



# THERAPEUTIC ROLE OF YOGA AND PRANAYAMA IN AMLAPITTA

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## ABSTRACT:

*Amlapitta* is a disease which is prevalent all over the world especially in India due to unhealthy dietary habits, sedentary lifestyle, stress, sleep deprivation. Prevalence in Indian subcontinent can be as high as 80 per cent among the population. Both pharmacological and non-pharmacological methods are there to treat hyperacidity. Regular use of medications can cause some side effects to the human body. In contemporary science many non-pharmacological interventions are available like *Yoga*. *Yoga* is a fantastic practice that originated in ancient India and has since spread worldwide. It encompasses a variety of physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines aimed at achieving harmony and balance within oneself. The physical aspect of *Yoga* involves various postures (*Asanas*) that promote flexibility, strength, and balance. These *Asanas* are often combined with breathing exercises (*Pranayama*) to enhance the mind-body connection and promote relaxation. Beyond the physical benefits, *Yoga* is also renowned for its ability to reduce stress, increase mindfulness, and improve overall well-being. *Yogic* techniques like *Surya namaskara*, *Urdhwahastana*, *Trikonasana*, *Vrikshasana*, *Dandasana*, *Paschimottansana*, *Ushtrasana*, *Vajrasana*, *Shalabhasana*, *Pavanamuktasana*, *Savasana* and *Pranayamas* like *Nadishuddhi*, *Sheetali pranayama*, *Bhramari pranayama* are beneficial in management of *Amlapitta*. So, in this review we are analysing the therapeutical effect of *Asanas* and *Pranayama* in the management of *Amlapitta*.

Keywords: *Amlapitta*, Hyperacidity, *Yoga*, *Asana*, *Pranayama*.

## INTRODUCTION:

*Amlapitta* is a disease which is prevalent all over the world especially in India due to unhealthy dietary habits, sedentary lifestyle, stress, sleep deprivation.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Prevalence in Indian subcontinent can be as high as 80 per cent among the population.<sup>5</sup>

*Amlapitta* is a frequently encountered pathological manifestation of *Annavaha Srotas* which is explained in *Ayurveda classics*; Wherein the *Shuktata* (fermentation) of *pitta dosha* gets elevated.<sup>6</sup> Most of the people who are affected with *Amlapitta*, they will try to manage it by taking antacids. Continuous use of these antacids will lead to problems such as inhibition of absorption of iron, calcium and phosphates, milk-alkali syndrome, impotence, gynecomastia, liver damage, increased risk of cancer.<sup>7,8,9</sup> So, a better approach is needed by changing the life style.

*Yoga* is a timeless practice that has transcended centuries and cultures, offering a profound journey towards physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. *Yoga* practice is beneficial in controlling and healing so many bodily ailments by promoting harmony, balance and inner peace.

*Yogic* techniques like *Surya namaskara*, *Urdhwahastana*, *Trikonasana*, *Vrikshasana*, *Dandasana*, *Paschimottasana*, *Ushtrasana*, *Vajrasana*, *Shalabhasana*, *Pavanamuktasana*, *Savasana* and *Pranayamas* like *Nadishuddhi*, *Sheetali pranayama*, *Bhramari pranayama* are beneficial in management of *Amlapitta*.

## AMLAPITTA:

*Amlapitta* is a pathology which involves *Annavaha Srotas* (digestive tract) and has a very bare minimum explanation in *Bruhatrayee's* (*Charaka samhitha*, *Susrutha samhitha*, *Ashtangahrudaya*). The detailed elucidation of *Amlapitta* can be found in *Laghutrayee's* (*Madhava Nidana*, *Sharangdara Samhita* and *Bhava Prakasha*). Even though much references are not there in *Bruhatrayee's*, scattered references about *Amlapitta* are seen. It is explained as *Viruddha ahara*<sup>10</sup> (antagonistic food) and *Visha Janya Vikara* (disease caused by toxic substance).<sup>11</sup>

According to *Madhava Nidhana* aetiology is, The *Pitta* which has already accumulated in the body gets further aggravated by consuming *Viruddha*, *Dushta* (vitiated), *Amla* (sour taste), *Vidahi* foods (substances that produces burning sensation) and *Pitta* aggravating foods and drinks is called as *Amlapitta*. Symptoms of *Amlapitta* like *Avipaka* (indigestible), *Klama* (exhaustion without exertion), *Utklesha* (nausea), *Tikta amlodgara* (bitter and sour eructation), *Gourava* (heaviness), *Hrut-kanta Daha* (burning sensation of heart and throat), *Aruchi* (tastelessness) can be seen.<sup>12</sup>

