

## VARIOUS ASPECTS OF GHRITA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COW GHEE

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### ABSTRACT

Ghee is a natural fatty substance produced by milk. It is one of the most valued as well as appreciated natural substance known to mankind since ancient times. Of all the natural foods rich in fat and protein it is the most wholesome and delicious. The medicinal quality, taste, texture, color and aroma of ghee differs according to the geographical area and the species of cows from which it has been made. Ghee is called as Ghrita in Ayurveda. The properties of ghrita are related to the time since it is prepared. Navina ghrita is the one that is freshly prepared. After one year of preparation this ghrita it is known as Purana ghrita. In Ayurveda there are different types of ghrita according to different animal origin, as ghrita of buffalo, horse, goat etc. Here ghrita means only 'go ghrita' i.e. made from cow's milk. Etymology, synonyms, varieties, method of collection, chemical constituents, properties, adulterants, chemical tests, and the different uses of ghee are gathered from text books, experienced Ayurvedic physicians and from the internet. In Ayurveda, ghee is used for external as well as for internal use. Externally ghee is mainly used in *lepa*, *tarpana* and internally its used as *anupana* or as a whole medicine. *Ghee* is used in many preparations of *Ayurveda*. *Snehapaka* are majorly prepared with ghrita. The present work aims at the review of ghee or ghrita in ayurvedic as well as modern point of view.

**Keywords:** Ghee, ghrita, snehapaka, Ayurveda, goghrita

### INTRODUCTION

Chaturvidha sneha (fats) are described in Ayurveda. These are ghrita (ghee), taila (oil), vasa (fat of body), and majja (bone marrow). Of these four snehas, ghrita is most important as it has more medicinal properties due to its samskara anuvarti guna. It can be use in all tridosha chikitsa. Traditionally, in India ghee is one of the main ingredients in food. Hindus consider it auspicious to use grihta on different religious occasions. Hindus consider ghrita

as one of the five elixirs of immortality (Panchamrita)<sup>1</sup>. In temples, ghrita is poured over the deities in a ritual called Ghrita snana. The dieties are offered lamps which are lighted with ghrita. Grihta is also used to make prasad which is offered to the dieties. The Vedas and other ancient literatures describe ghee as one of the most healthiest of foods and also the one that has many medicinal properties. Hence, it is used in many medicinal preparations. In snehapaka

kalpana, ghrita is the main basic ingredient used for preparing the medicine.. Ghrita also used as *anupana* in some medicines. In rasashastra, ghrita is used for shodhana of some minerals. In panchakarma chikitsa, ghrita has got importance as snehapana.

#### SYNONYMS<sup>(2)</sup>

sanskrita :	sanskrita : Aja, Havisya, Sarpih, Ghrta
Bengali.	Gava Ghee, Gava Ghrta
English.	Clarified butter
Gujrathi	Ghee
Hindi.	Gaya Ghee
Kannada.	Tuppa
Malyalam.	Pasu Ney, Pasu Nei
Marathi.	Toop
Oria.	Gai Ghia
Punjabi.	Ghee
Tamil.	Nei
Telagu.	Neyyi, Nei
Urdu.	Gaya ka ghee

#### PRODUCTION<sup>3</sup>:

1. In commercial production, fat is separated from milk by centrifuge machine and then boiled to obtain *ghee*. This *ghee* does not have a good medicinal value. But manufacturing is fast. In modern process the milk is passed through cream separating machine. After passing 25 litres of milk in cream separating machine, 1 kg of cream and 24 litres of white liquid (which is sold to us again as milk) are obtained. So there is loss of only 1 litre of milk as 24 litres is sold back as milk. The cost of one litre milk is Rs 25. Cost of separating cream, heating and packing can be Rs 50. So this type of *ghee* costs utmost Rs 75 per kg and is sold in the market at Rs 250- 350 per kg !!!

2. In Indian homes, traditionally curd is obtained from milk overnight. Then butter is obtained by churning the curd. This butter is then boiled to obtain *ghee*. The quality of

the *ghee* that is obtained this way is good but it is not the best. The process of preparing *ghee* at home is slow.

3. Since ancient times, the traditional method of preparing *ghee* in Indian homes is from whole milk. This is called as the whole milk *ghee*. It is an expensive and a time consuming method. Nevertheless, the advantage of this method is that the *ghee* prepared by this method has all the desired medicinal properties.. To manufacture 1 kg of such *ghee*, it takes 30 to 35 liters of cow milk. The only by product is butter milk.

#### AYURVEDIC PROPERTIES OF GHRITA:-<sup>(4 to 7)</sup>

In Ayurvedic literature, *ghrita* when mentioned is considered only as 'go *ghrita*'. Go *ghrita* mentioned is majorly of two types in Ayurveda on the basis of time period.

**1. Navina Ghrita<sup>(4 to 7)</sup> :-** Freshly made cow *ghee* is called as Navina *ghrita*. It has properties like; smriti, buddhi vardhaka, agnideepaka, virya-oja-kapha-meda vardhaka, vata-pitta nashaka, used in diseases like vishavikara, unmada, rajyakshma, kantihinata, jirnajwara. Due to properties like netrya, balya,swara-varna kara, used in diseases like shalyakrita and agnidagdha vrana. It has guna like samskaranuvarti i.e. it can also act in many diseases when it is combined with medicines which act on that particular disease and enhances drugs property. Hence, it is used widely in treatment according to acharya's .It is snehottama means best amongst all sneha (fats).

**2. Purana Ghrita: <sup>(4 to 7)</sup>** After one year of preparation *ghrita* is known as purana *ghrita*. It is having katu rasa katu vipaka, mada-murcha, apasmara, unmada, garavisha,

hwara, karnashula, yonishula, sheerashula nashaka. It used in udar roga. Also has vrana ropaka & vrana shodhaka properties.

