

Concept of *snehapaan* & *agni* in growth & development of children**Shilpa Raghunath Pandey*¹, Sayali Balaram Patil²**¹Assistant Professor, Dept of Kaumarbhritya, Himalayiya Ayurvedic Medical College & Hospital, Deharadun, Uttarakhand, India²Assistant Professor, Dept of Rachana Sharir, YMT Ayurvedic Medical College and Hospital Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, M. S. , India Email id-sayalipatil92.sp@gmail.com
Contact number -7710838836***Corresponding author:** Email id- shilpapedey1195@gmail.com; Ph: 8850410787**Abstract:**

A healthy gut plays a critical role in the growth and development of children, influencing everything from physical health to brain function. In Ayurved, gut health and *Agni* (digestive fire) are deeply interconnected. In Ayurveda, the concept of *Agni* (digestive fire) is central to overall health. A strong *Agni* ensures proper digestion, assimilation, and elimination. When *Agni* is impaired, it leads to the accumulation of *Ama* (toxins), which obstructs the proper nourishment of bodily tissues (*Dhatus*). *Snehapaan*, when appropriately used, nourishes the body, mind, and immunity of children, preparing them for lifelong wellness. This review is an attempt to enlighten the role of *Agni Vardhan due Snehapaan* in growth and development of children.

Keywords: *Snehapaan*, *Agni Vardhan*, Growth and Development**Introduction**

The meaning of the term *Sneha* means, a substance that brings oiliness or unctuousness. *Sneha* is the procedure which brings *Snigdhatta* (unctuousness), *Vishyandata* (liquification), *mardavta* (softness) and *kledatva* (moistness) to the body.

Agni Parikshan the assessment of digestive fire—is a core diagnostic and prognostic tool in Ayurveda, crucial for understanding a patient's overall health and disease potential. A balanced *Agni* is considered the cornerstone of good health, especially in digestion, immunity, and even mental clarity.

Need of the Study

Diet and lifestyle are major factors thought to influences susceptibility to many diseases. The paramount need of the hour is to realize unhealthy effects of processed food and adaptation of highly developed technologies and start

preferring traditional healthy lifestyles to curtail incidence of lifestyle diseases.

Agni Pariksha is a powerful tool for evaluating and guiding pediatric growth and development. It ensures that nourishment is not just consumed but also digested, assimilated, and utilized effectively to build *Bala*, *Dhatus*, and *Ojas*.

Rogāḥ sarve api mandagnau” – All diseases begin with impaired Agni. *Snehapaan* revives *Agni*, heals the gut, and builds a strong foundation for lifelong growth and immunity.

Snehapaan either in (*Shaman* or *Brihan*) plays a direct and supportive role in enhancing growth, immunity, and cognitive development when administered appropriately. In this article we have tried to explore the role of Agni in children's health and how *Snehapaan* can promote *Sapta dhatus* formation leading to growth and development by nurturing and balancing Agni.

Materials & Method

^{1,2} Review on *Abhyantar Snehapaan*:

The administration of *Sneha* internally through oral route for the purpose of *Snehan*.

Based on the action *Abhyantar Snehapan* is of three types:

- a) *Shodhananga Snehapan*
- b) *Shamananga Snehapaan*
- c) *Bruhananga Snehapaan*

***Shamanartha Snehapan*:**

Administration of *snehapaan* to pacify the morbid *doshas* is known as *Shamanartha snehan*. Acharya Hemadri defines *Shaman Snehan* as, administration of *Sneha* in different disorders with an intention to normalize the aggravated *doshas* without expelling them and disturbing the normal *doshas*.

Acharya Vagbhhat has mentioned that *Shaman snehan* is a procedure of administration of *Madhyam Matra* of *Accha Sneha* during mealtime or *Annakala* when one feels hungry.

***Bruhananga Snehapaan*:** The administration of *Sneha* along with *Mamsa Rasa*, *Kshira* etc are known as *Bruhananga Snehapaan*. The dose of *Sneha* should be *alpa* (less than quantity of *Hrasiyasi Matra*). *Bruhananga Snehapaan* if given with food enhances *Agnibala*, gives strength and stability.

