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### Concept of *Swarnaprashana* As *Jatakarma Samskara* (Birth ritual)

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction-** *Swarnaprashana* formulation is a unique method of administration of gold contain medicament to neonate. Literal meaning of *Prashana* is to lick i.e application of medicament on the tongue. The use of Gold internally in children through oral route is first available in the *Kashyapa Samhita* with the name of *Swarna Prashana*. Gold licking is also mentioned by *Sushruta*, *Vagbhatta* and other *Acharyas* immediately after the birth as a part of *Jatkarma Samskara* (birth ritual). Ancient *Acharya* of *Ayurveda* has given more thrust to the development of body's defense system against diseases rather than focusing the disease. As far as pediatric cases are concerned *Acharya* had taken special care to boost up the immune system of the infant from the time of birth itself. The purpose of *Swarna-Prashan* is same as of modern vaccination to prevent diseases by building immunity. It also benefits in a proper brain development, improves memory, intelligence, verbal and cognitive functions of the brain. All the above said benefits are indicating the enhancement of all favorable factors required for proper growth and development of a child.

**Keyword:** *Swarna Prashan*, *Jatakarma Samskara*, Immunity, Vaccine



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## INTRODUCTION

*Samskara* mean those religious rites and ceremonies which sanctify the body, mind and intellect, so that person may become fit for the society. In other words, *Samskara* means *Gunantaradhan*<sup>1</sup> which is used for trans-forming the qualities. Physician can also assess the growth and development of child during performing the *Samskara*(ritual). *Jatakarma Samskara* (birth ritual) is a birth ceremony (touching a newly born child's tongue thrice with ghee after appropriate prayers)<sup>2</sup>. *Acharya Sushruta* mentioned administration of *Swarna* along with honey and *Ghee* in one among the procedures of *Jatakarma Samskara* (birth ritual). The medicament used as a single dose at the time of birth in the procedure of new born care. He provided the rationale behind this practice that there will be no adequate secretion of breast milk for the first 4 days after delivery and so as to support the baby with respect to preventive and nutritive aspects such

practices are indispensable. In the present world where children suffering from harmful side effect of medicine, irregular life style, unhealthy drinks, genetically modified food, electronic distraction and gradually changing environment, it is a most challenging question for parents and to the Government, too how to preserve and enhance the physical and mental health of children. *Swarna Prashana* is a classical method vaccination to bust the child immunity. *Swarna Prashana* formulation is a unique method of administration of gold contain medicament to neonate. Literal meaning of *Prashana* is to lick i.e. application of medicament on the tongue. *Swarna Prashana* is also called as *Swarnaprashana*, *Suvarnaprashana*, *Swarnamritha Prashana*, *Swarna Bindu*, *Prashana Suvarna*, *Swarna Bindu Drops*, *Gold Drops*, *Immunity Drops* and *Suvarnayukta Drops* etc<sup>3</sup>.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Regarding the use of gold internally, various references are available since Vedic period. During the Vedic period gold is used as *Rasayana* (Rejuvenation) with the name of '*Dakshayani Hiranya Rasayana*' and also references available in the *Shatapatha Brahmanas* use of gold for longevity of life and as well as attain good health. The *Katopanishad* also mentioned use of Gold for attains betterment of health. But the use of Gold internally in children through oral route is first available in the *Kashyapa Samhita* with the name of *Swarna Prashana*. Gold licking is also mentioned by *Sushruta*, *Vagbhatta* and other *Acharyas* immediately after the birth as a part of *Jatkarma Samskara*. *Jatkarma Sanskar* (birth ritual) is

considered one among the 16 essential rituals described as mentioned in *Ayurveda* and performed during *Balya Avastha*(childhood). For the first time *Kashayapa* prescribed gold preparation for administering internally to the new born child. Take some water on clean rubbing stone and rub with pure gold by facing east direction. Now, the rubbed material is mixed with Honey and Cow's Ghee and administered child to increase non-specific immunity. According to *Charak* the *Jatakarma* (birth ritual) is to be performed at the time of cutting and tying of umbilical cord. It is surprise that *Acharya Charaka* has not administered / advised use of gold or any other metal during the *Jatakarma* (birth ritual). *Acharya Sushruta* advised

performance of *Jatakarma* (birth ritual) time same as *Acharya Charaka* i.e. done after cutting and tying of umbilical cord as per method: First, Cold water is sprinkled on child for *Ashwasana* then

followed *Swarna Churna / Bhasma* (powder/metallic preparation) is licking to the child mixed with *Madhu* (honey) and *Ghrita* (ghee) by the index finger.

