

Ayurvedic remedies on respiratory disorders

Preface

In this book, we have described the functions and diseases of nose, ears, throat, respiratory passages, lungs and pleura. The main function of the respiratory system is to extract Oxygen from air and deliver it to the blood in capillaries in the lungs and carry the Carbon-dioxide (CO₂), the gaseous waste product of the cells from blood in the capillaries of lungs and expel it into atmosphere. The function of Oxygen is to provide energy to all the cells in the body from the food particles in the cells with the help of enzymes in the cells.

We breathe in our first breath at the time of birth, the first cry of the baby is the first expiration of the body. We breathe out our last breath at the time of death. We can survive without food and water for some days but without air, that is, breathing, we cannot survive for more than 2 to 3 minutes.

Therefore, Oxygen is called *Pranavayu*, that is, 'life sustaining gas'. After birth, in the first month, the new-born baby breathes 30-40 times a minute. While resting, in a normal adult, it is 12 to 16 times per minute. The hair in the nose filter the inspired air and the sinuses help to moderate the temperature of inspired air. Tonsils are bodyguards at the junction of nose and throat and prevent entry of germs into the air passages. The size of the tonsils in children between 6 to 8 years of age is double that of adults. After the age of 14 years, the size of the tonsils automatically regresses. Tonsils should not be unnecessarily removed, just because they are enlarged.

Larynx, the voice box is the organ of speech. Man is the only animal who can speak. Through his speech, man can make friends or enemies. Ears are the organ of hearing. We should not hear loud and harsh noises like those of crackers. We should use ears for hearing stories of avatars (Incarnations of God) and melodious music.

Cold and cough are the most common symptoms from which everyone suffers. This is because we are breathing in and out air, which is contaminated with germs, dust particles, chemicals, fumes, smoke of vehicles and factories and cigarette smoking. In Mumbai, the humid climate promotes growth of germs. Overcrowding predisposes to transfer the germs of cold and cough, from one person to another.

In this text causes, symptoms, diet, medicines and general 'dos and don'ts' for the diseases of nose, throat, ears, voice box, air passages and lungs are given in detail. Ayurveda advises the remedies including diet according to type of disease, constitution, environment and season. In this book, we have given measures to keep these organs healthy. *Pranayam*, that is, controlled breathing can improve the vital capacity of lungs and health of all organs, including the mind.

This book will be useful to doctors, *Vaidyas*, medical students as well as common men to keep these organs healthy and to prevent diseases.

We pray to the *Prana-Devata*, the Deity of life sustaining air to keep the respiratory organs healthy.

|| *Om Sameeranaya Namaha* ||

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Index

Preface	13
Unique preface with spiritual terminology	15
Chapter 1: Structure and functions of Respiratory System	
1. The main function	18
2. The parts of Respiratory system - Picture	18
3. Functions of Respiratory passages	20
4. Mechanism of breathing	21
5. Functions of Lungs – Picture	
6. Steps in carrying oxygen in air to blood in lung capillaries and carrying carbon dioxide from lung capillaries to outside air	22
7. Percentage of oxygen and carbon dioxide in inspired and expired air	23
8. The role of oxygen in supplying energy to body from food	24
9. The Respiratory rate 10. Tidal Air	24
11. Vital capacity	25
12. The nervous regulation of Respiration	26
13. Chemical regulation of Respiration	28
14. <i>Pranayam</i>	29
Chapter 2: Infectious diseases of the Respiratory system	
1. What are the infectious diseases of the Respiratory tract	32
2. How is it that every child coming in contact with the germs does not catch the infection	33
3. What are the factors on which the resistance of the respiratory tract depends	34
4. Why do most children get frequent attacks of colds, cough and fever	35
5. Why is that when infected with the same bacterium or virus, everybody shows different symptoms	36
6. Why do some children catch cold after taking a head bath or having cold drinks or getting wet in the rain	37

7. Why does intensity of cough and frequency of coughing increase at night	38
8. How does cough or asthma increase by taking cold items	38
9. Can we get rid of recurrent attacks of cold and cough by using vaccines	39
10. Does the weather affect severity and frequency of cold and cough attacks	39
11. Why does everyone say that the weather of my village is good	40
Chapter 3: Cold	
1. What are the functions of nose	40
2. Why do we children and adults turn over and change the side during sleep?	40
3. How do the nose drops relieve the blocking of nose?	41
4. Is it advisable to instil nose oil or ghee drops in the nose of the newborn everyday regularly	41
5. Causes of cold 6. Symptoms of cold	41
7. General treatment of cold	43
8. Recipes strengthening nasal passages	44
9. Diet	45
10. Types of cold	46
A. <i>Vataja</i> cold B. <i>Pittaja</i> cold	46
C. <i>Kaphaja</i> cold D. <i>Sannipatik</i> cold	49
11. Complications of cold and their treatment	51
12. Why do we sneeze when we get cold	52
Respiratory disorders in Ayurveda	
13. Can only one nostril catch cold	53
14. At times why does it take weeks to get rid of a cold attack	53
15. Are antibiotics useful in an attack of cold	53
16. Can one get an attack of cold due to allergy	53
Chapter 4: Sinusitis and other diseases of nose	
1. What is sinus	55