Commonly used *Sneha*: *Goghrita* (cow ghee), *Siddha ghrita* (medicated ghee) viz. *Brahmi Ghrita*, *Triphala Ghrita*, *Medhya Ghrita* etc.

Mahasneha is a class of four major unctuous substances like ghee (*ghrita*), edible oil (*taila*), muscle fat (*vasa*) and marrow (*majja*).

Importance of Balanced Agni (digestive fire)

- ***Jatharagni*:** The digestive fire located in the stomach and intestines. This Agni is responsible for digesting the food and extracting nutrients that fuel growth.
- ***Dhatvagni*:** The metabolic fire that governs the transformation of nutrients into the seven *Dhatus* (*Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja*, and *Shukra*). *Dhatvagni* ensures proper nourishment of tissues, contributing to healthy growth and development.

A balanced *Agni* ensures that children receive the necessary nutrients for building strong muscles, bones, and cognitive functions.

Types of Agni: *Samagni* (balanced), *Mandagni* (slow), *Tikshnagni* (sharp), *Vishamagni* (irregular)

Agnimandya (weak digestion) is often associated with a compromised immune system. Ayurved believes that when *Agni* is strong, the body can effectively absorb nutrients and eliminate toxins, thus supporting immunity. A weak *Agni* makes children more susceptible to infections, allergies, and autoimmune disorders. Disruptions in *Agni*, such as indigestion or malabsorption, can hinder physical and mental development. Children with low *Agni* often experience frequent colds, coughs, ear infections, and skin conditions.

When *Agni* is functioning well, the body can create healthy *Dhatus* (tissues), which are essential for physical growth and overall vitality.

Review on Growth & Development

In the context of childhood development, growth is defined as an irreversible constant increase in size, and development is defined as growth in psychomotor capacity. Both processes are highly dependent on genetic, nutritional, and environmental factors.

There are 5 significant phases in human growth and development,

1. Infancy (neonate and up to 1 year age)
2. Toddler (1 to 5 years of age)
3. Childhood (3 to 11 years old) - early childhood is from 3 to 8 years old, and middle childhood is from 9 to 11 years old.
4. Adolescence or teenage (from 12 to 18 years old)
5. Adulthood

Gut-Brain Axis and Cognitive Development

Scientific research has highlighted the strong connection between the gut and the brain, known as the gut-brain axis. The gut produces neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine, which influence mood, behaviour, and brain function. In children, a balanced gut microbiome contributes to better concentration, memory, learning abilities, and emotional regulation.

Emerging studies also link gut imbalances to conditions such as ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, and anxiety. A healthy gut may therefore play a role in supporting not only cognitive development but also mental well-being.

^{3,4}Review on Impact of *Snehapana* on *Agni* (digestive fire) and Growth & Development

Boosts *Agni*, Leading to Better Digestion and Absorption

- In children, *Agni* is immature (*Bala Agni*) and easily disturbed.
 - *Snehapana* with appropriate *Sneha* (usually *ghrita* in paediatrics) helps stabilize and gently strengthen *Agni*.
 - This leads to better digestion, improved nutrient absorption, and efficient *Dhatu* formation, which directly impacts:
 - Physical growth (height, weight, muscle tone)
 - Cognitive development (brain nourishment via *Medha dhatu*)
 - Immunity (*Bala*)
2. Supports *Oja* Formation
- *Ghee*, the most common *Sneha* for children, is *Oja*-building and nourishes *Shukra* and *Majja dhatus*, which are critical for:
 - Brain development
 - Emotional stability

○ Reproductive health in later stages

3. Improves Memory and Intellectual Functions

- *Medhya Ghrita*, a medicated ghee with herbs like *Brahmi*, *Shankhapushpi*, and *Vacha*, is traditionally used in Bal Chikitsa for:

- Enhancing smriti (memory)
- Supporting speech development
- Balancing Vata in neurodevelopmental disorders