According to *Bhavaprakasha Madhyamakhanda*, Due to consumption of foods which are opposite in their properties, which are contaminated, fermented, hot and spicy and which aggravate *Pitta Dosha*, the food taken in gets fermented and is called *Amlapitta*.<sup>13</sup>

*Amlapitta* is told as *pitta* with *amla guna*. It is also told as *vyadhi* caused by over eating of *Raja masha* (Cow peas – *Vigna unguiculata*), by eating over quantity of *Lavana* (salt).<sup>14,15,16</sup>

## HYPERACIDITY

Acid reflux disease, also known as hyperacidity, is a common condition that affects millions of people worldwide. It occurs when the stomach produces too much acid and it flows back into the oesophagus, causing a burning sensation in the chest and throat. This condition can be uncomfortable and may lead to more serious health problems if left untreated.<sup>17</sup>

It may present with an array of symptoms, the most common being non-descript epigastric discomfort.

Other symptoms include nausea, vomiting, loss of appetite, belching, and bloating.

Other factors like food habits such as, excessive intake of spicy and sour food like green chilli, pepper, tamarind, pickles, fried food, oil baked fast and junk foods, excessive intake of food, improper timing of food consumption, excessive intake of water before and after food intake, not taking food during hunger. Other bad habits which will cause hyperacidity are excessive intake of tea and coffee, excessive smoking, alcoholism, tobacco chewing, drug abuse, carbonated drinks intake. One another major factor is psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, depression, antacids and corticosteroid drugs.<sup>18</sup>

### AHARA:

Before practicing *Yoga*, one should avoid certain foods (*Agrahyahara*).

Food not to be taken:

In the beginning of yoga practice, one should discard bitter, acid, salt, pungent and roasted things, curd, whey, heavy vegetables, wine, palmnuts and over ripe jackfruit, *Kulaththa* (*Dolichos biflorus*) and *Masur* beans (*Lens culinaris*), pumpkins and vegetable stems, gourds, berries, *Katha-bel* (*Feronia elephantum*), and *Palasa* (*Butea frondose*), *Kadamba* (*Nauclea cadamba*), *Jambira* (citron), *Bimba* (*Coccinia grandis*), *Lukucha* (a kind of bread fruit tree), onions, lotus, *Kamaranga* (*Averrhoa carambola*), *Piyala* (*Buchanama latifodia*), *Hingu* (*asafoetida*), *Salmali* (*Salmalia malabarica*), *Kemuka* (*Costus speciosus*), fresh butter, ghee, thickened milk, sugar and date sugar etc, as well as ripe plantain, cocoa-nut, pomegranate, dates, *Lavani* fruit, *Amlaki* (*Emblie myrobalan*) and everything containing acid juices. A yogi should avoid hard (not easily digestible), sinful food, or putrid food, or very hot or very stale food as well as very cooling or very much exciting food

An individual should avoid much travelling, company of women and warming himself by fire. one should avoid.<sup>19</sup>

Food to be taken:

One should eat rice, barley or wheaten bread. Can have *Mudga* (*Phaseolus mungo*), *Masha* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), *Patola* (*Trichosanthes dioica*), Jackfruit, *Manakachu* (*Arum colocasia*), *Kakkola* (a kind of berry), jujube (*Ziziphus jujuba*), the bonduc nut (*Bonducella guilandina*), cucumber, plantain, fig; the unripe plantain, the small plantain, the plantain stem and roots, brinjal, green & fresh vegetables (*Baalasaaka*), black

vegetables (*Kaalasaaka*), the leaves of *Patola*, the *Vastuka-saka* (*Chenopodium murale*) and *Hima-locika saka* (five *Sakas* praised as fit for Yoga practitioners), Cardamom, *Jatiphala*, cloves, aphrodisiacs or stimulants, the rose-apple, *Haritaki* and palm dates. These should be clean, white and free from chaff.

Pure, sweet and cooling food should be eaten to fill half the stomach. Eating thus sweet juices with pleasure and leaving the other half of the stomach empty is called as *Mitahara*.<sup>20</sup>

These foods are easily digestible for the body and when it is paired with yoga one can prevent *Amlapitta Upadravas* from ever forming.

