

## Ayurvedic Management of Ahiputna (Napkin Dermatitis): A Short Communication

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## Introduction

Ahiputna is a classical Ayurvedic condition found predominantly in neonates and infants, closely correlated with modern-day *napkin dermatitis* or *diaper rash*. It manifests with **pustules, redness, inflammation, itching,** and oozing in the perineal region. Acharya Sushruta classified Ahiputna under *Kshudra Rogas*, attributing its pathogenesis to the vitiation of **Kapha and Rakta doshas**, along with *Stanya Dushti* (vitiating breast milk)<sup>(1)</sup>. The recurrent exposure of delicate infant skin to feces, urine, and dampness exacerbates the condition.

## Need for Ayurvedic Intervention

While allopathic approaches include barrier creams and topical steroids, Ayurveda emphasizes **holistic healing** through internal and external therapies such as *lepa* (pastes), *snigdha sneha* (oily applications), *kashayadhavan* (herbal decoction washes), and *stanyashodhana* (breast milk purification in the mother). These interventions provide anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, and healing support while being safer for infants.

## Common Ayurvedic Management Strategies

## 1. Shatadhauta Ghrita

A repeatedly washed ghee used externally for its **cooling,**

**healing, and anti-inflammatory properties.** A case study showed complete resolution of symptoms within 5–7 days<sup>(2)</sup>.

## 2. Shankhadi Lepa

A herbal paste made with conch shell and other ingredients, which offers **astringent, drying, and wound-healing actions.** A clinical case reported its effective use in reducing erythema and lesions<sup>(3)</sup>.

## 3. Triphala-Khadira Kwath Dhawan

Washing the affected area with a decoction of **Triphala and Khadira** has been effective due to their **antimicrobial and cleansing action.** Clinical trials indicate substantial reduction in rash intensity and recurrence<sup>(4)(5)</sup>.

## 4. Triphala-Khadira Avachornan (Dusting Powder)

Used as a natural baby powder alternative. In an infant case, it showed complete healing without side effects in 10 days<sup>(6)</sup>.

## Stanyashodhana (Breast Milk Purification)

Since *Stanya Dushti* is considered a root cause, treatment may include administering **internal medications like Musta, Guduchi, and Vidanga** to the breastfeeding mother<sup>(7)</sup>.

Table 1 : Mechanism of Action of Key Ayurvedic Interventions

Intervention	Primary Action	Mechanism (Based on Ayurvedic and Modern Pharmacology)
<b>Shatadhauta Ghrita</b>	Cooling, wound healing, skin protectant	Repeatedly washed ghee enhances <i>Snigdha</i> (unctuousness), <i>Shita</i> (cooling), and <i>Ropana</i> (healing) properties. Acts as an emollient that restores epidermal moisture, reduces transepidermal water loss, and facilitates re-epithelialization <sup>(1,2)</sup> .
<b>Shankhadi Lepa</b>	Astringent, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic	Contains <i>Shankha Bhasma</i> (conch shell) and herbal powders which are <i>Rakta-Stambhaka</i> (anti-hemorrhagic) and <i>Vrana- Ropaka</i> (wound healers). Its alkaline nature balances local acidity and supports drying of oozing wounds <sup>(3)</sup> .
<b>Triphala-Khadira Kwath Dhawan</b>	Cleansing, antimicrobial, anti-pruritic	Triphala is rich in tannins and flavonoids with antioxidant and antimicrobial activity. <i>Khadira</i> ( <i>Acacia catechu</i> ) is known for its <i>Kashaya rasa</i> (astringent taste), which contracts tissue and reduces exudation. This wash cleanses the area and minimizes bacterial/fungal growth <sup>(4,5)</sup> .
<b>Triphala-Khadira Avachornan</b>	Dusting agent, drying, antimicrobial	Fine herbal powder absorbs moisture, prevents friction, and provides a natural antiseptic barrier. Especially helpful in warm and humid climates <sup>(6)</sup> .
<b>Stanyashodhana Dravyas</b> (e.g., Musta, Vidanga, Guduchi)	Purifies breast milk (stanya), prevents recurrence	These herbs detoxify <i>Docita stanya</i> , reduce maternal <i>Kapha-Pitta vitiation</i> , and thereby prevent further aggravation of the infant's skin condition <sup>(7)</sup> .

### Discussion

Ahiputna, recognized in Ayurvedic texts as a Kapha–Pitta–Rakta pradhāna *Kṣudraroga*, corresponds to modern napkin dermatitis—characterized by erythema, burning, vesiculation, and pustular lesions over the perianal area. Its pathogenesis stems from prolonged exposure to moisture and irritants (urine/feces), aggravated by improper hygiene and *stanyaduṣṭi* (vitiating breast milk)<sup>(8)</sup>.

#### Clinical Efficacy of Ayurvedic Topicals

- **Triphala-Khadira Yog Avachooran:** In an 11-month-old infant presenting with diaper rash, topical application of this herbal dusting powder (avachooran) led to complete symptom resolution within 10 days, with no recorded relapse<sup>(8)</sup>.
- **Shatadhauta Ghrita:** This medicated ghee, washed 100 times to produce a soft, cooling emulsion, has been effectively used in pediatric cases of diaper dermatitis. In one documented instance, an infant experienced significant relief from discomfort and inflammation after just 4–5 daily applications, with healing observed over a week.

The swift resolution of symptoms, coupled with the absence of adverse effects, points to the safety and efficacy of these Ayurvedic interventions in infant care.

#### Comparative Advantage & Limitations

Unlike zinc-oxide or corticosteroid creams—which may risk skin irritation or systemic absorption—these Ayurvedic formulations are gentle, non-steroidal, and well-tolerated by infants. However, current evidence is limited to case reports and open-label trials. There is a critical need for randomized controlled studies, standardized protocols, and objective measures to validate and integrate these therapies conclusively into clinical practice.

### Conclusion

The Ayurvedic approach to managing Ahiputna is effective, non-invasive, and safe for infants. Interventions like **Shatadhauta Ghrita**, **Triphala-Khadira Kwath**, and **herbal lepas** offer substantial relief and reduce recurrence. Clinical evidence supports the need for **standardized**

**protocols and larger trials** to validate these outcomes further.

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