

2.7.2 Indigestion (*Ajīrṇa*)

Introduction

An abnormality in digesting food or lack of proper digestion is termed as Indigestion (dyspepsia). Indigestion refers to number of gastro-intestinal complaints, which can include gas (belching or flatulence) and upset stomach. Ageing is accompanied by several changes in the gastro-intestinal system and older adults frequently present with gastro-intestinal problems. Physiological changes of ageing may be difficult to differentiate from disease.

According to *Ayurveda*, those who are not following dietary guidelines and consume food without self control become victims of *Ajīrṇa* (Indigestion). This leads to various diseases.

Aetiology

1. Excessive drinking of water after meal
2. Incompatible and unwholesome diet (*Samaśana*)
3. Irregular food habits (*Viśamāśana*)
4. Suppression of natural urges of *nidrā* (sleep), *vāta* (flatus) and *puriśa* (stool)
5. Improper sleeping habits
6. Emotional disturbances
7. Loss of teeth due to ageing
8. Decreased saliva production
9. Over eating (*Adhyaśana*)

Patho-physiology

In elderly people, ingested food doesn't digest properly due to

1. Diminished secretion of digestive enzymes
2. Impaired chewing due to loss of teeth
3. Decrease in saliva production due to ageing may also contribute to severity of acid reflux
4. Slowing of gastric emptying, which may produce abdominal distention, increase meal induced fullness



Clinical features

1. Pain or burning sensation in the upper abdomen
2. Feeling of undue satiety after eating
3. Nausea, heartburn, bloating and belching
4. Regurgitation, vomiting (occasionally)
5. Heaviness in the body
6. Headache and body ache
7. Thirstiness
8. Loss of taste etc.

The severity of these symptoms is often associated with eating.

Investigations

Following Investigations may be helpful to know whether indigestion is physiological as a process of ageing or secondary to any disease condition

1. Liver function test (LFT)
2. Ultrasonography (USG-Abdomen)
3. Upper G.I. Endoscopy
4. Barium meal follow through

Management approaches

a. Prevention

1. Consumption of *godhūma* (wheat), *mudga* (green gram), old rice, *rasona* (garlic), seasonal fruits, diet of high fiber content, *hiṅgu* (asafoetida), *drākṣa* (grapes), *āmalakī* (*Phyllanthus emblica* Gartn), *pippalī* (long pepper), *śuṅṭhī* (dry ginger), green leafy vegetables and luke warm water
2. Consume light and easily digestible food and chew food properly
3. Take *triphalā cūrṇa* 3 gm with lukewarm water at the bed time
4. Practice of *vajrāsana* after meal regularly



5. Avoid irregular food habits, heavy, unwholesome, oily and spicy food items, bakery and preserved items
6. Avoid overeating, suppression of natural urges, excess tea, coffee, smoking
7. Avoid irregular sleep, worries, anxiety, depression

b. Medical management

Line of treatment (A.H.Su.8/27)

1. **Nidāna parivarjana (avoidance of aetiological factors)** - Incompatible diet, irregular food habits, drinking of excess water immediately after meal should be avoided
2. *Sarvāṅga svedana* for 1 day
3. *Dīpana* (increasing the digestive fire/ process) with *Trikaṭu cūrṇa*
4. *Pācana* (digestion of toxic metabolites) with *Citrakādi vaṭī*, *Laśunādi vaṭī* etc.
5. *Saṁśodhana cikitsā* (bio-cleansing therapies) followed by *Śamana cikitsā* (Palliative therapy) should be advocated

- i. *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) with*

<i>Drākṣa</i> (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)	-	10 gm
<i>Āragvadha</i> (<i>Cassia fistula</i>)	-	10 gm
<i>Harītakī</i> (<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Linn.)	-	10 gm
<i>Kuṭakī</i> (<i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i>)	-	5 gm along with 1 teaspoon full <i>Eraṇḍa</i> (<i>Ricinus communis</i>) <i>taila</i>

or

Eraṇḍa taila 10-20 ml with half glass of milk at night

It should be decided by physician according to the condition of the patient whether *Śodhana* therapy (bio-cleansing therapies) is to be advocated or not.

* (Above said formulations are common in practice but dose should be adjusted by the physician according to patient's condition).

6. Drug therapy



SINGLE DRUGS

Drug	Dosage (per dose)	MOA ^s / Vehicle	Duration*
<i>Śuṅṭhī</i> (<i>Zingiber officinale</i> Rose.) <i>cūrṇa</i>	1 gm	Warm water	7 days
<i>Ajamoda</i> (<i>Apium graveolens</i> Linn.) <i>cūrṇa</i>	3 gm	Lukewarm water	7 days
<i>Pippalī</i> (<i>Piper longum</i> Linn.) <i>cūrṇa</i>	2-3 gm	Lukewarm water	7 days