## YOGA:

*SuryaNamskara*: *Suryanamaskara* is a combination of regulated breathing along with *Pranamasana*, *Hastautthanasana*, *Padahasthasana*, *Asvasanchalanasana*, *Dandasana*, *Ashtanga Namaskara*, *Bhujangasana*, *Parvatasana*. *Suryanamaskar* also improves peristalsis of the intestines, stimulates blood circulation throughout the body, massages, and tones up kidneys so that wastes are efficiently eliminated from the body at ease, and helps the body to eliminate toxins through increased perspiration.<sup>21</sup>

Some other *Yogasanas* which are told to be beneficial to manage *Amlapitta* are *Urdhwahastana*, *Trikonasana*, *Vrikshasana*, *Dandasana*, *Paschimottansana*, *Ushtrasana*, *Vajrasana*, *Shalabhasana*, *Pavanamuktasana*, *Savasana* and *Pranayamas* like *Nadishuddhi*, *Sheetali pranayama*, *Bhramari pranayama*.<sup>22</sup>

*Urdhwahastanasana*: It can help improve your digestion. It is also a great pose for stretching the shoulders and arms.<sup>23</sup>

*Trikonasana*: *Trikonasana* or *Utthita Trikonasana* Triangle Pose is a Standing *Asana* in modern yoga as exercise. Variations include *Baddha Trikonasana* (bound triangle pose) and *Parivrtta Trikonasana* (revolved triangle pose).<sup>24</sup> This pose stimulates the bowel movement, regulates the colon, and strengthens the digestive system.<sup>25</sup>

*Vrikshasana*: The meditative aspect of the pose has a soothing effect on the nervous system, reducing stress and anxiety.<sup>26</sup> Stress and anxiety is also a reason for *Amlapitta*.

*Dandasana*: This *Asana* gives relief to persons who feel a bloating sensation in the abdomen due to gas and also to those suffering from gastric complaints.<sup>27</sup>

*Paschimottanasana*: By this *asana* the *Pranic* currents rise through *Sushumna*, the digestive fire increases, the abdomen becomes flat, and the practitioner becomes free from diseases<sup>28</sup>.

*Vajrasana*: It helps in digestion, relieving constipation, curing digestive acidity and gas formation<sup>29</sup>.

*Shalabhasana*: This is called locust posture<sup>30</sup>. The pose aids digestion and relieves gastric troubles and flatulence<sup>31</sup>.

*Pavanamuktasana*: It may be beneficial in increasing the muscular contractions of the digestive tract which moves the food ahead, thus removing gas and helping prevent constipation.<sup>32</sup>

*Savasana*: It removes tiredness and enables the mind (and whole body) to relax. The relaxation of mind aids in better digestion and all psychosomatic diseases<sup>33</sup>.

*Nadi Shodhana Pranayama*: It increases the digestive fire and appetite. Brings the balance in sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems by relaxing the sympathetic nervous system and strengthening the parasympathetic nervous system. This helps in reducing stress related indigestion by regulating stress hormones. Therapeutically it will lower the levels of stress and anxiety by harmonizing the Pranas. As stress is one of causative factor of *Amlapitta*.<sup>34</sup>

*Sheetkari Pranayama*: The practice on proper use of this Pranayama will be free from increased appetite, thirst and sleep.<sup>35</sup> It has a cooling effect, when air enters through the mouth it cools the tongue and lowers the temperature of the blood leaving the lungs and thus of the whole body<sup>36</sup>.

*Sheetali Pranayama*: This *Kumbhaka* called *Sheetali* cures an enlarged stomach or spleen and other related diseases, fever, excess bile, hunger and thirst, and counteracts poisons. By the regular practice of this *Pranayama*, it helps to cure *Pitta janyarogas*.<sup>37</sup> This practice not only cool and calm the physical body, they also affect the mind in the same way<sup>38</sup>.

*Bhramari Pranayama*: The sound produced in *Bhramari* is very soothing and thus the practice relieves mental tension and anxiety and helps reduce anger<sup>39</sup>.

*Uddiyana Bhanda*: The autonomic nerves comprising the solar plexus are strengthened. The processes of digestion, assimilation and elimination are directly affected<sup>40</sup>.