**Table 1 :- Showing Drugs mentioned by various Acharyas as Swarna Prashana and Jatkarma Samskara(birth ritual)**

Name of the Samhita	Drugs	Sahapana	Matra	For how many days
<i>Kashyapa Samhita</i> <sup>4</sup>	Pure <i>Swarna</i> (Pure gold)	<i>Madhu</i> (honey) , <i>Ghrita</i> (ghee)	Not given	Daily from birth to 1 or 6months of age.
<i>Charaka Samhita</i> <sup>5</sup>	-	<i>Madhu</i> (honey) <i>Ghrita</i> (ghee)	Not exactly given	Single dose at birth
<i>Sushruta samhita</i> <sup>6</sup>	<i>Swarna Churnam/Bhasma</i> (powder/metallic preparation)	<i>Madhu</i> (honey) <i>Ghrita</i> (ghee)	1 <i>Gunja</i> (125 mg) ( <i>Dalhan</i> )	Single dose at Birth
<i>Astanga Sangraha</i>	<i>Indri/indravaruni</i> ( <i>Cirulluscolocynthis</i> ), <i>Brahmi</i> ( <i>Bacopamonniari</i> ), <i>Vacha</i> ( <i>Acoruscalamus</i> ), <i>Shankhapushpi</i> ( <i>Convolvulus Pluricaulis</i> )	<i>Madhu</i> (honey) <i>Ghrita</i> (ghee)	1 <i>Harunu/</i> 1 <i>Kalaya</i>	Single dose at Birth
	<i>Brahmi</i> ( <i>Bacopamonniari</i> ), <i>Bala</i> ( <i>Abulitonindicum</i> ), <i>Ananta/Durva</i> ( <i>Cynodon dactylon</i> ), <i>Shatavari</i> ( <i>Asparagus racemosus</i> )	<i>Madhu</i> (honey) <i>Ghrita</i> (ghee)	1 <i>Harunu</i> /1 <i>Kalaya</i>	Single dose at birth
<i>Astanga Hridaya</i> <sup>7</sup>	<i>Indri/indravaruni</i> ( <i>Arunadatta</i> ) ( <i>Cirulluscolocynthis</i> ), <i>Brahmi</i> ( <i>Bacopa monniari</i> ), <i>Vacha</i> ( <i>Acorus calamus</i> ), <i>Shankhapushpi</i> ( <i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> )	<i>Madhu</i> (honey) <i>Ghrita</i> (ghee)	1 <i>Harenu</i>	Single dose at Birth
	<i>Swarnabhasma</i> , <i>Vacha</i> ( <i>Acorus calamus</i> ), <i>Brahmi</i> , <i>Swarna or Rajata Makshik</i> , <i>Haritaki</i> ( <i>Terminalia chebula</i> )	<i>Madhu</i> (honey) and <i>Ghrita</i> (ghee)	Not given	Single dose at Birth
	<i>Swarnabhasma</i> , <i>Amalaki</i> ( <i>Emblificinalis</i> )	<i>Madhu</i> , <i>Ghrita</i>	Not given	Single dose at Birth
<i>Sharangdhar Samhita</i> <sup>8</sup>	Pure <i>Swarna</i>	<i>Madhu</i> , <i>Ghrita</i>	Not given	Single dose at birth
<i>Bhavaprakash</i>	<i>Swarnabhasma</i> , <i>Kustha</i>	<i>Madhu</i> , <i>Ghrita</i>	Not given	Daily from birth

a <sup>9</sup>	( <i>Saussurealappa</i> ), <i>Vacha</i> ( <i>Acoruscalamus</i> )			to 1 year or 12 years.
	<i>Swarnabhasma</i> , <i>Brahmi</i> ( <i>Bacopamonniari</i> ), <i>Shankhapushpi</i> ( <i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> )	<i>Madhu (honey)</i> and <i>Ghrita (ghee)</i>	Not given	Daily from birth to 1 year or 12 years.
	<i>Swarna</i> , <i>Brahmi</i> ( <i>Bacopamonniari</i> ), <i>Shankhapushpi</i> ( <i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i> )	<i>Madhu (honey)</i> and <i>Ghrita (ghee)</i>	Not given	Daily from birth to 1 year or 12 years
<i>Bhaishajya ratnavali</i> <sup>10</sup>	<i>Swarnabhasma</i> , <i>Kustha</i> ( <i>Saussurealappa</i> ), <i>Haritaki</i> ( <i>Terminalia chebula</i> ), <i>Brahmi</i> ( <i>Bacopa monniari</i> )	<i>Madhu (honey)</i> and <i>Ghrita (ghee)</i>	1 <i>Ratti</i> (125 mg)  1 <i>Tola</i> (12gm)	Daily from birth to 1 year year of age

**Swarna Vacha:** *Swarna Vacha* (*Acorus calomus*). is another unique formulation which is popularly used for administering *Swarnaprashana*<sup>11</sup>. In this preparation a purified gold wire is inserted into processed underground stem of *Vacha* (*Acorus calomus*). This *Swarna Vacha* is rubbed on a clean rubbing stone (5-6 rotations) with milk or water, so as to get fine gold particles along with a paste of *Vacha*. This is then mixed with equal amounts of *Ghee* and honey and used for *Swarnaprashana*. The one special benefit of *Swarna vacha* (*Acorus calomus*). is improvement of speech. Practitioners advise administration of *Swarnavacha* (*Acorus calomus*). in infants after 3 months of age till 5-6 years or 12 years.

