

# Role of Pathya Apathaya in Sheetpitta

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## Abstract

**Background-** *Sheetapitta*, a condition analogous to urticaria, is an allergic skin disorder caused by the imbalance of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha Dosha*. It is triggered by exposure to cold wind (*Sheeta Vayu*), incompatible food intake (*Viruddha Ahara*), and weak digestive fire (*Agnimandya*), leading to toxin accumulation (*Ama*). Ayurveda emphasizes the significance of *Pathya* (wholesome diet and lifestyle) and *Apathya* (unwholesome diet and lifestyle) in disease management and prevention.

**Objective-** To evaluate the role of *Pathya-Apathya* in the management and prevention of *Sheetapitta* by analyzing its pathogenesis (*Samprapti*), dietary and lifestyle influences, and their impact on symptoms and recurrence.

**Methods-** review was done from classical Ayurvedic texts (*Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya*, *Ashtanga Samgraha*) along with commentaries, journals, and internet sources such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and ResearchGate.

**Results-** *Pathya* practices, including easily digestible and *sheet* foods (e.g., Moong dal, rice, buttermilk, turmeric, and neem), pacify aggravated *Dosha*, improve digestion, and aid in detoxification. Conversely, *Apathya*, including heavy, oily, spicy, fermented foods, *Divaswapana*, and exposure to extreme temperatures, worsens the condition.

**Conclusion-** Ayurveda highlights that adherence to *Pathya* enhances treatment outcomes, while *Apathya* can aggravate symptoms and reduce medication effectiveness. Implementing a balanced diet and lifestyle modifications is crucial for managing *Sheetapitta*, preventing recurrence, and maintaining overall health.

**Keywords:** Ayurveda *Sheetapitta*, Urticaria, *Pathaya*, *Apathaya*, Wholesome, Unwholesome, Diet, Lifestyle

## Introduction

Ayurveda emphasizes the significance of *Pathya* (wholesome diet and lifestyle) and *Apathya* (unwholesome diet and lifestyle) in the management of various diseases. According to Ayurvedic principles, health is maintained by balancing the three *Dosha*—*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*. Any imbalance in these *Dosha* can lead to various disorders, and diet and lifestyle play a crucial role in restoring equilibrium. *Sheetapitta* is derived from two Sanskrit terms- *Sheeta* and *Pitta*.

*Sheeta* is associated with *Hima Ritu* (winter season) as mentioned in various *Nighantu*<sup>1</sup>. *Pitta* (*Tap Santape*) is defined as the principle responsible for generating heat in the body<sup>2</sup>.

*Sheetapitta* is a disorder that manifests primarily due to an imbalance of *Vata* and *Kapha Dosha*, along with the aggravation of *Pitta Dosha*<sup>3</sup>. It closely resembles allergic skin conditions such as *urticaria* or *hives* in modern medicine. Factors such as exposure to cold wind (*Sheeta Vayu*), excessive intake of

incompatible foods (*Viruddha Ahara*), and weak digestive fire (*Agnimandya*) contribute to its onset<sup>3</sup>. This results in the accumulation of toxins (*Ama*), which further aggravates the condition. In the pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) of this disease, *Agni Mandhya* (digestive impairment) and *Ama* (toxins) play a pivotal role. Impaired digestion, aggravated by irregular dietary habits, leads to the formation of *Ama*, which vitiates the *Tridosha*. This disturbance causes *Srothorodha* (channel obstruction) due to *Sanga* (accumulation) and *Vimargagamana* (displacement of Dosha). As a result, the *Doshadushya Sammurchana* initiated in the *Aamashaya* (stomach) eventually localizes in the *Twak* (skin), giving rise to disease symptoms.

The role of *Pathya-Apathya* is particularly vital in the management of *Sheetapitta*, as dietary and lifestyle modifications help in pacifying aggravated *Dosha*, enhancing digestion, and reducing toxin accumulation. Ayurvedic texts emphasize that following a *Pathya* regimen not only aids in faster recovery but also prevents recurrence. Proper dietary habits, lifestyle adjustments, and herbal formulations can provide long-term relief and improve overall health. Understanding and implementing *Pathya* while avoiding *Apathya* is key to effective disease management and maintaining a balanced state of health. The concept of *Pathya-Apathya* plays a crucial role in alleviating the symptoms of *Sheetapitta* by balancing *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha Dosha*, enhancing digestion, and detoxifying the body.

