



“Takra in Ayurveda: Myths, Misconceptions, and the True Path to Healing”

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ABSTRACT:

Takra, or buttermilk, holds a prominent place in Ayurvedic literature for its therapeutic properties. It is often referred to as a divine substance, likened to the nectar consumed by gods, for its ability to alleviate various disorders. However, there exists a widespread misconception about Takra, especially regarding its preparation, benefits, and applications in treating diseases. This article explores the significance of Takra in Ayurvedic medicine, highlighting its correct usage, indications, and contraindications, as well as addressing common misconceptions about its consumption. Emphasis is placed on understanding the difference between Takra and Chhachchhika (buttermilk) and the appropriate methods for preparing and consuming Takra.

Keywords:

Takra, Ayurveda, buttermilk, Takra sevan, doshas, agnimandya, diseases, health benefits, contraindications, misapprehensions

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, Takra (buttermilk) is considered a vital element for maintaining health and treating various ailments. Described as a powerful substance capable of curing multiple diseases, it has earned a place in the hearts and diets of practitioners and patients alike. However, there is a significant lack of understanding regarding its preparation, consumption, and dosage, leading to suboptimal results in therapeutic contexts. A closer look reveals that while Takra's health benefits are well-documented, there are several misconceptions surrounding its consumption.



This article aims to shed light on the correct usage of Takra and dispel common myths surrounding it.

Significance of Takra in Ayurveda

The Ayurvedic text, *Charaka Samhita*, emphasizes the therapeutic benefits of Takra in treating a variety of diseases, particularly those associated with digestive disorders, vata imbalance, and gastrointestinal issues. Takra is considered to have properties that can pacify excess heat (*ushna*), enhance digestion (*deepani*), and balance the doshas, particularly vata and pitta. It is praised for its ability to aid digestion, strengthen immunity, and detoxify the body, making it a highly recommended remedy for multiple ailments.

**‘na takrasevi vyathate kadachinna takradagdha: prabhavanti roga: yatha suranam
amrutam sukhay tatha naranam bhuvi takramahu:’¹**

Takra to nectar, which, when consumed regularly, is said to prevent diseases from reoccurring. Diseases that are cured by Takra sevan are believed to have no chance of relapse, further enhancing its reputation as a health elixir.

Takra is nothing but sanskarita dadhi. It has been mentioned by almost all shastrakaras. Charaka samhita has given it special mention in vyadhis like arsha and grahani.

Despite having such great *gunadharma* of Takra, do we really get appreciative results in patients?

There are certain things that I have observed regarding this. There seems to be lack of knowledge on this topic. Everyone advises his or her patients to take *Takra*, but how it should be processed, how much should be consumed, in which *kaal* etc. is not considered. Also there are some misconceptions regarding it. In this article I would like to stress on some very essential points which if not followed correctly changes the entire purpose for which *Takra* is given.

People are well versed with a substance or liquid called “*chhaas*” or buttermilk or “*Taak*”. When asked to the patients do you drink buttermilk he replies in affirmation. But does this affirmation really means “*Takra*”? The answer is “NO”, what people consume is *chhaas* and not *Takra*.

Takra vs. Chhachchhika: The Key Misconception

‘Chhachchhika saradinam syat swachchha prachuravarika’

The first major misconception surrounding Takra is the confusion between Takra and "Chhachchhika" (buttermilk). Many people casually refer to buttermilk (*chhaas*) as Takra, which is technically inaccurate. While both are derived from curd, their preparation methods differ significantly, leading to vastly different properties.



**‘Chhachchhika sheetala laghvi pittashramatrushahari vatanut kaphakrut sa tu deepani
lavananvita’²**

Chhachchhika is prepared by diluting curd with water and churning it, resulting in a product that is cooler (sheeta) and has a higher water content. According to Ayurvedic principles, Chhachchhika possesses a cooling effect, which is suitable for treating conditions like excess heat, but does not serve the same purpose as Takra in treating agnimandya (low digestive fire) or vata-related disorders.

Takra, on the other hand, is made by adding minimal water to curd without removing the cream, thus retaining its warmth (ushna) after the preparation process. This property makes Takra more suitable for conditions related to digestive imbalances and vata disorders.

So here comes the big surprise! *Takra* has been advised to take in all *agnimandyajanya vikaras*. But *chhachchhika* so called *Takra* is *sheeta*. Therefore the entire purpose of consuming *Takra* stands nullified. The above mentioned *chhachchhika* will suffice the purpose only when *ushna viryatmaka lavana* is added to it which enhances its *deepaniya guna*.