### Various Aspects On Time Period Of Purana Ghrita By Various Acharyas<sup>(5)</sup>

1. Bhavamishra :- one year old ghrita is known as purana ghrita.
2. Yogaratnakara :- 10 years old ghrita is known as purana ghrita while 100 years old ghrita is known as kumbha ghrita.
3. Chakradutta :- 10 years old ghrita known as purana ghrita is also known as kumbha ghrita, after 10 years ghrita known as prapurana ghrita.
4. Ashtanga hridaya arundutta tika :- 15 years old ghrita known as purana ghrita.
5. Sushruta :-  
1 to 10 years ghrita is purana ghrita.  
11 to 100 years old ghrita is kumbha ghrita.  
after 100 years ghrita known as maha ghrita.

### PROPERTIES AND ACTION<sup>(2)</sup>

**Rasa :** Madhur.

**Guna :** Guru, Snigdha, Mridu

**Virya :** shita

**Vipaka :** Madhur.

**Karma :** Agnidipana, Anabhishtyandi, Ayushya, Balya, Cakshushya, Dipana, Hridya, Kāntipradkā, Medhya, Ojovardhaka, Rasāyana, Ruchya, Slesmavardhana, Snehana, Śhukravardhaka, Tejobalakara, Tvacya, Vātapittapra śamana, Vayasthapana, Vishahara, vrishya.

### THERAPEUTIC USES<sup>(2)</sup>

Agnidagdha (Accidental burns), Amlapitta (Hyperacidity), Apasmara (Epilepsy), Aruci (Tastelessness), Grahai (Malabsorption syndrome), Jirnajwara (Chronic fever), Karnasula (Otagia), Kshatakshina (Debility due to chest injury), Mada (Intoxication), Murcha (Syncope), Shirahsula (Headache),

Smrtinasha (Loss of memory), Sosa (Cachexia), Unmada (Mania/psychosis), Vishamajvara (Intermittent fever), Visarpa (Erysepales), Vishavikara (Disorders due to poison), Yonisula (Pain in female genital tract)

### NUTRION VALUE OF GHEE:<sup>(8)</sup>

Fats & fatty acids	Amounts per 100 g of ghee
Total fat	99.5 g ( 153% DV)
Saturated fat	61.9 g (310% DV)
Monounsaturated fat	28.7 g
Polyunsaturated fat	3.7 g
Trans fats	4 g
Omega-3 fatty acids	1.447 mg
Omega-6 fatty acids	2.247 mg
Omega-9 fatty acids	25.026 mg
Other non-fat nutrients	Amounts per 100 g of ghee
Carbohydrates	0
Minerals	0
Cholesterol	256 mg (85% DV)
Phytosterols	0
Vitamin A	3069 IU (61% DV)
Vitamin B, C, D	0
Vitamin E	2.8 mg (14% DV)
Vitamin K	8.6 µg (11% DV)

### IDENTITY, PURITY AND STRENGTH<sup>(8)</sup>

Specific gravity At 25 °C	1.01995
Reichert Meissel Value	24-28
Moisture %	Not more than 0.5
Saponification value	Not more than 225
Iodine value	Not more than 35

Unsaponifiable matter %	Not more than 1.5
Carotene	Not less than 2000IU
Microbial limits	Complies with API
Heavy Metals	Complies with API

### DISCUSSION

Since ancient times ghee is an important ingredient in food and medicines. Depending on the time duration ghee differs from its property which have been mentioned in Ayurvedic text books. Different types of time durations are described in different books of Ayurveda.

GRANTHA NAMA	DURATION
Bhavprakasha	1 year
Ashtanga hridaya arundutta tika	15 years
Chakradutta	10 years
Yogratnakara	10 years
Sushruta	1 to 10 years

Again prapurana and kumbha ghrita concept is also there. According to different species of cow the ghee prepared also differs in properties. The chemical composition and standard value should be obtained from those different ghee, which are derived from different species. That is further scope of study. Here mentioned values are nutritional values and standard value of cow ghee according to API. Ghee is curative of pitta and vata. Ghrita is beneficial to the nutrients body fluid, semen and vital essence. Ghrita is palatable and satmya to everyone from their child hood. Ghee has ability of absorbing the properties of ayurvedic drugs with which it proceed and to act as a vehicle. Ghee used in shodhana and shamana chikitsa as well as in local application disease like mouth ulcer. Ghee is preferred only because of its laghu guna as compared to other sneha like taila, vasa,

majja. The following reasons make ghee superior to taila, vasa, majja. Ghee retains its own properties like shita guna. It has the ability to accept the properties of the medicines where it is used as a vehicle. It is used to prepare like chitrak, khadir, yashtimadhu. Ghee is used regularly for consumption in various foods which are consumed since childhood. So our body is suited to it and can be easily consumed for medicinal purpose. Ghee when consumed leads to agnidipana. That strengthens the digestive system.

Go ghrita consists of clarified butter derived from cow's milk to which no colouring matter or preservative is added and contains not less than 76.0 per cent of milk fat by weight. An oily liquid or a semi solid at room temperature, granular in texture, colour white to light yellow, odour rich, taste pleasant. It shall be free from animal fats, wax, mineral oil, vegetable oils and fats.

### CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that ghee is an invaluable natural substance with many diverse usages. It helps in many diseases like mukhapaka, Kshudrakushtha, jwara, kshataksheena, karshya. It can be used alone or it functions as a part of the medicine that it is used to prepare. It is also used for preparation of various medicines as a binding agent. It is used for anupana and can also be used for local application. It is also used during snehapana before vama and virechana. Ghee having divers uses. But it must be pure and genuine.

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