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## An appraisal on Rationale of Agni and need of balanced Agni for Hair

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**Abstract:** Ayurveda described significant aspect of Agni in our body. It considers Dehagni as a Cause of life, Complexion, Strength, Health, Luster, Oja, Teja, Nourishment and Prana. As per Acharya Charak, Agni is divided into 13 types, i.e. one Jatharagni, five Bhutagni and seven Dhatvagni. Jatharagni is directly related to Dhatvagni (bioenergy in the cells and their metabolic processes) or Dhatu Nirmana Processes (ultimate tissue metabolism). Agni is the inflexible mediator in the process of digestion of food. Ingested food is to be digested, absorbed and assimilated, which is inevitable for the preservation of life and is performed by Agni. All the normal functions of Dhatu, Upadhatu and Mala in the body are directly dependent on healthy status of Agni. Hairs are said to be the Mala of Asthi Dhatu. Thus, Asthi Kshaya can lead to Keshapatan and Khalitya. Also, hairs are related to Rasa Dhatu as Rasavikruti affects health of hairs causing Khalitya, Palitya, etc disorders. So, for proper formation of Rasa Dhatu and Asthi Dhatu healthy status of Agni is must along with proper diet. If Agni is Normal, hair will be nourished, strong and healthy. If Agni gets Vikrut, it will affect the health of hair. Thus, Agni plays an important role in health of hairs.

**Keywords:** – Jatharagni, Dhatvagni, Dehagni, Agni, Hair, kasha

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**Introduction:**

The strength of Agni is certainly affected when it vitiates by a poor diet, improper food combinations, an obstructive lifestyle, emotional disturbances, rainy seasons. If someone learn to recognize and address imbalances with Agni relatively quickly, the effects need not be long lasting and it maintains health good. Otherwise, they will undoubtedly lead to ill health and disease. All the normal functions of Dhatu, Upadhatu and Mala in the body are directly dependent on healthy status of Agni. Thus, Ayurveda deliberates that Dehagni is the cause of life, strength, health, appearance, nutrition, luster, oja, teja and prana.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Concept of Prakriti-**

'Pra' means the 'beginning' or 'source of origin' and 'kriti' means 'to form'. Put together 'Prakriti' means 'natural form'. It means "nature" or natural constitution of the human body. This constitution comprises of both "physical body" as well as "mental body". Dosha, Dhatu and Mala are very important and Moola components of the body, moola means source as like a tree, its trunk, branches, leaves are reliant on its roots, in the same way the body is reliant on Dosha, Dhatu and Mala.<sup>[2]</sup> Acharya Charaka

has mentioned several additional factors which determine the Prakriti such as nature of the season, condition inside the uterus, food of mother during pregnancy, other regimens adopted by mother during pregnancy, Shukra-Shonita (sperm-ovum) of father and mother and Mahabhuta Vikara.<sup>[3,4]</sup> Prakriti is shaped by the dominance of Doshas at the time of Shukra-Shonita Samyoga (conception). That means Doshas took active part in the formation of Prakriti. Here, during the union the Dosha status in Shukra, Shonita, Garbhashaya and external environment incorporate to form the Dehaprakriti.<sup>[5]</sup>

**Concept of Agni:**

Agni is the force of intelligence within each cell, each tissue, and every system within the body. Ayurveda has given due importance to the concept of Agni, as it is critically important to our overall health. Ayurveda identifies a immense range of functions for which Agni is directly accountable, various factors responsible for the maintenance of health and causation of disease as well as decay revolve, but it also teaches us that impaired Agni is at the root of all imbalances and diseases.<sup>[6]</sup> In fact, according to Ayurveda, if Agni is balanced, it

tends to support strong immunity, and a long, healthy life. The cardinal signs of balanced Agni include- Normal appetite, clean tongue (Niramata of Jivha) Proper appreciation of taste, (actual feeling of all Rasa) Good digestive power, balanced metabolism, good immunity, sound sleep, proper excretion of malas (Mala, Mutra, Purish), strong energy and vitality, courage, and intelligence, cheerfulness, and enthusiasm.<sup>7</sup>