#### Age for *Swarna Prashan*:

However, *Swarna Prashan* requires administration as early as possible. Children between ages 0 to 16 years are eligible for taking *Swarna Prashana*. However, the specific age of giving *Swarna Prashana* is not described in ayurvedic texts, but the early administration of *Swarna Prashan* is greatly helpful for building immunity and intelligence. The capacity to build immunity against various diseases and infections is higher in early childhood and 90% brain development takes place by the age of five<sup>12</sup>.

Therefore, it would be good to give *Swarna Prashan* before an age of five for maximum benefits. *Swarna Prashan* great effects on brain and intelligence, but it would help more before the age of 5 years. In case you have missed giving *Swarna Prashan* to a child before the age of five then you can give him /her up to the age of 16 years.

#### Time of *Swarna Prashana* administration:

The best suitable time to give *Swarna Prashana* to children is early morning before sunrise<sup>13</sup>.

#### Duration of Use:

As discussed, single optimum dosage of *Swarna Prashana* is also effective to prevent common infections, but 30 days regular use of *Swarna Prashana* is helpful for preventing maximum of the diseases and increasing intelligence. For more beneficial effects on the brain, it can be used for 6 months.

According to *Kashyapa Samhita*, if *Swarna Prashana* is taken for a month, child becomes very intelligent. If it is taken for 6 months, child becomes able to learn quickly and remember whatever he hears<sup>14</sup>. According to this statement, it

is cleared that *Swarna Prashana* can be used for 6 months without any doubt.

**Table 2** Showing duration of use of *Swarna Prashan*:

Minimum Usage	For at least 30 days
Maximum Usage	Not clearly specified, but as per <i>Kashyapa Samhita</i> statement, it can be surely used for 6 months regularly.

After a course of 30 to 180 days, *Swarna Prashana* can be given once in every month for next 30 months. *Pushya Nakshatra* (The Star of Nourishment day) is the best for monthly usage. It comes after every 27 days.

**Importance of *Pushya Nakshatra* for *Swarna Prashna*:**

It is recommended that *Swarna Prashna* should be taken on *Pushya Nakshatra* (The Star of Nourishment day). *Pushya* refers to nourishment and *Pushya Nakshatra* is one of the most auspicious of the 27 *Nakshatra*<sup>15</sup>. *Sushruta* clearly mentioned that all *Swarna* preparations are more useful and powerful when it is administered on the day of *Pushya Nakshtra* (The Star of Nourishment day) <sup>1</sup>

## DISCUSSION

*Swarna Prashana* develops *Medha* (mental ability), *Agni* (digestive power), *Bala* (strength), *Aayu Vardhana* (prolonged life span), it is also *Mangalakara* (brings in good virtues in child, positive attitude in life, optimism, power to overcome mental and physical hardships, good fate), *Vrushya* (attractive nature and personality),

*Varnya* (tones skin colour), *Graha Baadha Nashaka* (avoids away associated evils). If *Swarna Prashana* is done regularly for 1 month then child becomes extremely intelligent and remains unaffected by any infective diseases, if taken for 6 months regularly then child will be *Shrutadhara* (excellent grasping)

***Medhagni balavardhanamm !***  
***Aayushyam mangalam punyamvrushyam grahapaham !!***  
***Maasat paramamedhavevyaadhirbhirnn cha dhrushyate !***  
***Shadbhirmaasai shrutdhar suvarnaprashanad bhavet !!”***  
***(Sutrasthanam Kashyap Samhita)***<sup>18</sup>

It's a unique method of immunization which helps the children to boost up the intellectual power and produces nonspecific immunity in body to fight against general disorders. It is also helpful even to the Special children with Autism, Learning Difficulties, Attention Deficit, Hyper Activity,

Delayed Milestone etc. *Swarna Prashan* has following healing properties, which increase its medicinal value for preventive as well as therapeutic purposes: boosts immune system<sup>18</sup>, enhances memory, improves digestion, nourishes the skin, reduces mental agitation, improves hearing

and vision, improves overall physical and mental health.

## CONCLUSION:

Children are the future of any nation and it is a challenge for every nation to keep up physical, mental and social health of them without any adverse effect. *Swarna Prashana* is an ancient immunization technique with no adverse effects and provides a better life with fulfilling WHO's definition of 'health' (i.e. physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing). So, *Swarna*

*Prashana Samskara* should be accepted for immunization program with positive attitude throughout the world.

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