Correct Method of Preparing Takra:

The Ayurvedic method of preparing Takra is detailed in classical texts, where it is described as being churned with only one-fourth of water added to curd, without removing its cream. This preparation retains its warming properties, which are essential for treating diseases associated with low digestive fire and vata imbalances.

“Kashayosna vikashitwat roukshyat chaapi kaphapaham”³

hence *Takra* has been advised in *agnimandyajanya vikaras*. This type of *Takra sevan* is nowhere to be seen. So when we advise patients to take takra, method of preparation should be stressed upon.

Therapeutic Properties of Takra:

- Takra is described as having a warming (ushna) quality, which makes it beneficial for individuals suffering from disorders related to coldness or slow digestion.
- The presence of a small amount of water ensures that it retains its digestive-enhancing and stimulating properties.
- Takra is recommended for various gastrointestinal disorders, including arsha (hemorrhoids), grahani (digestive dysfunction), atisara (diarrhea), and more.

Takra sevan according to doshas-⁴

- 1) *Vata dosha aadhikya*- *Takra* should be taken with *amla ras/ shunthi/ saindhav*.



- 2) *Pitta dosha aadhikya*- *Takra* should be taken with *madhur ras/ sharkara*.
- 3) *Kapha dosha aadhikya*- *Takra* should be taken with *shunthi/ maricha/ pippali/ yavakshara*.

Takra sevan in various diseases-⁵

Takra when processed with *bharjita hinga* and *jiiraka* and flavoured with *saindhav* uproots almost all *vaat-vyadhis*, *arshas* and *atisaras*. It has unmatched and flawless results in *arshas* and *grahani*, so much to the extent that patients are almost kept on *Takra* and patented medicines like *takrarishta* have been made and further graded as 1 and 2 according to the disease type.

Vyadhis of G.I.T. are very well taken care by *Takra*. In *Pandu roga*, it is advisable to take *Takra* with *Chitraka churna*. Likewise in *mutrakrichchha* *Takra* mixed with jiggery is beneficial.

Indications of Takra sevan-⁶

Takra has a wide range of therapeutic applications, especially in treating digestive and metabolic disorders. Some key indications for *Takra* include:

- 1) Sheetakala
- 2) Agnimandya
- 3) Vataroga
- 4) Aruchi
- 5) Nadi avarodh
- 6) Gara vish
- 7) Vamana
- 8) Praseka
- 9) Vishamajwara
- 10) Panduroga
- 11) Medoroga
- 12) Grahani
- 13) Arshas
- 14) Mutragraha
- 15) Bhagandar
- 16) Prameha
- 17) Gulma
- 18) Atisara
- 19) Shoola
- 20) Pliharoga
- 21) Udararoga
- 22) Aruchi
- 23) Shwitra
- 24) Koshthagata roga



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- 25) Kushtha
 - 26) Shotha
 - 27) Trushna
 - 28) Krimiroga

The versatility of *Takra* makes it a valuable remedy in managing a wide variety of diseases, particularly those associated with digestion and metabolism.

The above mentioned list contains almost all diseases in which *Takra* is indicated. But then the question arises, can *Takra* be given blindly to everybody in all diseases? The answer is NO. There are certain disease conditions where *Takra* is contraindicated.

Contraindications of *Takra*-⁷

Despite its numerous health benefits, *Takra* is contraindicated in certain conditions. It is important to exercise caution when prescribing *Takra* in the following circumstances:

- 1) Kshaya roga
- 2) Grishma ritu
- 3) Murchha
- 4) Bhrama
- 5) Daha
- 6) Raktapitta

CONCLUSION

Takra is a powerful therapeutic substance in Ayurveda, offering a wide range of health benefits when consumed correctly. However, it is essential to differentiate between *Takra* and *Chhachchhika*, as well as to follow the proper guidelines for preparation, dosage, and combination with other ingredients based on the individual's constitution and disease condition. Understanding the true potential of *Takra* and overcoming the misconceptions surrounding it can significantly enhance its therapeutic efficacy, promoting a healthier society and better health outcomes for patients.

By adhering to the principles of Ayurveda and embracing *Takra* in its true form, we can unlock its immense benefits and create a foundation for holistic health that transcends generations.

From times immemorial, *Takra* has been an integral part of our culture and society. When Lord Krishna could not resist the temptation of having it, how can we humans? Don't you think it is a noble way to welcome our guests by offering them '*Takra*' instead of tea, then only the glory of *Ayurveda* and the benefits of *Takra* will be relished and thus impart a healthy society for generations to come.



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