



## AYURVEDIC MANAGEMENT OF HAIR LOSS ( *KHALITYA* ) BY *KESHYA LEPA* (HAIR PACK).

Aditi Joshi<sup>1\*</sup>, Parth Mahajan<sup>2</sup>, Vijay Patil<sup>3</sup>

1. P. G. Scholar, 2. P. G. Scholar. 3. Associate Professor

1. 3. Department of Agadatantra, 2. Department of Dravyaguna Vigyan.  
Yashwant Ayurvedic College P.G.T. & R.C., Kodoli, Kolhapur.

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Aditi Joshi, Email: [dr.aditimahajan@gmail.com](mailto:dr.aditimahajan@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT:

Hair loss or *khalitya* is an important *kshudra rog* which is demanding increased attention. This article will try to explain the treatment of the issue with a hair pack or *keshya lepa*. The different references will be brought together from ayurvedic texts and will be co related to the present scenario in terms of availability, physibility and comfort ability to put forth a practical approach in dealing *khalitya*. Hair and skin care is the largest growing industry presently. As people are getting aware of the ill effects of chemical products the flow is inclined towards Ayurveda to seek a healthy and safer treatment for beauty issues. Hair according to Ayurveda is closely related to *Asthi dhatu*. Any product which increases *asthi dhatu* will consequently help improving the quality of hair. Hair loss is also attributed to *Pitta dosha* disturbing the hair roots and then making the hair weak. So, drugs are chosen in a manner where they would increase *asthi dhatu* and reduce *pitta dosha*. The same can be co-related to the increase of Anagen phase and reducing the telogen phase.

Different *lepas* as mentioned in Ayurvedic texts have been quoted along with single drugs which are widely used for hair loss. To summarize the article the various drugs have been classified according to their mode of action on *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha* and *Visha*. The same can be mixed together according to the *dosha* dominance and applied as a *lepa* on scalp to fight hair loss.

**KEY WORDS:** *Khalitya*, Alopecia, Treatment of hair loss, Ayurvedic hair pack, *Keshya lepa*.

### INTRODUCTION:

Hair and beauty sector is an area which is demanding growing attention from every field may it be Health sector, wellness sector or the electronic gadgets sector. People are now demanding healthy hair with healthy skin. And amongst all the sectors, Ayurved has been given the first preference for managing beauty issues. As responsible ayurvedic physicians, we also must put in our increasing efforts for studying and exploring remedies for the said issue.

Ayurved very well defines the hair loss problem as *Khalitya* and mentions different treatments for the problem. One amongst the many is the application of

an external pack or *keshya lepa*. Amongst internal medicines, *panchakarma* and external therapies, this article will only focus on external packs which can be applied on the scalp for relieving the trouble of hair loss.

Hair or *Kesh* is considered to be a part of *Asthi dhatu* according to ayurveda. It is said to be a *Paarthiv* (having more *prithvi mahabhoot*) by Acharya Vagbhat. *Kesh shaat* (hair fall) is considered a sign of *Asthi dhatu kshaya* in Vagbhat sutrasthaan 11/19. So, our Acharyas very well have focused the relation between Bones and hair which can be correlated to the calcium levels in the body by modern science.

**How does Hair loss occur**

Hair grows in three different phases –

**Anagen phase** – This phase determines the length of the hair. Most of our scalp hair is in this anagen phase for almost about 7 years till some unknown factors push the hair to go into the catagen phase. This phase can be correlated to kapha kaal of hair follicle as the growth is steady and for long duration and also the first phase of hair follicle growth.

**Catagen phase** – in this phase the hair follicle stops growing and gets converted to club hair. Somewhat representing the pitta phase of growth.

**Telogen phase** – the last phase of growth of hair follicle where the follicle goes into a dormant resting phase and the hair shaft is shed off. A phase which can closely be related to the vata dosha functions.

After the follicle has rested for 2 – 3 months the hair follicle again goes into the anagen phase to produce new hair shafts. The whole aim to reduce the hair fall now points towards increasing the duration of anagen phase. Anti inflammatory drugs, anti oxidant drugs and androgen inhibitors are said to elongate the anagen phase when used topically.

Hair is made up of keratin the key structural material. Keratin is a fibrous structural protein which is bound together by disulphide bridges. The bounce of hair is because of these disulphide bridges which are many a times damaged during hair straightening treatments. While keratin local application might prove fruitful to control hair loss, other chemical ingredients like formaldehyde and high temperatures can damage the shine of the hair and also induce hair fall. The increased temperatures during hair treatments also damage the shine of the hair by altering the position of the hair cuticle scales. The hair may also be forced to turn into the catagen phase due to the high temperatures, thus inducing hair fall after few weeks. A soothing, normal temperature topical application can thus be fruitful.

According to ayurvedic texts-

*Khalitya* is mentioned by Charak Samhita in *trimarmiya chikitsa adhyaya* shlok 132 as

तेजोऽनिलाद्यैः सह केशभूमिं दध्वाऽऽशु कुर्यात् खलति  
नरस्य | च.चि. २६/१३२

The *Tej mahabhoot* of the body along with *Vaata* etc *doshas* burns the roots of hairs to produce *khalitya*.