COMPOUND FORMULATIONS

Drug	Dosage (per dose)	MOA ^s / Vehicle	Duration*
<i>Hingvaṣṭaka cūrṇa</i>	1.5-3 gm.	<i>Ghṛta</i> / Luke warm water	7 - 10 days
<i>Lavaṇabhāskara cūrṇa</i>	1-2.5 gm	Butter Milk	7 - 10 days
<i>Gandharvahastādi kaṣāya</i>	15 ml	Water	7 - 10 days
<i>Ajamodārka</i>	12 - 24 ml	Water	7 - 10 days
<i>Pudīnārka</i>	12 - 25 ml	Water	7 - 10 days
<i>Śaṅkha vaṭī</i>	250 - 500 mg	Honey/ warm water/ Butter milk	7 - 10 days
<i>Citrakādi vaṭī</i>	1.5 mg	Warm water/ Butter milk	7 - 10 days
<i>Hingvādi vaṭī</i>	1.5 gm	Warm water	7 - 10 days
<i>Laśunādi vaṭī</i>	1.5 gm	Warm water	7 - 10 days
<i>Agnitunḍīvaṭī</i>	125 - 250 mg	Water	7 - 10 days
<i>Saṅjīvanī vaṭī</i>	125 mg	<i>Ārdraka Svarasa</i> / Warm water	7 - 10 days
<i>Indukānta ghṛta</i>	10 gm	Warm water/Milk	7 - 10 days
<i>Pippalyādi ghṛta</i>	10 gm	Warm water/Milk	7 - 10 days
<i>Pippalyāsava</i>	12 - 24 ml	Water	7 - 10 days
<i>Kumāryāsava</i>	12 - 24 ml	Water	7 - 10 days



<i>Drākṣāriṣṭa</i>	12 - 24 ml	Water	7 - 10 days
<i>Jīrakādyariṣṭa</i>	12 - 24 ml	Water	7 - 10 days

§MOA - Mode of administration

* Initially 2 times in a day after meal followed by condition of patient and physician's direction

NOTE: Out of the drugs mentioned above any one of the drug or in the combination may be prescribed by the physician. The duration of the treatment may vary from patient to patient. Physician should decide the dosage (per dose) and duration of the therapy based on the clinical findings and response to therapy.

c. Yogic practices - The following *yogic* practices are beneficial in Indigestion; however, these should be performed only under the guidance of qualified Yoga therapist. Duration should be decided by the Yoga therapist.

1. *Sūryanamaskāra, Kaṭicakrāsana, Bhujāṅgāsana, Dhanurāsana, Vajrāsana, Pavanamuktāsana* etc.
2. *Prāṇāyāma (Sūrya anuloma viloma, Bhastrikā)*
3. *Agnisāra kriyā, Bhujāṅginī mudrā*
4. *Kuñjala, Daṇḍa dhauti, Vastra dhauti* etc.

Counselling - Advice the patient to

1. Ensure the digestion of previously consumed food before having next meal
2. Eat properly in a pleasant, quite atmosphere without watching T.V., reading, talking, etc.
3. Take food at a regular time
4. Take dinner 2-3 hours before sleep
5. Walk regularly after dinner
6. Include fiber food in diet
7. Avoid the habit of skipping breakfast
8. Avoid spicy, oily and heavy food articles
9. Avoid tea or coffee before sleep
10. Avoid the habit of drinking too much water after meal



11. Avoid junk food like pizza, burger, samosa, kachori etc.

Indications for referral

1. Patients who are suffering from indigestion secondary to another disease may be referred
2. Having carcinoma of esophagus or other alimentary tract

COSTING DETAILS

Approx. costing of Indigestion Management

S.No.	Medicine	Requirement	Unit	Rate in Rs.	Cost in Rs.
1.	<i>Śuṅṭhī cūrṇa</i>	15	gm	0.6	9
2.	<i>Ajamoda cūrṇa</i>	15	gm	0.5	7.5
3.	<i>Pippalī cūrṇa</i>	15	gm	0.5	7.5
4.	<i>Hīṅgvaṣṭaka cūrṇa</i>	20-60	gm	0.28	5.6 - 18
5.	<i>Lavaṇabhāskara cūrṇa</i>	50-60	gm	0.31	16 - 19
6.	<i>Gandharvahastādi kaṣāya</i>	210-300	ml	0.5	105-150
7.	<i>Ajamodārka</i>	200-500	ml	0.13	26 - 65
8.	<i>Pudīnārka</i>	200-500	ml	0.50	100 - 250
9.	<i>Śaṅkha vaṭī</i>	3.5-10	gm	1.90	7 - 19
10.	<i>Citrakādi vaṭī</i>	21-30	gm	1.20	26 - 36
11.	<i>Hīṅgvādi vaṭī</i>	21-30	gm	2.00	42 - 60
12.	<i>Laśunādi vaṭī</i>	21-30	gm	1.60	33 - 48
13.	<i>Agnitundīvaṭī</i>	1.75-3.5	gm	2.20	4 - 8
14.	<i>Sañjīvanī vaṭī</i>	1.75-3.0	gm	1.60	3 - 5
15.	<i>Indukānta ghr̥ta</i>	70-100	gm	0.45	32-45
16.	<i>Pippalyādi ghr̥ta</i>	70-100	gm	0.34	24-34



17.	<i>Pippalyāsava</i>	200-500	ml	0.75	16-39
18.	<i>Kumāryāsava</i>	200-500	ml	1.54	31 - 77
19.	<i>Drākṣāriṣṭa</i>	200-500	ml	0.12	24 - 60
20.	<i>Jīrakādyariṣṭa</i>	200-500	ml	1.43	29 - 72

Approx. costing of *Pañcakarma* procedure in Indigestion **

S.No.	<i>Pañcakarma</i> procedure	Days	Rate in Rs./ day	Cost in Rs.
1.	<i>Sarvāṅga sveda</i>	1	150	150
2.	<i>Vamana</i> (including preparatory and post therapeutic procedures)	-	-	1000
3.	<i>Virecana</i> (including preparatory and post therapeutic procedures)	-	-	1000

