

### Importance Of Ideal Nidra(sleep) In Maintaining Good Health: An Ayurvedic Review

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#### Abstract:

**Introduction:** . The disturbance in nidra might be related to the lifestyle, environment influences. mental tention changed food habits and day stress which ultimately disturb the psychoneuro-biological rhythm of sleep. It is important to review literature and its effect on health. Nidra (sleep) is an important and essential phenomenon of life which affects the body and mind equally in a favourable way when it is enjoyed in a right manner.

**Material and method:** This article is an attempt, to observe the effect of Nidra in maintaining health. The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are charaka Samhita, sushruta samhita, Ashtang Hridaya, Bhav prakash and Amarkosh and available commentaries on these. We have also referred to the modern texts books and searched various website to collect information on the related topic.

**Discussion:** The aim of this article is, to observe the impact of Nidra & highlights, the concept of Nidra & its importance on humans' day to day life. Sleep is one of the natural instincts of the body just as food & water. The relationship between physical health and sleep is complicated by the fact that many people are diagnosed with more than one health condition. Our Acharya recognized the natural constructive power of sleep. Charakacharya explained Nidra as one of the three pillars that support life.

**Key Words:** Nidra sleep, good health, aayurveda

#### Introduction:

It is interesting to know that one third of human life is spent on sleeping. Sleep is an essential aspect when it comes to growth and development of living beings; as many of the vital physiological processes occur during sleep. As far as Ayurveda is concerned, sleep i.e., Nidra is considered as one of the three pillars of life. Ayurveda being a science of life, explains daily routine and regimens to be followed by individuals to stay healthy.<sup>(1)</sup> Nidra being a day-to-day phenomenon, ayurvedic texts have detailed information about its definition, types physiology and health benefits. Nidra is very crucial factor for day-to-day life. If Nidra is not taken routinely can cause serious diseased condition, which will affect the physical and mental health as well.

According to Ayurveda when empty channels of body get covered (aavruta) by Kapha dosha, when body gets exhausted & when sense organs are not functioning, then sleep occurs. Kapha dosha is related to growth and development of our body tissues and increases the immunity to fight against diseases.<sup>(2)</sup>

Hrudaya is the main place of consciousness (Chetana). When it is subdued by tamas, nidra occurs. Tamas is cause of Nidra & sattva is cause of awakening or nature is cause of all as Nidra occurs by nature. At the time of commencement of this creation, sleep occurs. It has born out of tama & it is another

form of tama itself. So, it is said that, Nidra occurs naturally at night (ratra kal) when tama is predominant.

According to Acharya charaka Kapha dosha helps to build the body strong. Such persons is the one who has proper body built, proper health, strength, good sense organs. He can tolerate hunger, thirst, excess exertion, cold weather, etc. this gives importance of proper body built. Nidra is harmonious gift of nature.sleep is physiological process occurring in every individual. Restful sleep is foundation for physical and mental wellbeing. According to Monnier Williams Sanskrit dictionary, nidra is "Dadrushu naish (Nisha) meaning, the phenomenon which occurs during the night. In terms of lifestyle, recent epidemiological studies suggest a minimum sleep duration to be obtained to maintain health.research argues that short sleep duration is related to the prevalence of hypertention.<sup>(3,4,5)</sup>

Sleep is a fundamental need of every living human being. The various organs & part of body can be given rest independently, but, complete rest is possible only during sleep. Our Acharya recognized the natural constructive power of sleep & explained it as a supernatural power which is beneficial for health, happiness, longevity. When someone does not sleep for a too long period he find hard to concentrate or to do any work properly. Ayurveda aims at preventing the person form getting diseased by maintaining the balanced

condition of tridoshaj, viz; Vata, Pitta, Kapha in his body. This idea of prevention is explained for the first time in Ayurveda and is the basic concept for a healthy society.<sup>(6)</sup>

#### Aim And Objectives-

##### Aim-

To study the importance of Nidra for maintenance of health.

##### Objectives-

1. To understand the role of quality of sleep in maintaining good health.
2. To evaluate the role of Nidra in swasthya rakshan.
3. To understand the role of bed, types of bed, height of bed and its importance in sleep quality.

##### Material and methods-

This article is based on a review of Ayurvedic texts. Material related to Nidra. The main Ayurvedic texts used in this study are Charak Samhita, Sushruta-samhita, Ashtang Sangraha, Ashtang Hridaya, Yog Tarnakar and Amarkosh and available commentaries on these. We have also referred to the modern texts and searched various websites to collect information on the relevant topics.

