



## Neonatal Care in Ayurveda (*Navjata Shishu Paricharya*): A critical review

<sup>1</sup>Parul Kaushik, <sup>2</sup>Amitabh Singh

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Scholar, Dept. Of Kaumarbhritya , Gaur Brahman Ayurvedic college, Brahmanwas, Rohtak.

<sup>2</sup> Prof., Dept. of Kayachikitsa Desh Bhagat Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Mandi Govindgarh, Punjab

Received on 05/05/2025

Accepted on 02/06/2025

Reviewed on 15/08/2025

Published on 15/09/2025

### Abstract

*Kaumarbhritya* is one of the branches in *Ashtang Ayurveda* which deals with care of infant, children; their disease and management. *Ayurvedic* and modern books include detailed descriptions of *Navjata Shishu Paricharya* (newborn care). Both *Ayurveda* and contemporary texts provide detailed descriptions of *Navjata*. In Ayurvedic writings, *Acharyas* provide detailed instructions for caring for newborns from birth until full stability. Various *Acharyas* recommended different treatments for newborn stability, with slight variations in the order of the steps. This essay analyses the processes in *Navjata Shishu Paricharya* and their scientific importance for newborn care. Materials were gathered from traditional *Ayurvedic* texts, paediatric textbooks, publications, and research journals. Ancient literature provides guidance on newborn care, including resuscitation, prevention of hypothermia, aspiration, and infections, as well as promoting rooming in and early breast feeding.

**Keywords:** *Navjata Shishu Paricharya*, resuscitation, hypothermia.

## INTRODUCTION

According to Lord Brahma, Ayurveda is a subset of Atharvaveda, which existed before the creation of living things. He separated it into eight parts and wrote it in one thousand chapters with one lakh Shloka (verses). One of the eight branches of Ayurveda is called Kaumarbhritya, which is derived from the words kaumar and bhritya. It addresses children's health, illnesses, and appropriate treatments. In Ashtang Ayurveda, Acharya Charak ranked Kamarbhritya sixth. In Asthanga Ayurveda, Acharya Sushruta ranked Kumarbhritya fifth.

In Acharya Vagbhata's ranking, Kamarbhritya came in second. This branch's subject matter is mostly found in the Uttar Tantra and Sharir Sthana treatises, which include Brihatrayi. Neonatology is also covered, with a detailed description of infant care (Navjata Shishu Paricharya) included. Acharyas provided a thorough explanation of how to care for a newborn from birth to their full stability in Ayurvedic writings. With some variations in opinion on the order of those processes, different Acharyas recommended different procedures for the stability of newborns.

Acharya Charaka	Acharya Sushruta	Acharya Vagbhata
Pranapartayagamana	Ulya parimarjana	Ulya parimarjana
Snana	Mukha vishodana	Pranapartayagamana
Mukha vishodhna	Pichudharna	Nala chedana
Pichudharna	Nala chedana	Snana
Garbhodaka vamana	Jatakarma	Pichudharna
Nala chedana	Snana	Suvaranaprashana
Jatakarma		Garbhodaka vamana
Raksha karma		Jatakarma

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

The resources were gathered from research publications, journals, and Ayurvedic texts. Acharyas recommended a number of operations for a newborn's stability, albeit there were some variations in the order in which they should be performed.

### 1) Prana pratyagamana (neonatal resuscitation)

The following actions should be followed for the neonate's resuscitation as soon as possible after the baby is born, while also removing the placenta, according to Acharya Charaka: showering the infant's face with cold water in the summer and hot water in the winter, and striking stones close to the base of the baby's ears. By taking these steps, the infant will become cognizant again. Until the baby is completely restored, wave a krishankapalika shoopa—a shattered clay pot with a charred surface—near it if it does not stabilize<sup>1</sup>. Ulvaparimarjana was followed by Astanga Hridaya in stating this procedure. The signs and symptoms of an asphyxiated newborn were provided by Acharya Vagbhata. According to

Acharya Vagbhata, a newborn should be Parisheka with Bala Tailam and have two stones struck close to the base of their ears in order to properly revive (resuscitate) them. If the child's stability is not restored by these measures, give them oxygen by doing krishankapalika shupa and chanting mantras in their right ear<sup>2</sup>.