Urticaria affects approximately 20% of the population at some point in their lifetime. Acute urticaria is more commonly observed in young individuals, whereas chronic urticaria tends to be more prevalent among middle-aged women. Patients with urticaria are generally less likely to have a personal or family history of atopy. However, allergic urticaria is more frequently seen in individuals with active atopic dermatitis or hay fever.

Bandkowski (1968) reported an age incidence of 3.4% in infants and children, compared to 1.87% in the general population. Among 885 cases of urticaria, only one was observed in a patient over 65 years of age. Urbech and Gottlieb noted that two-thirds of the 500 cases studied occurred between the ages of 20 and 40. Experts widely agree that urticaria is most prevalent during the third and fourth decades of life. Additionally, Volterani (1965) found a higher prevalence in women, with 64% of cases occurring in females<sup>4</sup>.

### Material and Methods-

Here, various information regarding *Sheetpitta* (Urticaria), *Pathya* (wholesome diet and lifestyle), and *Apathya* (unwholesome diet and lifestyle) has been collected from classical texts- *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashthanga Hridaya*, *Ashthang Samghraha* with their commentaries, journals, and internet sources like Goggle scholar, PubMed, Research gate.

### Aim:

To evaluate the role of *Pathya* (wholesome diet and lifestyle) and *Apathya* (unwholesome diet and lifestyle) in the management and prevention of *Sheetapitta*.

### Objectives:

1. To understand the pathogenesis (*Samprapti*) of *Sheetapitta* in Ayurveda.
2. To analyze the impact of *Pathya-Apathya* on *Sheetapitta* symptoms.
3. To highlight the importance of diet and lifestyle modifications in reducing recurrence.

**Discussion-**

*Charak* defined *Pathya* as treatment, detailing wholesome and unwholesome substances for general health and specific patient well-being.<sup>5</sup> *Vaidya Lolimbraja* emphasized the significance of *Pathya Aahar* (wholesome food), stating that a patient consuming wholesome food may not require medicine. Conversely, if a patient persistently consumes unwholesome food, medicine becomes ineffective, rendering treatment futile<sup>6</sup>. *Sheetpitta* is a disease caused by ‘*Asatmya Sevana*’ (incompatible dietary and lifestyle habits), leading to the vitiation of *Kapha* and *Vata Dosha*. *Pathya* includes wholesome foods and substances that promote health and balance bodily functions. These include aged rice, green gram, horse gram soup, drumstick root, bitter gourd, medicinal plants, pomegranate, *Triphala*, honey, and meat broth from dry-land animals. Additionally, consuming foods with pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes, warm water, and dietary choices that balance *Pitta* and *Kapha Dosha* are considered beneficial. Conversely, *Apathya* refers to unwholesome foods and practices that may disrupt physiological equilibrium. These include milk, sugarcane products, fish, meat from wetland animals, fresh alcohol, and incompatible food combinations. Moreover, lifestyle factors such as daytime sleep, *AtiVyavya* prolonged sun exposure, frequent bathing, and consuming oily, heavy, sour, and sweet foods are considered detrimental to health. In Ayurveda, the treatment of *Sheetapitta* (Urticaria) focuses on using *Pathya-Apathya* principles to regulate eating habits (*Ahara*) and lifestyle changes (*Vihara*). Since the imbalance of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha Dosha* is the primary cause of *Sheetapitta*, dietary and lifestyle changes are essential for reducing symptoms, avoiding recurrence, and improving therapy effectiveness.

