



# Koshta Pariksha and Its Diagnostic Significance in Ayurveda Practice

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## Abstract

Panchakarma is the elimination of *Bahu dosha* (excessive Doshas) in *Bahu ati matra* (excessive amount) through the *Asanna marga* (nearest route), thus all Panchakarma can be viewed under *Poorvakarma* (pre-operative), *Pradhana karma* (operative) and *Paschat karma* (post-operative). In Ayurveda, the term "*Pariksha*" denotes a thorough examination or investigation intended to obtain precise information about a patient or illness. When it comes to planning *Chikitsa* (treatment), *Koshta* (the gastrointestinal tract) *Pariksha* is one of the important considerations. *Koshta Pariksha*, which examines the nature of bowel movements, is equally important in clinical practice *Koshta pariksha* is necessary to evaluate the selection of *Aushadha matra*, *Anupana*, and *Snehapana*. *Koshta* is categorized into *Krura* (hard), *Madhyama* (moderate), and *Mridu* (soft), each influencing the choice of treatment, especially in therapies like *Snehana* (oleation), *Vamana* (emesis), and *Virechana* (purgation). So, *Koshta Pariksha* are fundamental in Ayurveda, guiding the appropriate administration of drugs, dietary recommendations, and therapeutic interventions. Proper assessment ensures that treatments are effective and safe, preventing complications and supporting both the healing process and the maintenance of health. Understanding the interplay of *Agni*, *Koshta*, and *Prakriti* (constitution) is essential for successful Ayurvedic practice, emphasizing the need for careful examination in every stage of treatment.

**Keywords:** *Pariksha; Koshta; Mridu; Madhyama; Krura; Clinical Applicability*

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## Introduction

*Pariksha* means "*Pareetha Ekshaie*" the circumspect examination or study. In Ayurveda the term *Pariksha* is used in place of *Pramana* [1]. *Pramanaih arthavadharanam iti pariksha* - Through means of *Pariksha* one can acquire clear knowledge about *Vishaya* (patient or disease). *Pariksha* aids to gain *Pratipatti jnana* i.e., *Nidana*, *Lakshanas* which helpful in treatment planning. The purpose of examination is to obtain knowledge regarding *Ayu*, *Rogi bala*, *Roga bala* and intensity of morbidity. The physician should first examine the disease and then administer the drug after getting complete knowledge about the disease [2].

## Concept of Koshta

*Koshta* is derived from "*Kush n nishkarshe*". *Koshta* - *Sarvam udaram* i.e., entire abdomen [3]. It is a cavity formed from *Avarana* which consists of *dhatu*s. It also considered as *Mahasrotas*, *Sarira Madhya*, *Amapakwashaya* and *Abhyantara Roga marga* [4]. According to *Bhavaprakasha*; *Amashaya*, *Pakwashaya*, *Mutrashaya*, *Rudhirashaya*, *Rhudya*, *Unduka*, *Phupusa* are considered as *Koshta* [5]. Physiologically bowel movements is considered as *Koshta* according to constitution of person.

*Koshta* is of three types i.e., *Krura*, *Madhyama* and *Mridu*. *Krura koshta* - Elimination of Hard faeces with difficulty or non-elimination due to *Ruksha* and *khara guna* of *Vata dosha*. *Mridu koshta* - Elimination of Semisolid faeces (watery) once or twice in a day due to *Drava*, *Sara*, *Laghu guna* of *pitta dosha*. *Madhyama koshta* - Solid faeces which are firm moving out smoothly and regularly due to *Snigdha*, *guru*, *sthira guna* of *Kapha dosha*.

*Koshta* is the nature of bowel habit i.e., the movement of digested food in the alimentary canal, ultimately leading to the elimination of stool. These cavities are the spaces or hollow areas within the body that contain organs [6].

## Koshta pariksha

*Koshta* is considered as *agni adhisthana*.

**Table 1:** *Prakriti* with the *Koshta*.

| SL.NO | KOSHITA PRAKRITI | PRAKRITI       |
|-------|------------------|----------------|
| 1.    | Krura koshta     | Vata prakriti  |
| 2.    | Madhyama koshta  | Kapha prakriti |
| 3.    | Mridu koshta     | Pitta prakriti |

It can be assessed by physiological entity and anatomical entity.

Physiological entity – nature of bowel habit from birth.

Anatomical entity - includes all the organs of abdominal and thoracic cavities.