##### Why sleep is so important-

When mind gets exhausted along with karmendriya & zyanendriya, zyanagrahan (knowledge) of vishaya (matter) does not take place, then it is stated that one has slept i.e. Nidra has arrived. Zyanagrahana kriya requires synchronization of atma-mana-indriya (sense organ) and indriyartha. During Nidra, as mind and karmendriya get exhausted, this co-ordination cannot be completed. Hence, zyanagrahana does not occur, which causes lack of knowledge during sleep.<sup>(7)</sup>

Sleep at night time makes the balance of the body constituents (dhatusamya), alertness, good vision, good complexion and fired digestive power. Timely sleep promotes growth, complexion, strength, enthusiasm, digestive power, absence of drowsiness & equilibrium of body.<sup>(8)</sup>

Ayurveda described that, those who take proper sleep-in proper time will not suffer from diseases; their mind will be peaceful; they will gain strength, good complexion. Good virility; their body will be attractive; they won't be lean or fatty & live good for 100 years. Along with these, in other ayurvedic compendia stated that sleep at proper time balances body constituents (Dhatusamya).

##### Shayanvidhi-

There is such a description, which is recommended after the meal. The effect of sleep after meal is to obtain strength hence to sleep on bed on the back requires to have eight times breathing lying down on the back and 16 times on the right side and 32 times on left side, particularly at the left side is the seat of agni near about the naval. Which is responsible for the

proper digestion. It renders adequate strength to the body. This is the order of taking sleep to be observed.<sup>(9)</sup>

Types of bed and their effects-<sup>(10,11)</sup>

1. **Anukula shayya (comfortable bed):** This type of shayya is considered good for proper sleep, pleasure, nourishment, relieves tiredness, pacifies the vitiated Vata, and aphrodisiac.
2. **Bhumishayya (On ground):** It can pacify the vitiated Vata, nourishes human body gives strength and aphrodisiac.
3. **Khatva (Cot):** This type of shayya Causes vitiation of Vata.
4. **Darupatta (Wooden planks):** It is also cause vitiation of Vata.
5. **Andolika (Hanging bed):** It relieves tiredness, leads to long life, plumpness aphrodisiac, alleviates vitiated Vata, decreases sweating, pleasing to mind.
6. **Talpa:** It helps to decrease weight. it is good for health of skin.

##### Sleep on the ground is of two kinds.<sup>(12)</sup>

- 1) First one is the sleep without bed on the ground. The contact of body with the ground it causes vitiation of vata.
- 2) The beds stretch on the ground nourishes and aphrodisiac.

The prior one type causes aggravation of vata and the later on the contrary is beneficial to health.

Person should go to sleep with pleasant mind, after having light and suitable food in the evening. The bed should be kept in a place which is clean, devoid of too many people but with 2/3 faithful attendants, furnished with suitable pillows, which are broad, even and comfortable. The bed should be of the height one's knee. Soft and beautiful.

Head should be placed towards the east or south and legs not stretched towards elders etc. The bedroom should be either in the east or west of the house. Person should think of only righteousness at the time of going to bed

##### About height of bed

According to Ayurveda, bed should be at the level of knee and it should be soft and comfortable.

##### About sleeping position

According to Ayurveda Sleeping in prone position should be avoided.

##### Prataha Utthana/Brahmamuhurta jagaran:(early awakening)

Acharya Vagbhatt have advised to get up from bed during Brahma muhurta.<sup>(13)</sup> (According to Acharya Indu, last yama i.e., last three hours of night is known as Brahma Muhurta.)

##### Effect of bed(shayan) on sleep(nidra):

Sleeping on a Khatava (cot) is tridosha shamaka and also a promoter of good health. Sleeping on a bed on the ground (Bhumishayan) neutralizes vata and kapha, sleeping on the ground results in obesity, increase vata, increase virility and dryness in the body and neutralizes rakta pitta. Sleeping on a plank of wood (darupatta) increase vata. Sleeping on a comfortable bed (Anukula shayya) in general increases happiness, sexual desire and virility and helps in getting rid of excess of vata and exhaustion.

### Avoiding position of sleep

- 1) One should not sleep downwards and in awkward position (ch. Su.9/21)<sup>(14)</sup>
- 2) Head should not be downward. (su.chi.24/98)<sup>(15)</sup>
- 3) Excessive sleep should be avoided. (su.chi.29/96)<sup>(16)</sup>
- 4) One should not sleep on the same bed of the wife (As.sg.su.3/102)<sup>(17)</sup>
- 5) One should not sleep without observing etiquettes. (As. Sg. Su.3/103)<sup>(18)</sup>
- 6) One should not sleep in the evening (As. Hr.su. 2/42)<sup>(19)</sup>

The healthy person in order to protect the life, should get up from his sleep in the Brahma muhurta, after considering the conditions of digestion of food whether properly done or not.<sup>(20)</sup>

As. Sg. Su.3/2

All should go to sleep at the proper time at night according to their habits. "Early to bed and early to rise make a man healthy, wealthy and wise"

### Care for Nidra-

In the modern science, there is treatment available for Nidranash but there is not much treatment for sleepiness. From all above observations we have come to a conclusion that special Nidra care for vatal, pittal, and vata-pittal persons should be carried out.