### Clinical Importance

Acharya Charaka has emphasized the importance of starting Prana Pratyagamana procedures as soon as possible after delivery and working quickly to extract the placenta. It appears that striking two stones and spraying water on the face stimulates the senses of touch, hearing, and sight. When two stones strike close to the mastoid or base of the ear, a loud sound is produced that stimulates the vestibule cochlear nerve. It is a sensory neuron with an afferent branch that sends feeling to its nuclei, which are located close to the respiratory centre on the fourth ventricle's floor. When this centre is triggered, respiration starts. Sprinkling hot or cold water may activate the face nerve's sensory fibers, which in turn activates the brain's

respiratory centre. Babies benefit from tactile stimulation, temperature regulation, and strength when *Bala tailam* is rubbed over their bodies. *Mantra's* enchantment near the baby's ear may benefit the mother psychologically and provide the infant with auditory stimulation.

## 2) Snana

In accordance with *Acharya Charaka*, the newborn should have a bath when his oropharyngeal passage has been washed with water and his breathing has stabilized [3]. *Sushruta* advises bathing the newborn following *Jata karma*. Depending on the season, dosha, and resources, he recommends bathing a baby with a mixture of laticiferous tree decoction, aromatic medicine water, water heated with silver or gold, or a warm decoction of *kapittha* leaves<sup>4</sup>. *Snana* should be performed according to the baby's *doshas*, *kala*, and *bala*, according to *Acharya Vagbhata*. Different *dravyas* are also mentioned by *Vagbhata*, including lukewarm, *ksheerivriksha kwatha*, *sarvagandha dravyas*, medicated water, water in which heated *rajat* or *swarna* has been quenched, and *kapith patra kwatha* for *Snana*<sup>5</sup>.

### Clinical Importance

Giving baby a bath keeps them clean and bathing water with medicinal ingredients has calming effects and aids in the healing of umbilical stumps. Antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and analgesic properties are included in the majority of medications that *Acharyas* prescribe<sup>6</sup>.

## 3) Mukhvisodhan (Cleaning of Oral Cavity)

According to *Acharya Charaka*, newborn's *talalu*, *ostha*, *jivaha*, and *kantha* should be correctly trimmed, washed, and covered with cotton swabs from the attendant's finger before covering the baby's *shira's talu* with a cotton swab containing unctuous substances<sup>7</sup>. *Vagbhata* gives a similar description<sup>8</sup>. *Acharya Sushruta* recommended using ghee and rock salt for oral cleaning<sup>9</sup>. Both *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* advocated covering the fontanel with ghee-soaked cloth.

### Clinical Importance

This method prevents secretion from aspirating into the respiratory system when the newborn begins to breathe by first cleansing the oropharyngeal cavity and then the nasal cavity. Consequently, this precaution eliminates the

possibility of aspiration pneumonia (*Ulvaka*). A cotton piece soaked in ghee placed on the neonate's anterior fontanel shields the enormous surface area of their head from harm and stops heat loss.

## 4) Pichudharna (Tampon application)

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, after *Mukhvisodhan*, use a *ghrita*-soaked tampon on *Murdha*<sup>9</sup>. *Acharya Vagbhata* recommends covering the *Talu pradesh* with *Sneha pichhu*<sup>10</sup>.

### Clinical Importance

*Murdha/brahmarandra*, also known as the anterior fontanelle, are soft intracranial structures in newborns that are vulnerable due to unfused cranial sutures. *Acharyas* recommend covering the anterior fontanelle with a *sneha-pichhu* to provide protection along with to prevent hypothermia as well.

## 5) Garbhodaka Vamana (Stomach wash)

According to *Acharya Charaka*, after performing *Pichhu-dharana*, children should be administered *Vamana* (emesis) with *Saindhava* and *Ghrita* to wash out gastrointestinal contents<sup>11</sup>. *Acharya Vagbhata* suggests combining *Saindhava* and *Ghrita* with a specific medicine, *Vacha*<sup>12</sup>.

### Clinical Importance

*Acharyas* explained that *Saindhava Lavana* and *Vacha* have *Swadu*, *Dip anum*, *Pach anum*, *Sheeta*, *Tridoshhara*, *Vamankarka*, and *Malamutra shodhaka*, and cure *Vibandha* (constipation), *Adhymana*<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, these medications are recommended for *Garbhodakavamana* (stomach wash) as they prevent the possibility of regurgitation and aspiration of regurgitated contents as well as vomiting after feedings that may occur due to the irritating effect of meconium, blood, or amniotic fluid present in the stomach.

