etiological factor of obesity, because extra calorie will be converted in to fat and stored in the cells (fat cells), later increases the number & size of the fat cell.

Adhyashana & virudhashana can produce Aam dosha and Agnimandya, root cause of sthaulya. Godhuma, shali, sarpi, dadhi, cold drinks & junk foods have similar properties attributed to meda on the basis of sarvada sarva bhavanam samanyam vridhhi karanam principles.

### CONCLUSION

The sedentary life style, lack of physical exercise, faulty dietary habits (excessive intake of sweet, heavy, unctuous, and cold food items) and urbanization precipitate the disease sthaulya. Kapha prakriti persons are more prone to obesity so they should be advised proper diet regimens and exercise. Pranayama techniques increase the lung capacity and help burning fats. Regular practice of Pranayama brings balance in the system in terms of Physical and Mental functions.

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