

Restorative dentistry by sesame oil swish

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Abstract

The oral cavity is continuously colonized by pathogenic micro-organisms because there is constant challenge to the mucosa in the form of these micro-organisms. So maintaining good oral hygiene is one of the most important things one can do for teeth and gums. Oral hygiene is the practice of keeping the mouth and teeth clean to prevent oro-dental problems, like dental caries, gingivitis, tarter and bad breath etc. In Ayurvedic classics we get an elaborate explanation about the oral cavity, diseases affecting the parts of oral cavity, etiological factor along with its management. Ayurvedic ancient acharyas not only told the aetio-pathogenesis & treatment, but they also highlighted about how to maintain the good oral hygiene in Dinachari Adhyaaya (daily regimens). In this paper one of the oral hygiene maintaining procedure i.e Gandusha and Kavala (gargling) have been discussed.

Keywords: Restorative dentistry, Swish, Oil (Taila), Gandusha, Kavala.

Introduction

Mouth is considered as the index of one's general health. Oral health and general health are interrelated.¹ Hence it is very important to maintain oral health. But in spite of important advances in oral health, modern civilization and sophistication, the man becomes unable to maintain the oral hygiene which results in many oro-dental problems. Due to occurrence of side effects to modern medicines and oral hygiene products, people are increasingly attracted towards complementary and traditional practices. Hence there is a need of an innovative alternate methods and comprehensive approaches which reduces the oro-dental problems.

Taila (Oil) gandusha and kavala (gargling) are claimed to improve oral health and maintain the oral hygiene. Oral hygiene is the practice of keeping one's mouth clean and free of disease and other problems e.g. bad breath by regular brushing of the teeth, gargling etc. So maintaining good oral hygiene is one of the most important things one can do for teeth and gums. Healthy teeth not only enable to look and feel good, they make it possible to eat and speak properly. Good oral health is important for overall well-being. Daily preventive care, including proper brushing, flossing and mouthwash will help to stop problems before they develop and are much less painful,

expensive, and worrisome than treating conditions that have been allowed to progress.

Ayurveda explained a variety of oral hygiene measures which have been used for oro-dental cleaning among one such procedure is gandusha and kavala (gargling).² It is believed to cure more than thirty systemic diseases when practiced regularly and as directed, along with several oral health benefits and overall health benefits.

In Gandusha (gargling) mouth is completely filled with oil such that gargling is impossible whereas in Kavala (gargling) comfortable lesser quantities of oil is used such that gargling is possible.³ Many medicated liquids/oils are mentioned in classics for gargling. Amongst one of the commonest is Tila taila (sesame oil) having the properties as Rasa - Sweet, Astringent, Bitter and Pungent and pacifies the three important factors of body (Tridoshaghna).

Technique of gandush/kavala (Gargling)

Subject was asked to sit in a comfortable position. Take 10-15 ml of sesame oil in a bowl and make it luke warm by indirect heat. In Gandush (gargling), the oral cavity is filled completely with oil, held for about 10-15 minutes or till the nose and eyes starts watering,⁴ and then released. In Kavala (gargling), a comfortable amount of oil is retained with the mouth

closed for about 15-20 minutes, and then gargled. At the end of this activity if the procedure is done correctly, the viscous oil will become milky white and thinner. Then it is spit out and mouth is thoroughly washed with clean warm saline water or tap water and teeth are cleaned with fingers or routine tooth brushing is performed.

Care should be taken that oil is not swallowed as it is heavily loaded with toxic microorganisms. However if accidentally small amounts of oil is swallowed, there is nothing to worry as the same is removed from the body through feces.⁵

Mode of action of sesame oil gargling

The sesame plant (*Sesamum indicum*) of the Pedaliaceae family has been considered a gift of nature to mankind because of its nutritional qualities and its many desirable health effects. The seeds of the plant are commonly known as 'gingelly' or 'til' seeds. Sesame oil has a high concentration of polyunsaturated fatty acids and is a good source of vitamin E which reduces free radical injury occurring in oral cavity.⁶ It also contains sesamin, sesamol and sesaminol and has detoxification, antioxidant, and antibiotic actions. It also prevents lipid peroxidation.⁷ All the actions of sesame oil gargling is mainly due to saponification, emulsification and mechanical cleansing action.

The active ingredients and chemical constituents of the oil used in gargling are absorbed through the buccal mucosa and reach the blood stream. It is having both, local and systemic action but generally more in local effect. Gandusha increases mechanical pressure inside the oral cavity and stimulate the chemoreceptors and mechanoreceptors in the mouth to send signals to salivary nuclei in the brain stem. As a result, the parasympathetic nervous system activity increases and impulses sent via motor fibers in facial and glossopharyngeal nerves. They trigger a dramatically increased output of salivary secretion which predominantly watery (serous). The metabolic waste (toxins), food debris and depositions as well as superficial infective micro-organisms present in the oral cavity gets dislodged and mixed with retained medicated liquid and removed from the oral cavity. Thus, Gandusha will act as a good oral cleansing

method and helps to improve or regain the oral hygiene.

Gandusha (gargling) stimulates the salivary glands to secrete more saliva. Saliva contains a variety of host defense factors. The IgA, IgM antibodies and lysozyme present in the saliva provide protection against micro-organisms by acting as local antibiotic. The main function of salivary buffer is to maintain pH at the mucosal epithelial cell surface and the tooth surface. Healthy mouth is a non-acidic or neutral. Gandusha is an instantaneous solution for mouth acidity and change the oral pH quickly into a safe zone. Gargling regulate and balance the pH of the oral cavity and help to reduce bacterial growth in the mouth. Thus gargling cures the disease and helps to regain oral hygiene by maintaining a good pH balance in the mouth.⁸⁻¹⁰

Along with these benefits Sesame oil has the other advantages over the standard and commercially available mouthwashes: it causes no staining, has no lingering aftertaste, and causes no allergic reactions.¹¹ It is five to six times more cost-effective than the commercially available mouthwashes and is, moreover, readily available in the household. Considering these benefits, oil pulling therapy with sesame oil should be promoted as a measure for the prevention of oral disease.

Conclusion

Oil pulling is a powerful detoxifying Ayurvedic technique that has recently become very popular as a CAM remedy for many different health ailments. Using this method, surgery or medication could be prevented for a number of chronic illnesses. The oil gargling is preventative as well as curative. It is a simple rejuvenating treatment, which, when done routinely, enhances the senses, maintains clarity, brings about a feeling of freshness, and invigorates the mind. These oral cleansing techniques can also benefit bad breath, dry face, dull senses, exhaustion, anorexia, loss of taste, impaired vision, sore throat, and all kapha related imbalances.

No matter how sophisticated dental techniques and procedures may have become, preventive dentistry remains the foundation of oral health care. Hence,

gargling carried out with sesame oil plays a vital role in this aspect.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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