## 6) Nala Chedana (Cutting & Care of Umbilical Cord)

*Acharya Charaka* recommends *Naalchedan* after *Garbhodak Vamana*, while *Acharya Sushruta* suggests it after *Mukha Vishodhana* and *Pichu Dharana*. *Acharya Vagbhata* reported cutting the umbilical cord after *Ulva parimarjan*. *Charaka* recommended cutting the umbilical cord at eight *Angula* distance from the baby's umbilicus using an *Ardhadhara* instrument made of *swarna*, *rajat*, or *ayasa*, and tying the cut end with a clean thread. Hang the free end of the clamped chord on the baby's neck. To treat pus formation on the umbilical cord, apply oil prepared with pastes of *lodhra*, *madhuka*, *priyangu*, *suradaru*, *haridra*. To treat

suppurated umbilical cord, sprinkle powdered drugs suggested for oil preparation<sup>14</sup>.

#### **Clinical Importance**

*Acharyas* advised after resuscitation and stabilization, the umbilical cord is cut to offer nutrients and blood supply to the newborn. Clamp the cord with a thread to prevent bleeding and hypovolemic shock. To minimize bleeding and infections from urination and stool, hang the umbilical cord around the neck after cutting it. *Lodhra*, *Madhuka*, *Priyangu*, *Suradaru*, and *Haridra*. *Kushtha* contains *jantughan*, *vedana sthapana*, and *shothahara*, which have anti-inflammatory qualities<sup>17</sup>. So these medications are used to prevent infections.

#### **7) Jatakarma**

*Jatakarma* is the first sacrament performed after childbirth. According to *Acharya Charaka*, newborns should be fed with sanctified honey and *ghrita* on the first day. After that, the mother should nurse the infant with her right breast, placed by the baby's head. An earthen jar containing *mantras* should be placed near the child's head<sup>18</sup>. *Acharya Sushruta* advocated licking *madhu*, *ghrita*, and *ananta* with the index finger. The infant should be fed *Lakshmana* with *ghrita* on the second and third days, followed by *sava-panitalasamitta* (or quantity that fills the neonate palm) *madhu* and *ghrita* on the fourth day. After this, the baby can be entirely breast-fed<sup>19</sup>. *Acharya Vagbhata* recommends administering *ghrita* (*sarpi*) and *navnita* (butter) to newborns on the fourth day before starting breastfeeding, similar to *Sushruta's* approach. According to *Acharya Vagbhata*, *Jata karma* should be conducted via the *prajapatya* technique as outlined in holy texts<sup>20</sup>.

#### **Clinical Importance**

*Jatakarma* is a birth ceremony that prepares the newborn for life outside the womb. Honey and ghee are high-calorie foods that provide energy and nutrients to babies. Gold powder protects and improves the brain development of babies. The first meal stimulates motility and activates the stomach and gastrointestinal systems. During *Jatakarma*, we may evaluate infant's rooting and sucking reflex. *Jatakarma* with mantra provides psychological support to the mother. *Charaka* recommends starting breast feeding as soon as possible after birth to benefit from the protective immunoglobulin found in colostrum and for nourishment.

#### **8) Rakshakarma (PROTECTIVE MEASURES)**

*Acharya Charaka's* detailed description of *Rakshakarma* refers to neonatal protection. To decorate the labour room (*sutikagara*), hang twigs of *Adani*, *Khadira*, *Karakndu*, *Pilu*, and *Parushaka*, and sprinkle *Sarshapa*, *Atasi*, *Tandula*, and *Kan-kanika* on the floor. A bundle of *Raksoghana dravyas*, including *Vacha*, *Kustha*, *Kshomka*, *Hingu*, *Sarspa*, *Atasi*, *Lasuna*, and *Guggulu*, shall be hanging on the entrance and strung around the necks of both mother and child. Maintain a steady fire within the *Sutikagara* using *Tinduka*. Female friends of the mother should maintain a continual vigil by staying up for 10-12 days. Celebrate with loved ones throughout the home. *Brahmins* who follow the *Atharva Veda* should pray twice a day for the mother and child's good fortune<sup>21</sup>. According to *Acharya Sushruta*, newborns should be wrapped with *kshauma* cloth and placed on a comfortable linen-covered bed. Fan the infant with twigs from *Pilu*, *Badar*, *Nimba*, *Parushaka*. Apply an oil-soaked tampon (*tailapichu*) on the baby's forehead every day. Fumigation of *rakshoghana dravyas* is recommended for *Sutikagara* Daily<sup>22</sup>. *Acharya Vagbhata* recommends tying herbs such as *Brahmi*, *Indryana*, *Jivaka*, and *Rishbhaka* around the newborn's hands or neck, adding to *Charaka's* advice<sup>23</sup>.