*Koshta pariksha* is important in *Panchakarma*. It can be understood mainly by two methods It can be understood mainly by two methods.

#### 1. Anumana (inference)

By giving *Mridu anulomaka dravyas* (mild laxatives) like *Ksheera* (milk), *Juda* (jaggery), *Ikshu Rasa* (sugar cane juice) [7] etc.

Persons gets purgated with *Ksheera*, *Aragwadha*, *Ikshu*, *Takra*, *Mastu*, *Guda*, *Krushara*, *Nava Madhya*, *Ushnodaka*, *Draksha*, by this we can infer *Pitta Bahulyata* and then considered as *Mrdu koshta*. Persons get purgated with *Kushta*, *Sama*, *Triphala* we can infer there is more *Vata* and then considered *Koshta* as *Krura koshta* [8]. It helps for selecting type of *Aushadha dravya* and its *matra* in *Chikitsa i.e.*, *Sodhana* and *shamana* [9]. It also helpful for fixation of dosage and duration of *Snehapana* [10].

2. *Prashna pariksha* (interrogation) by asking directly with the patient about nature of bowel habit, frequency and consistency.

It mainly helpful for assessment of *Prakriti* with the *Koshta*, which is an essential step in Ayurvedic clinical practice [11] (Table 1 and 2).

## Role of Koshta in Poorvakarma

#### 1. Deepana-Pachana

*Pachana* is one among the *Langhana chikitsa*. It helps in digestion of *Ama* and hence relieves *Ajeerna* (indigestion).

Before the administration of *Sneha*, one must administer mild medicines which increases the *Agni* and brings the *Laghuta* (lightness) in the *Koshta* [13]. If *Shodhana* is administered in *Ama avastha* it will hamper the body just like extracting juice from a unripen fruit [14].

#### 2. Roohshana (Dryness therapy)

There is a direct indication of *Rookshana* in *Vishamagni* and in persons with *Ruksha* (dry), *Bahu- anila* and *Krura koshta* [15], *Vyayama sheela*, *Deeptagni Dhatu*, *vishsta poorvakarma* in the form of *Rookshana* can be done. Improper *Rookshana* may lead to *Agnibala nasha*.

#### 3. In Snehapana

*Koshta* helps in deciding number of days of *Snehapana*

In *krura koshta taila* and *majja* should be the *chaturvidha Snehana* choice and *yusha* and *manda* is the *anupana* (Table 3).

*Dalhana* has further divided *Koshta* and its duration

*Mridu koshta*:

*Mridu* - Soft - 3days

*Mridutara* - Very Soft - 2 Days

*Mridutama* - Extremely Soft - 1 Day

*Madhyama koshta*:

*Madhyama* - 4 Days

*Madhyam tara* - 5 Days

*Madhyama tama* - 6 Days

*Krura koshta*:

*Krura* - 7 Days

*Krura tara* - 8 Days

*Krura tama* - 9 Days

#### 4. Role of Koshta in Swedana Karma

*Shodhanaga swedana* helps to bring the *Doshas* from *Shakha* - *Koshta*.

## Role of Koshta in Pradhana Karma

#### 1. In vamana

In relation to *Vamana* three types of *koshta* is explained in *Vagbhata* [16], i.e., *Sleshmadikatwam* – *Mrdu koshta*, *Sleshma madhyatwa* – *Madhyama koshta*, *Sleshma hinata*- *Krura koshta* by considering these *Aushadhi* can be administered. When the amount of *Kapha* is more, medium and minimum in the *koshta*, it is considered as *Mrudu*, *Madhyama* and *Krura koshta* respectively for *Vamana* [17]. *Shodhana* medicine is decided based on *Koshta* of the