The factor to be noted here is that *Tej* or *Agni* is highlighted more and the doshas are secondary in causing disease. So, whatever may be the treatment, it should not increase the *Agni* constituent on the scalp or the body. Hot water for head bath is also contraindicated by Acharya Sushrut in *chikitsasthan* 24 / 59, saying it is harmful for eyes. But as the scalp should be protected from *Agni mahabhoot* it could be considered harmful for hair too.

In the present times, hair is being subjected to various chemical shampoos, conditioners, serums and to add on the pollutants present in the air. Lack of awareness also subjects the hair to salon treatments like hair spa, hair straightening, hair perming where the hair survives increased temperatures. And if at all some lucky strands survive on the scalp, they are then covered with ammonia colours to end up looking dead. All these have ammonia which is actually a corrosive agent. As we have a look at all above factors, a local application becomes a must to prove efficacy of the whole treatment.

**Lepa as mentioned in texts**

A few references can be cited here for understanding the view of ancient vaidyas.

Acharya Charak mentions a *lepa* for good hair growth in the 26<sup>th</sup> chapter of *chikitsa sthanam* while describing the treatment for *khalitya*.

तिलाः सामलकाश्चैव किञ्जल्को मधुकं मधु | बृंहयेत्  
रञ्जयेत् चैतत् केशन्मुर्धप्रलेपनात् || - च.चि.२६ /२७९

*Til, Amalaki, Pollen of lotus, Yashtimadhu* and Honey are advised as a *lepa* on hair to improve growth as well as for reducing greying.

*Sharangdhar samhita* also states different *lepas* for strengthening the hair roots :

गोक्षुरस्तिलपुष्पाणि तुल्ये च मधुसार्पिषि | शिरः प्रलेपेन  
तेन केशसंवर्धनं परम् || शा.स. उ. ११/२२

यष्टीन्दिवरमृद्धिकातैलाज्यक्षीरलेपनैः || शा.स.उ. ११ /२४

*Gokshura* and *Til pushpa* mixed with honey and ghee are said to reduce the hair loss by a great extent.

*Yashtimadhu, Kamal, Mrudvikaa, Til oil, ghee and honey* are also mentioned as a remedy for hair loss. *Yogratnakar* also includes the same *lepa* mentioned by *Sharangdhar Samhita* in the treatment of *kshudrarog* after the treatment of *Indralupta*.

A different reference in this regard can also be studied with the point of view of *Agadtantra*. Acharya Sushrut in *Kalpasthanam* mentions the treatment of hair fall due to poisoned comb or other materials.

प्रलेपो बहुशस्तत्र भावितः कृष्णमुत्तिकाः।

ऋष्यपित्तघृतश्यामापालिन्दीतण्डुलीयकैः॥

सु.स.कल्प.स्था. १/७७

गोमयस्वरसो वाऽपि हितो वा मालतीरसः। रसो

मूषिकपर्ण्या वा धूमो वाऽगारसंभवः ॥.स.कल्प.स्था. १/७८

Here black mud processed with *Hrishya pitta*, ghee, *Shyama*, *Nishottar* and rice water can be used as *lepa* or Juice extracted from cow dung or *Swaras* of *Malati* flower or *Swaras* of *Mushakparni* or *Gruha dhoom* can also be used for *lepa* on hair.

All the above references can be used to design a hair pack which would be effective for treating hair fall and improve hair quality.

Some herbs mentioned in *Bhav Prakash* as *keshya* are cited here for possible *lepa* additions.

*Nirgundi* –

*Nirgundi* being *tikta, kashaya, katu* it does the *pachanam* of vitiated *rasa dhatu* accumulated at the roots of hair. Hair fall occurs when the hair roots nutrition is blocked by vitiated *kapha* caused by *ama* or improper *Rasa dhatu*. In such conditions *Nirgundi* can help relieve hair fall.

*Bhringraj* –

*Bhringraj* also being *katu* and *tikshna* acts like *Nirgundi* in preventing hair fall.

*Musta, Amalaki, Guduchi* –

All these drugs being mentioned as *Asthi pachak dravyas* by Acharya Charak, they act by balancing the *asthi dhatu* and hence providing better strength to hair roots.

### Hair fall could be treated by lepa of the following ingredients -

A combination of drugs can be selected from above references for proper treatment of *Khalitya* with *keshya lepa*.

For dry hair (*vata* predominance) –

A *lepa* of *Yashtimadhu / Til pushpa / ghee / Gokshur* can be chosen as single drug or combination.

For delicate hair strands (*pitta* predominance) –

A *lepa* of *Malati pushpa / Kamal / Mrudvika / Amalaki / ghee / Musta / Guduchi / rice water* could be better options.

For oily hair (*kapha* predominance) –

*Nirgundi / Bhringraj / ghruh dhoom / Shyama / Nishottar / Honey / juice of cow dung* could be chosen from.

For damage due to pollutants (*Visha*) –

Black mud / *Malati* flower *swaras / Mushakparni swaras / ghee / Shyama / Nishottar* would prove efficient in hair loss.

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