<i>Pathaya in Sheetapitta</i>	<i>Apathaya in Sheetapitta</i>
Cereals & Pulses: Aged rice ( <i>Purana Shali</i> ), Green gram ( <i>Mudga</i> ), Horse gram soup ( <i>Kulattha Yusha</i> )	Dairy & Sugar Products: Milk ( <i>Ksheera</i> ), Sugarcane derivatives ( <i>Ikshu Vikara</i> )
Vegetables & Herbs: Drumstick root ( <i>Shigru Mool</i> ), Bitter gourd ( <i>Karvellam</i> ), Medicinal plants like <i>Upodika</i> and <i>Vetagra</i>	Protein Sources: Fish ( <i>Matsya</i> ), Meat of wetland animals ( <i>Anupa Mamsa</i> )
Fruits & Phytochemicals: Pomegranate ( <i>Dadima</i> ), <i>Triphala</i> (a combination of <i>Emblica officinalis</i> , <i>Terminalia chebula</i> , and <i>Terminalia bellirica</i> )	Fermented & Alcoholic Beverages: Fresh alcohol ( <i>Naveena Madya</i> )
Sweeteners: Honey ( <i>Madhu</i> )	Digestive Practices: Suppression of vomiting urge ( <i>Vamana Vegadharana</i> ), Consumption of incompatible foods ( <i>Viruddhashana</i> )
Protein Sources: Meat broth from dry-land animals ( <i>Jangala Mamsarasa</i> )	Lifestyle Factors: Daytime sleep ( <i>Divashayana</i> ), Excessive sexual activity ( <i>Vyavaya</i> ), Sun exposure ( <i>Atapa</i> ) <sup>7</sup>
Taste Preferences: Pungent ( <i>Katu</i> ), Bitter ( <i>Tikta</i> ), and Astringent ( <i>Kashaya</i> ) taste substances <sup>8</sup>	Personal Hygiene & Routines: Bathing ( <i>Snana</i> ), Oily and heavy foods ( <i>Snigdha, Guru Anna</i> ), Sour-tasting foods ( <i>Amla Rasa</i> ), and Sweet-tasting foods ( <i>Madhura Rasa</i> )

Hydration & Balance: Warm water ( <i>Ushna Jala</i> ), Foods that balance Pitta and Kapha doshas ( <i>Pitta-Shleshmahara Dravya</i> ) <sup>9</sup>	
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Ayurveda describes various etiological factors (*Hetu*) responsible for the manifestation of *Sheetapitta*, broadly classified into *Aaharaja Hetu* (dietary factors) and *Viharaja Hetu* (lifestyle-related factors). These contribute to the vitiation of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha Dosha*, leading to the pathogenesis of the disease.

**Pathya in Sheetpitta**

<i>Draya</i>	<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Guna</i>	<i>Veerya</i>	<i>Vipaka</i>	<i>Karma</i>
<i>Karvallaka</i>	<i>Tikta, Katu</i>	<i>Laghu, Ruksha</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha Pitta shamak</i>
<i>Kulatha</i>	<i>Kashaya</i>	<i>Laghu, Vidahi</i>	<i>Ushna</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Kapha Vata shamak</i>
<i>Shali</i>	<i>Madhur, Kashaya</i>	<i>Snigdha, Laghu, Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Pitta Nashaka, Vata Kapha Karaka</i>
<i>Upodika</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Sheeta, Snigdha</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Kapha Janak, Vata Pitta Nashak</i>
<i>Vetagra</i>	<i>Tikta</i>		<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	
<i>Mudga</i>	<i>Madhura</i>	<i>Ruksha, Laghu, Grahi, Sheeta</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>	<i>Katu</i>	<i>Vata Janka, Kapha Pitta Shamaka</i>

Ayurveda focuses on preventing diseases rather than treating them, emphasizing the concept of “*Nidan Parivarjan*.” This principle highlights that diseases arise from specific etiological factors (*Hetu/Nidana*) and can be prevented by eliminating these causes<sup>10</sup>. In *Sheetapitta*, a *Sheeta* and *Laghu* diet is essential to balance *Vata*, *Kapha*, and *Pitta*. *Shali* (Rice) and *Mudga* (Green gram) are beneficial as they soothe inflammation and pacify *Pitta*. *Upodika* and *Vetagra* help but should be consumed in moderation to avoid excess *Kapha*. *Karvellaka* (Bitter gourd) and *Kulatha* (Horse gram) may increase *Vata* or *Kapha Shamaka*, due to hot potency. A well-balanced diet supports healing and symptom relief<sup>11</sup>.

**Conclusion**

In *Sheetapitta*, following *Pathya* (wholesome diet and habits) plays a vital role in reducing symptoms and preventing recurrence. Ayurveda states that proper dietary regulations and lifestyle modifications are as important as medication in the treatment of diseases. *Acharya Charaka* has emphasized that if a person follows *Pathya Ahara*, medicines may not even be required, whereas consuming *Apathya Ahara* can make even the best medicines ineffective. Therefore, adopting a *Pathya* lifestyle ensures better management and prevention of *Sheetapitta*, leading to a healthier and balanced life.

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