**Table 2:** Features *Trividha koshta* [12].

| SL.NO | FEATURES                      | MRIDU KOSHITA                                                                                                                                                              | MADHYAMA KOSHITA                                                 | KRURA KOSHITA                                            |
|-------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Ashtanga Hridaya              | Pitta                                                                                                                                                                      | Kapha /Sama                                                      | Vata                                                     |
| 2.    | Sushruta                      | Pitta                                                                                                                                                                      | Sama                                                             | Vata Kapha                                               |
| 3.    | Mala Ka Pravrutti             | Passes Stool Daily 1-2 Times Regularly                                                                                                                                     | Passes Stool Daily Once                                          | Do Not Pass Stool Regularly                              |
| 4.    | Nature of Stool               | Semiformed Or Liquid Stools                                                                                                                                                | Susamhata Mala                                                   | Kathin Va Sushka Mala                                    |
| 5.    | Time And Nature of Defecation | Easy Defecation, Less Time Required                                                                                                                                        | Minimum Stress, Little Long Time Compared to <i>Mridu Koshta</i> | Enormous Straining, Long Time for Defecation             |
| 6.    | Effect After Defecation       | <i>Krita Sangya</i> Satisfactory After Defecation                                                                                                                          | <i>Krita Sangya</i>                                              | <i>Krite Api Akrita Sangya</i> Unsatisfactory Defecation |
| 7.    | Nature Of Laxative            | Minor Dose Often Causes Diarrhoea                                                                                                                                          | Medium Dose Does Not Purgates by Minor Laxatives                 | Drastic Purgatives Encounters More Constipation          |
| 8.    | Dravyas                       | <i>Sarpi</i> , <i>Kasmarya Triphala</i> , <i>Draksha</i> , <i>Pilu</i> , <i>Ushna Jala</i> , <i>Mastu</i> , <i>Kshira</i> , <i>Dadhi</i> , <i>Payasa</i> , <i>Krushara</i> | <i>Triphala</i> , <i>Avippatikara Choorna</i>                    | <i>Katuki</i> , <i>Jayapala</i> , <i>Ichhabhedhi</i>     |

**Table 3:** Applications of Koshta in Shodhanartaha Snehana form.

| Sl.No | Koshta          | Number of days snehapana done |
|-------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1     | Mridu Koshta    | 3 Days                        |
| 2     | Madhyama Koshta | 5 Days                        |
| 3     | Krura Koshta    | 7 Days                        |

patient, for *Mridu koshta* patient (lesser dose), *Madhyama* (medium dose) and *Krura* (high dose) medicines has to be given.

## 2. In Virechana

*Aushadhi* undergo *Pachana* first here so *Krura koshta* and *Alpagni* persons are not suitable [18]. If *Tikshna Virechana* given in persons having *Mrdu Koshta* and *Diptagni* it does not eliminate *dosha* properly [19], similarly persons having *Krura koshta* and *Tikshnagni*, if given *Alpa Aushadhi* leads to *Vyadhi* and *Bala vibhrama* so assessment *Koshta* before *Virechana* is Necessary.

*Sharangadhara Samhita* mentions the relations between *Koshta -Virechana aushadha* with *Anupana* (taken along with). For *Krura koshta* individuals *Tikshna matra aushadha* like *Swaraksheeri*, *Jayapala*. For *Mridu koshta mridu matra aushadhas* like *Draksha* (grapes), cow milk, hot water, *Eranda taila*, and for *Madhyama koshta*, *Madhyama matra aushadha* like with *Trivrut* and *Katuki* (Table 7).

## 3. In Basti

*Basti* administered without considering *Koshta* and *agni* leads to *basti vyapat*. As it causes *atityoga* in *Mridu koshta* persons if we give *basti* with *Ati Tikshna* and *ushna dravyas* and in *Krura koshta* persons *alpavirya oushadhi* causes *margavarodha* [20]. Persons who have more *rookstha* and *bahuvata* symptoms should take *Anuvasana basti* every day; in other situations, it should be taken once every three days to avoid *agni* derangement [21], similarly *Anuvasana basti* is contraindicated in *Mandagni* and *Guru koshta*. *Basti*, given in this condition, leads to reduction of *Agni*.

To remove the *Doshas* which are adhering in *Koshta*, *Antharapana* with *Vyosha*, *Amla*, *lavana* (salt) can be used. *Mridu koshta* is considered as one of the reasons for early *Prathyagamana* of *Basti Dravya*.

## 4. In Nasya

There is no direct relation of *Koshta* and *Agni* in *Nasya*. But *Acharya Charaka* mentioned it cannot be performed in *Ajeerna* condition that means optimum *Agni* is needed for the procedure and the absorption of *Nasya aushadhi* takes place because of the *Agni*. (*Abhyanga* (oil massage) and *Sweda* (sudation) done as *Poorvakarma*).

# Role of Koshta in Paschat Karma

## 1. Samsarjana karma

*Shodhana* leads to elimination of *Doshas* from the body resulting in *Agni santhooshana*. Therefore, one has to follow the *Samsarjana krama*. To restore the strength of *Agni* and *Prana*, *Peyadi samsarjana*

*krama* has to be followed [22] just as administering dry grass initially, followed by cow dung or pieces of wood in a *Homa*, increases the *Agni*, similarly, *Peyadi Krama* enhances the *Agni*.