One can follow *Yogasanas* as told in Table 1.

table 1 - *Yogasanas* for *Amlapitta*

Procedure	Time/Rounds
<i>Shitilikarana Vyayama</i> – Loosening exercise	10 minutes
<i>Suryanamskara</i>	6 rounds
Standing asanas	
<i>Urdhwahastasana</i>	Each 3 rounds
<i>Trikonasana</i>	
<i>Vrikshasana</i>	
Sitting asanas	
<i>Dandasana</i>	Each for 2 minutes
<i>Paschimottanasana</i>	
<i>Vajrasana</i>	
Prone and supine asanas	

<i>Shalabhasana</i>	Each for 2 minutes
<i>Pavanamuktasana</i>	
<i>Savasana</i>	
Pranayama	
<i>Nadi shodhana pranayama</i>	Each for 3 minutes
<i>Sheetkari pranayama</i>	
<i>Sheetali pranayama</i>	
<i>Bhramari pranayama</i>	

## Discussion:

*Ayurveda* the science of life gives importance for both curative and preventive aspects. Majority of the literatures explains about the ways that to be followed to maintain a healthy state of life. One of them doing *Nitya Vyayama*. To do that *Yoga* and *Pranayama* are some of the best methods explained in contemporary science.

Before starting anything, *Agni* should be maintained in a healthy way. To do that the most important way is to proper method of *Ahara sevana vidhi*. *Ahara* is one among the three sub pillars supporting life. As *Charaka* told *Ahara* is the best among things which help to sustain life. Right amount of food will help the body to clear the morbid contents and even to increase concentration while doing *Yoga*, as told in *Chandogya Upanishad*; consumption of pure food makes mind clear. One of the ailments which is prevalent in our world because of lack of proper *Vyayama* (exercise) and wrong *Ahara* intake is *Amlapitta*.

*Surya Namaskara*, also known as Sun Salutation, is a sequence of 12 *Yoga* postures performed in a flowing and coordinated manner. The practice offers a wide range of physical, mental, and spiritual benefits. Firstly, it serves as an excellent full-body workout, engaging multiple muscle groups and promoting flexibility and strength. The dynamic movements and controlled breathing enhance cardiovascular health and stimulate blood circulation. Regular practice of *Surya Namaskar* improves digestion and helps detoxify the body by aiding in the elimination of toxins. From a mental perspective, it promotes mindfulness and reduces stress, anxiety, and depression.<sup>41</sup>

The symptoms of *Amlapitta* are *Avipaka*, *Klama*, *Utklesha*, *Tikta amlodgara*, *Gaurava*, *Hrut-kanta daha*, *aruchi*. The above told *Asanas* protocol will be helpful for each of the symptoms. *Suryanamaskara* will help to relieve the symptoms of *Avipaka* and *Gaurava* as the dynamic movements in *Suryanamaskara* helps to kick start digestion and reduce heaviness of the body. As told above it will also help in peristaltic movement thereby helping to reduce symptoms of *Utklesha*. *Urdhwahastasana* can help improve digestion. That is, it will help to reduce *Avipaka*. *Trikonasana* will stimulates the bowel movement and strengthens the digestive system. So, it can help to reduce *Utklesha*, *Tikta amlodgara*, *Hrut-kanta daha*, *Avipaka*, *Aruchi*. *Vrikshasana* and also *Shavasana* will help in relieving stress thereby helping in better digestion and reduces *Klama*. *Vajrasana*,

*Shalabhasana* and *Pavanamuktasana* helps in relieving constipation, gas formation. Holding flatulence will cause bloating, indigestion and heart burn.<sup>42</sup> *Pranayamas* will help in maintaining stress which will help to have a better enteric nervous system function and thereby good digestion.

The direct positive effect of Yoga on the digestive system is that it's like an internal massage of GI tract from the mouth to the anus, including the stomach area, intestines, liver, and pancreas. This massage makes sure of the flow of blood and oxygen, and also strengthens the muscles of the internal organs.<sup>43</sup>

Recent studies proved that there is connection between brain and gastrointestinal tract. It is called as brain-gut connection. So, any kind of stress or anxiety can affect the enteric nervous system and can alter the digestive process. So, *Yoga* will be very helpful in maintaining this brain-gut connection.

### Conclusion:

Practice of *Asana* makes the body free from the influence of the dualities of heat and cold and similar other influences. The *Asanas* mentioned above will help to improve digestion and to regulate the formation of gastric juices. It will also help us to calm our mind and thereby giving less stress to the enteric nervous system. So, *Yoga* and *Pranayama* will help to manage *Amlapitta*.

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