### Concept of Hair in Ayurveda:

Hair is the Upa Dhatu (sub tissue) of Asthi (bone tissue); some consider it as the mala (by product) of Shukra dhatu. The hair follicles have been named in Ayurveda as Romakoop. The kesh or lomes are tactile organs and are richly innervated. These Romakoop never increase in their size. Their blood supply is collateral from the reticular arterial plexus. They are like sweat gland and responsive to emotional stimulus. Acharya Charaka has described about swedavahasrotas and its appendages. This means the sweda is excreted out from the lomakoop of hair tract, he has also accepted the fact that the sweat gland and hair follicles are the out product of same srotas. This means the mool of swedavahasrotas are hair tract of skin.<sup>[8]</sup>

### Basic elements of hair:

In the origin and development of hair, there is substantial need of Prithvi (earth element) Mahabhoota.<sup>[9]</sup> During the process of formation and development of hair, the successive role of other tissues can also be estimated; because, though its origin begins at the earliest for its appearance it takes much time. So, the role of later dhatus like Asthi and Shukra can be well judged by this.

### Properties of Hair according to Specific Prakruti:

**Vata prakruti:** *alpa, ruksha, parush, sphutit, dhusar kesh.*<sup>[10,11]</sup>

**Pitta prakruti:** *alpa, mridu, pinga, kapila, khalitya, palitya, durgandhi yukt kesh.*<sup>[12,13]</sup>

**Kapha prakruti:** *Snigdha, Ghana, nil, dirgha, sthir, kutil kesh.*<sup>[14,15]</sup>

### Agni and Health of Hair:<sup>[16]</sup>

Ayurvedic hair care concepts cover all the aspects of hair health – growth of hair promotion, natural colour and prevention of hair fall. Ayurvedic classical literature emphasizes the utility of various herbal compounds in hair care. As far as the matter of hair and its growth is concerned, once again it is very essential to have the need of good nutrition and along with Agni condition as it is depending upon the Dhatunirmiti and



Dhatuposhan. So, the wellbeing of hair can be understood by three viewpoints like-

1. Kesha sanjanana - which helps in the origin of hair
2. Kesha vardhana - which helps growth of the hair
3. Kesha ranjana - which gives color to the hair

**Kesha sanjanana** - Kesha sanjanana where the origin of hair, there is a need of the substances which help to promote the Asthi and Shukra dhatus as the hair is directly linked with these tissues as a Updhatu. For the improvement of Asthi (bone tissue), Prithvi (earth element) and akasha (ether) mahabhootas are very essential. In this regard, the food and all other nutrients which are Madhura(sweet) and Lavana (salt), Kashaya (astringent taste) are very essential which also enhance the Agni. Thus, for the origin of hair, balanced nutrition with balanced diet is important too. Good diet helps in Agni enhance action.

**Kesha vardhana** - For the elevation of growth of hair, the drugs which are rich in snigdha (unctuousness), guru(heaviness), manda (slowness), sheeta(cold) and sthira (stable) qualities are essential. If Agni is in good condition, then digestion of food will enhance

these properties. Madhura(sweet), amla(sour) and slight kashaya (astringent) dominant substances contribute this benefit. The sesame oil or coconut oil are used as the bases for the purpose of Kesha vardhan.

**Kesha ranjana** - Ranjanata is possible by the substances which promote the Ranjaka Pitta and Bhrajaka pitta. In this condition, Agni is directly related to Pitta dosha and vice versa. So, for proper digestion, there should be balance in pitta dosha and Agni. It enhance Rasa dhatunirmiti and which further nourishes hair growth.

#### Conclusion:

If the Agni(digestive fire) is balanced, it tends to maintain a strong immunity and a long and healthy life. All the normal functions of Dhatu, Upadhatu and Mala in the body are directly dependent on Agni's health status. Similarly, if the function of this fire is disturbed, it will cause Rasavikruti and affect the health of hair, leading to diseases like Khalitya and Palitya. Therefore, to proper formation of Rasa Dhatu and Asthi Dhatu, a healthy status of Agni is necessary. Further to maintain normal, nurtured, strong and healthy hair, Agni must have normal. Therefore, Agni plays an important role in hair health.

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