#### **Clinical Importance**

*Rakshakarma* aims to prevent newborns from infections via the use of clean clothing and bedding. *Dhupana karma* suggests using antiseptic and antibacterial medications to fumigate the *sutikagara* and protect babies from infections and illnesses.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Our *Acharyas* have provided a basic overview of neonatology. After reviewing our *Samhitas*, we discovered that the text covers all important aspects of *Kaumarbhritya*, including newborn care, breastfeeding, child protection, neonatal nursery, and more. These topics are essential for basic knowledge and understanding by mothers, students, scholars, and physicians. While each proponent of *Ayurveda* has their unique approach to infant care, the essence remains consistent and serves as a precursor to contemporary neonatology. Despite advancements in science and technology, *Navjata Shishu Paricharya* remains a fundamental aspect of newborn care.

## REFERENCES

1. Caraka. Caraka Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma RK, Bhagwan Dash, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2012. Shareerasthana, 8/42.
2. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam, Vol. III. Srikantha Murthy, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1995. Uttara tantra, 1/1.
3. Caraka. Caraka Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma RK, Bhagwan Dash, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2012. Shareerasthana, 8/42.
4. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma PV, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati; 2010. Shareera Sthana, 10/13.
5. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam, Vol. III. Srikantha Murthy, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1995. Uttara tantra, 1/6
6. Sharma PV. Dravyaguna Vigyana, Vol. II. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Vishwabharti Prakashana; 2003. p.573.
7. Caraka. Caraka Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma RK, Bhagwan Dash, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2012. Shareerasthana, 8/42.
8. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam, Vol. III. Srikantha Murthy, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1995. Uttara tantra, 1/7
9. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma PV, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati; 2010. Shareera Sthana, 10/12. p.226
10. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam, Vol. III. Srikantha Murthy, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1995. Uttara tantra, 1/1-
11. Caraka. Caraka Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma RK, Bhagwan Dash, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2012. Shareerasthana, 8/43. Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma RK, Bhagwan Dash, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2012. Shareerasthana, 8/43.
12. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam, Vol. III. Srikantha Murthy, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1995. Uttara tantra, 1/10
13. Bhavaprakash Nighantu of Bhavamisra commentary by Dr. K.C. Chunkar and edited by Dr. G.S. Pandey, Chaukhamba Bharti Academy, Varanasi-221001 (India), reprint:2004, Haritakyadivarga p.154.
14. Caraka. Caraka Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma RK, Bhagwan Dash, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2012. Shareerasthana, 8/44.
15. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma PV, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati; 2010. Shareera Sthana, 10/12.
16. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam, Vol. III. Srikantha Murthy, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1995. Uttara tantra, 1/5-6.
17. Sharma PV. Dravyaguna Vigyana, Vol. II. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Vishwabharti Prakashana; 2003. p.573.
18. Caraka. Caraka Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma RK, Bhagwan Dash, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2012. Shareerasthana, 8/46.
19. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma PV, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati; 2010. Shareera Sthana, 10/13.
20. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam, Vol. III. Srikantha Murthy, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1995. Uttara tantra, 1/11.
21. Caraka. Caraka Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma RK, Bhagwan Dash, editors. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2012. Shareerasthana, 8/47.
22. Sushruta. Sushruta Samhita, Vol. II. Sharma PV, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Visvabharati; 2010. Shareera Sthana, 10/23.
23. Vagbhata. Astanga Hridayam, Vol. III. Srikantha Murthy, editor. 1st ed. Varanasi: Krishnadas Academy; 1995. Uttara tantra, 1/25-28.

### CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr Parul Kaushik

Associate Professor and HOD

Department of Kaumaryabhrta

Gaur Brahman Ayurvedic college and hospital

Email id.: [kaushikparul71@gmail.com](mailto:kaushikparul71@gmail.com)

Mobile no.

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None Declared

### Disclaimer:

The content published in this ayurvedic medical journal is intended solely for educational and informational purposes. It should not be considered a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Authors are responsible for the accuracy and integrity of their work. The journal, editors, and publishers assume no liability for any errors, omissions, or consequences arising from the use of the information provided. Readers are advised to consult qualified healthcare professionals for medical concerns.