Based on the *Shuddhi* of *shodhana* and the *koshta agni* the number of days is decided in *samsarjana karma*.

## Clinical applicability of koshta in shamana chikitsa

According to *Caraka* dosage refer to a person having moderate type of *Koshta*, *Vaya*, *Bala*. *Matra* of the *Aushadhi* is based on the *Dosha*, *Agni*, *Bala*, *Vyadhi*, *Koshta* for the better management. *Heena matra* is given in persons having *teekshagni* and *mridu koshta*. Similarly, persons with *Deeptagni* and *krura koshta Sneh dravya Majja* is advised (C. Su13/50).

## Koshta importance in rasayana chikitsa

*Rasayana* treatment helps for attaining the excellent qualities of *rasadhi dhatus*, increases longevity, memory, free from diseases etc., *Agni* is prime factor to be considered before starting *Rasayana* therapy along with that *koshta Shuddhi* given equal importance for better absorption of drugs for example After *Shodhana* procedure *Yavagu* with *ghrita* to be given for 3,5,7 days till elimination of *purana varcha* [23]. Based on strength of *Agni* and *bala* of the patient *matra* of *Rasayana* drugs is increased [24].

## Discussion

*Koshta* are the important concepts which are useful in different treatment aspects which include *Shamana*, *Shodhana*, and *Rasayanartha*. *Vaghbata* clearly mentioned that the *Matra* (dose) of *Aushadha* [25] depend on *Vyadhi* (disease), *Koshta*, *Bala* (strength), *Vaya* (age), *Yukti* (logic), *Desha* (place), *Kala* (time), etc. *Koshta pariksha* is essential for assessing before *Sodhana* and also selection of drug in *Shamana*. Understanding relation of *prakriti - Agni - Koshta* is important in *Chikitsa* because patient with complaints of Constipation can't considered as *Krura koshta* it may also a cause due to dysfunctioning of *Apanavayu*.

*Koshta* also represents the movement of faecal matter. Defecation is the elimination of faeces which may be solid or semisolid in consistency from the digestive tract. This happens once or twice in a day, though the frequency can vary from several times a day to three times a week and still be considered normal. The process involves muscular contractions known as peristaltic waves in the walls of the colon, which move faecal matter through the digestive tract to the rectum. It requires integrated and coordinated sensory motor functions, which are managed by central, spinal, peripheral (both somatic and visceral), and enteric neural activities. These neural activities act on a morphologically intact gastrointestinal tract, including the pelvic floor and anal sphincters. There are several factors that influence the evacuation such as psycho-behavioural factors, posture of defecation, the diet, age and gender [26].

## Conclusion

*Koshta pariksha* are basic and important in Ayurveda for the administration of drugs, appropriate *ahara* and *vihara*, and also in

**Table 4:** Relationship B/W Koshta-Virechana Aushadha -Matra-Anupana.

| Koshta   | Virechana aushadhi                         | Matra    | Anupana                                                      |
|----------|--------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Krura    | Swarna ksheeri, Jayapala                   | Tikshna  | Trivrit + Jangala rasa (Shundi, Saindhava, Amla, Madhya etc. |
| Mridu    | Draksha, cow milk, hot water, Eranda taila | Mridu    | Trivrit + Draksha kwatha (Ksheera, Ikshurasa etc.)           |
| madhyama | Trivrit, Katuki                            | MndhJnma | Trivrit + Triphala kwatha (Gomuthra, Trikatu etc.            |

every stage of treatment.

*Koshta pareeksha* reveals the predominance of *Dosha* and helps the physician to judge the line of treatment and can advise what to do and what not to do.

It helps in the selection of a line of treatment for the disease, and if anyone is administered without seeing and *Koshta*, it leads to several complications, even death. Not only in *Atura* person but also *Swastha* person for maintaining *Swasthyata Samagni* should be there. In *Shodhana Chikitsa*, *Koshta Pariksha* helps in fixing dosage, duration and *Samsarjana krama*. *Koshta suddhi* is important for proper absorption of *Ahara* and *Aushadhi*. So in every stage of the *Swasthya rakshna* and *Vikruti prashamna agni* and *Koshta pariksha* is very much essential and beneficial. Similarly, if we give drugs without assessing *koshta* and *agni*, it leads to *Atiyoga*, *Ayogya*, and *Mithyayogya*.

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