4. Prevents Recurrence of Digestive Illnesses

- Recurrent infections, poor appetite, or malabsorption in children are often due to *Mandagni* and *Ama*.
- *Snehapaan* gently clears *Ama* and improves *Agni*, thus preventing common pediatric issues like:
 - Indigestion
 - Constipation
 - Recurrent cold/cough due to *Ama* buildup

5. Improves Strength (Bala) and Endurance

- Proper nourishment of *Mamsa* and *Asthi Dhatus* through *Sneha* promotes:
 - Better muscle development
 - Bone strength
 - Improved physical stamina

Discussion

Each childhood stage has different *Agni* characteristics that influence how children digest food and process physical, mental, and emotional experiences.

In Ayurvedic text *Shushrut Samhita*, the age group has been classified into 3 groups as per their diet viz *Ksheerap Awastha*- Upto 1 year of life child consume only breast milk. *Ksheerannada Awastha*- Upto 2 year of life child consume solid food along with milk. *Annad Awastha*- After 2 years of life where child consumes solid diet like adult.

Table No.1 Showing State of Agni in Different age group ⁵

Age Group	Prominent Dosha	Agni State
Birth (0-5 Yrs)	<i>Kapha Dosha</i>	Immature Agni The Agni during this stage is irregular and fluctuates
<i>Kishore</i> (6-12 Yrs)	<i>Pitta Dosha</i>	Agni starts to become stronger and more regular, with a better ability to digest food.
<i>Yuva</i> (13-16 Yrs)	<i>Vata Dosha</i>	Adolescents may experience digestive issues like bloating or constipation.

Sapta dhatus Rasa, Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Asthi, Majja, and Shukra are nourished through proper digestion.

It is mostly observed that *Agni*, *Bala* (Immunity), and *Oja* in are linked with each other in Children. Since *Oja* is derived from properly nourished *Dhatus*; *Agni* is directly responsible for this immune and mental strength. Children with poor *Agni* often present with Frequent illnesses, Poor

attention/memory, Lethargy and low energy.

In *Kashyapa Samhita and Ashtanga Hridaya Ahara and Agni in Bala Poshana* (nourishment of children) has been emphasized. In *Charak Samhita* the importance of *Agni in Vyadhi-utpatti* (disease origin) and *Dhatu-vriddhi* (tissue development) has been mentioned.^{6,7}

Snehapaan plays a vital role as a daily or seasonal *Rasayan* that promotes digestion helps in Tissue growth, cognitive development and strengthen immunity.

TABLE NO.2: SHOWING IMPACT OF GHRITA ON AGNI (DIGESTIVE FIRE)^{8,9}

ELEMENT	IMPACT
Balances Agni	Ghee strengthens <i>Jatharagni</i> by lubricating and stimulating digestive enzymes. It helps correct Manda Agni (low fire) without aggravating Tikshna Agni.
Heals Gut Lining	Ghee nourishes and repairs the intestinal mucosa , helpful in IBS, ulcers, and leaky gut-like conditions.
Supports Microbiome	Acts as a prebiotic , fostering beneficial gut flora; especially useful in post-antibiotic gut recovery.

Flushes Ama (toxins)	Ghee penetrates deep tissues, loosens and mobilizes Ama , preparing the body for detox through Panchakarma.
Reduces Gut Inflammation	Ghee has anti-inflammatory properties that soothe the digestive tract and reduce symptoms like acidity, bloating, and cramps.

Conclusion

Studying *Agni Pariksha* in the context of growth and development of children is highly valuable in Ayurveda, as *Agni* (digestive fire) plays a pivotal role in *Ahara Paka* (food digestion), *Dhatu Poshan* (tissue nourishment), *Bala* (immunity), and *Oja* formation, all of which are essential for proper paediatric development. Timely intervention with appropriate measure, helps in management and prevention of most of the lifestyle disease in children and facilitate growth and development. A healthy gut ensures children get the nutrients needed for growth, bone development, and energy.

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