In society sleepiness is a great problem we cannot overlook the bad effects caused due to excessive sleep. In the study sleepiness is not found in kapha prakruti persons. if due to some reasons sleepiness occurs, the special care should be advised considering dosha Swaroop, kala, ritu, age, desh, dietary habits etc.

Like most other physiological process, nidra undergoes a series of transformations throughout the life span. The pattern of this change is quite consistent but some variations do exist. The source of individual differences may be either constitutional or result from life style. For example, some individual can function on five hours of sleep per night while others required 8 to 10 hours.

Sleep in the day time, after nidra veg dharan at night, sleep in the day is important to counterbalance the vata dosha vrudhhi in the body. . Try to go to bed at the same time every night and get up at the same time every morning.

### Regimes For Good Sleep:

For the treatment of karshya, sleep is considered as one of the main treatments. Along with other regimens, good sleep

makes a man fatty like a boar. Sleep is considered as universal nourishing devices.

Sushrutacharya also mentioned diet for good sleep as follows.

Shali rice, curd, milk, wheat, ikshu, pishtanna, meat, draksha, mishri, wine, mamsa of annupadeshiya animals & birds, masha, kilata, shaka, yusha, ghrita, fish etc are best food for sleep. Again massage, unctious, bath, intake of soup of domestic marshy & aquatic animals, shali rice with curd, milk, unctuous substances, alcohol, psychic pleasure, smell of scents & hearing sounds of one's own choice, netra trapana, application of soothing elements of head & face in ointment from, comfortable bed & home along with State without worry, to remain as always satisfied, to embrace a beautiful lady like creeper, etc.

**Life Style Changes:** having comfortable beds & room sleeping at proper time, wearing clean clothes, taking bath before sleeping, laying down in fragrant & airy places causes good sleep.

### Tips for good sleep-

- Try to avoid caffeine, nicotine and alcohol close to bedtime.
- Get regular exercise; try not to exercise close to bedtime.
- Don't eat a big meal in the evening although a light snack before bedtime may help you sleep.
- Make your sleeping place comfortable; be sure it is dark, quiet and not too cold or too warm.
- Create a routine to help you relax and wind down before sleep, such as reading a book and taking a bath.
- If you can't fall asleep and don't feel sleepy, get up and do something else until you feel sleepy.
- Keep the clock face turned away, do not keep looking at it.
- An occasional sleeping pill is not too harmful.
- Do not keep working right up to the time you switch off the light unwind.
- Watching TV before sleep is bad idea. Flickering lights wake up us even more. Soft music is better.
- Avoid naps, daytime naps can disturb sleep at night.
- Try gentle stretching, yoga, meditation, warm milk or herbal tea.
- If you find you still have a sleep problem, remember not to go to psychiatrist. See a sleep specialist.

### Discussion-

Nidra is one of the most important factors responsible for maintaining normal physiology of body, hence described under tray-upastambha i.e., the pillars which support the life. In today's era due to changing lifestyle & competitive atmosphere in the world, a man has to work for several hours. Hence, the demarcating line between day & night is seen to

blur away. 'Manu' the great law maker divided 30 muhurta periods in day & night. The day time being intended for activities & night for rest and repose. So one should have proper sleep at every night to give rest to body as well as mind. If a healthy person not getting proper sleep, he will become a patient. It is not a serious problem in the start, but later on stage it leads to number of health nuisance and ailments.<sup>(21)</sup>

### Conclusion-

The main aim of this article is, to overview & highlights, the concept of nidra & its importance on human life. Nidra is a key factor to play a big role in our healthy life.

By the previous descriptions it is clear that sleep have more important role in maintenance of equilibrium of body i.e., homeostasis. It is also maintaining balance between three humours. The equilibrium of dhatus also depends upon sleep. Proper sleep is responsible for dhatusamya & nourishment of body, increased strength & stability of life. Agni functions remain normal; evacuation of bowel & the emptying urinary bladder take place properly, if a person has slept well. The bad habits of waking at night & sleeping at daytime have been stated to provoke all three doshas. Sleeping at any time other than night time is mithyayoga of Nidra. Atinidra means, sleeping for more than required time which is Atiyog of Nidra. Not sleeping at proper time is Heenyoga or Ayoga of Nidra. These three conditions disturb health & may lead to death, while proper sleep brings happiness in life. The biological clock which is mandatory for one's wellbeing & rhythm of life cannot recognize the upsetting created by today's lifestyle changes. Once this biological clock disturbed, health gets hampered.

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