2. How can one know about an infection of the sinus	56
3. Why does an infected sinus take a long time to get cured	56
4. What should be done to cure sinusitis	56
5. Dryness of nose: Atrophic Rhinitis	58
6. <i>Narsa-arsha</i> : Polyp in the nose	59
7. Bleeding from nose - written	59
8. How do we maintain health of nose	60
Chapter 5: Tonsils and Throat	
1. Tonsils and Tonsillitis 2. Ayurvedic Treatment	63
3. Pharyngitis	65
4. Excessive salivation from mouth	66
5. Difficulty in swallowing	66
6. Gargling 7. Foul smelling breath	67
Chapter 6: Diseases of Larynx	
1. Hoarseness of noise 2. Tonics for Larynx	69
3. Diet	70
Chapter 7: Diseases of Ear	
1. Structure and functions of ear	71
2. Diseases of Ear 3. Maintaining health of ears	72
4. Diet in diseases of ears 5. <i>Vataja</i> diseases of ears	74
6. <i>Pittaja</i> diseases of ears 7. <i>Kaphaja</i> diseases of ears	75
8. Pain in ear	77
A. <i>Vataja</i> pain in Ears	77
9. <i>Pittaja</i> pain in Ears 10. <i>Kaphaja</i> pain in ears	78
11. Ear Discharge - Otitis Media	79
12. Watery or blood-stained ear discharge	80

13. Pus from ears 14. Deafness	81
15. Tinnitus - Karnanaada 16. Intolerance to sound	84
17. Deafness, stammering, dumbness	84
Chapter 8 : Cough (Kasa)	
1. What are the causes of cough	86
2. What are the causes of Chronic cough	87
3. What is bronchitis? 4. What is pneumonia	87
5. What should be done if a foreign body like chana pulses gets stuck in the respiratory tract	89
6. What are the causes of breathlessness	89
7. Ayurvedic concept of cough	90
8. <i>Vataja Kasa</i> (Cough)	91
9. <i>Pittaja Kasa</i> (Cough)	95
10. <i>Kaphaja Kasa</i> (Cough)	98
11. Recipes in <i>Vata-Kaphaj Kasa</i> 12. <i>Tridoshaja Kasa</i>	99
13. <i>Kshataja Kasa</i> 14. <i>Kshayaja Kasa</i>	102
15. General Ayurvedic Treatment of Cough	106
16. <i>Rasayan prayog</i> 17. Diet in cough	107
18. Effects of past deeds and spiritual treatment	109
19. Horoscope	109
1. Symptoms of Tuberculosis	111
2. Treatment of Tuberculosis	112
3. Medicines giving strength to lungs	114
4. Effects of post deeds and spiritual treatment	114
5. Which parts of body are affected by Tuberculosis	115
6. What precautions should be taken by a Tuberculosis patient	116
7. What is a BCG vaccine	116

8. How well is one protected by BCG vaccine	116
Chapter 10: Asthma	
1. Main symptoms	118
2. Triggering factors causing asthma	118
3. Treatment of Asthma	118
4. Effect of past deeds and spiritual treatment	122
5. Diet	122
Chapter 11: Hiccup and Yawning	
1. Hiccup	124
2. Effect of past deeds and spiritual treatment	124
3. Treatment	124
4. Diet	125
5. Yawning	126
Chapter 12: Chest pain and pleurisy	
1. Causes of pain in chests	127
2. What is pleurisy	128
3. Pain in the chest or side of chest (<i>Parshwa shoola</i>)	128
Chapter 13: Time of Administration of Medicine	
1. Time of administration of medicine & spiritual practice	130
2. If only one best remedy is to be given	130
3. Pranayam	130
4. Spiritual treatment	131
Chapter 14: Preparation of Ayurvedic recipe	
1. General guidelines	131
2. Recipes prepared from plants	133
A. <i>Kashaya</i> B. <i>Churna</i> (Powder) C. <i>Satva</i>	134

D. <i>Avaleha</i> E. <i>Paka</i> F. <i>Arka</i>	139
G. <i>Asava</i> and <i>Arishta</i>	142
H. <i>Sneha</i> (Medicated Ghee and Oil)	142
I. <i>Guggul</i> J. <i>Mashi</i> K. <i>Kshara</i>	144
3. Recipes of Metals	147
4. Food Items	148
A. Rice preparation	148
B. <i>Yusha</i>	149
5. <i>Lepa</i> , <i>Malahara</i> and <i>Upanaha</i>	150
A. Types of <i>lepa</i>	150
<i>Malahara</i> (Ointment)	151
6. <i>Shatadhouta ghruta</i> (Ghee washed one hundred times)	152
7. How long should the medicines be continued?	153