

# SWEDANA

**I**nduction of sweating for therapeutic purposes is referred by the name svedana Ayurveda. This may be used either for promotion of health or for curing the illness. By definition the procedure that alleviates the stiffness of the body, relieves sense of heaviness, and cures feeling of cold is called as svedana treatment, and these effects are achieved by increasing the natural process of perspiration. Sweat is a form of body waste. According to Ayurveda, sweat is produced during the metabolism of meda dhatu vis-a vis adipose tissue. And this sweat has considerable role in the maintenance of proper balance of body fluids. The process of sweating also involves elimination of waste and toxins from the body. These natural functions of the sweat are utilized for the therapeutic purposes in the svedana procedure. Svedana is a form of treatment, employed to cure specific diseases or to relieve symptoms like pain, stiffness, or contracture that may manifest as a symptom in different diseased conditions. That is why svedana is regarded as an upakrama, one among the shadupakrama. In addition to this, in any patient if eliminatory procedures like therapeutic emesis or therapeutic purgation is planned, svedana is performed as preliminary procedure, and therefore in such situations svedana is considered as Purvakarma or preoperative procedure.

## TYPES OF SVEDANA TREATMENT

The procedure of svedana treatment may be classified on different perspective Depending upon the usage of heat svedana is said to be of two types, likewise relating to the application of the oil prior to the svedana procedure once again it is said to be of two types. Similarly, svedana is of two types accordance with the extent of body parts exposed for Svedana.

Svedana may be performed with the application of direct heat or even without the use of direct heat. Accordingly, agni sveda and anagni sveda are the two types of inducing perspiration.

### AGNI SVEDA

Induction of perspiration by applying heat directly on to the skin is called as agni sveda. This may be achieved by using steam, warm poultice warm packs of boiled food grains etc,

### ANAGNI SVEDA

Inducing sweating without the application of direct heat is called as anagni sveda. Following are the methods adopted for inducing sweating without using the direct heat

Vyayama - Physical exercise.

Ushan sadan - Staying in a warm house.

Guru-pravarana - Covering the body with a thick blanket

Ksudha-Observation of fasting.

Bahu panam - Intake of alcohol.

Bhaya - Experience of fear

Kordha - Becoming angry

Upanha - Pasting of medicines that are hot by quality

Ahava - Involving in fighting

Atapa - Exposure to sunshine.

In all these examples body is made to perspire, but not by the application of heat. By the above said activities the production of the heat within the body is increased and that makes one to perspire. Inducing perspiration is the concept of svedana treatment, and therefore these activities are considered as means of svedana procedure.

### **OILY OR NON-OILY FORM OF SVEDANA**

The term Snigdha refers to oily character. The term ruksha is an antonym of the snigdha and refers to dryness. Heat may be applied to the body by heated substances having unctuous quality like oil, ghee and other fat substances. It is also true that heat may be applied by using substances that are dry in character like pack of heated sand, heated marble slab etc. accordingly the svedana considered to be basically of two types depending upon the character of the substances used for the svedana procedure.

Induction of perspiration by using the heated oily substances like oil or ghee is popularly known by the name snigdha sveda. Also application of heat to any part of the body following abhyanga procedure is called by the name snigdha sveda.

Contrary to this employment svedana procedure using heated dry substances like pack of sand or marble slab referred as ruksha sveda.

### **EXTENT OF BODY PARTS SUBJECTED TO SVEDANA**

Svedana is said to be of two types. They are named as ekanga sveda and sarvanga sveda

Here the classification is made on the basis of extent of body parts subjected to svedana procedure. In some of the diseased conditions symptoms are distributed in the whole body. Quadriplegia is a concrete example for this. Therefore, whole body has to be subjected to svedana procedure in such conditions. If whole body is subjected to svedana treatment then it is called as sarvanga sveda. The different methods of svedana procedures like prastara, kuti and jentaka sveda are meant for sarvanga sveda.

Contrary to this in some other conditions the disease process is restricted to one part of the body. Degenerative disease of the knee joint is an example. Needless to say, in such situations, only the diseased portion is subjected to svedana treatment. Nadi sveda, sankara sveda are the examples of procedures that are ideal for sudation to a part of the body. If a part of the body is subjected to svedana treatment then it is called as ekanga sveda.

Following are the thirteen types of svedana procedure mentioned in Charaka Samhita

### **SANKARA SVEDA**

Sankara sveda refers to application of heat by using the heated packs. Here packs are prepared by pounded plant parts or boiled grains tied on a piece of cloth packs are then heated in a boiling decoction or oil. Such warm packs are used for application of heat to the part of the body diseased. This procedure is ideal for applying heat to a portion of the body. Svedana can also be performed to the whole body by this procedure.

### **PRASTARA SVEDA**

Application of heat by making the patient to lie down on a heated marble slab with his body covered by a blanket is known as Prastara sveda. In this procedure first marble slab is heated by spreading boiled grains. Size of the slab should be adequate to accommodate the patient in supine position. When the heat in the slab is tolerable, grains on the surface of the marble is covered with a silk cloth or leaves of eranda (*Ricinus communis*), and the patient is made to lie down on this slab with his body covered with a thick blanket. This induces sweating.

### **NADISVEDA**

Here steam from a boiling decoction is passed on the diseased parts of the body. And this is possible by using the unique instrument meant for this.

### **PARISHEKA SVEDA**

Warm infusions are poured on the body parts that are diseased and this procedure is known as Parisheka sveda. For this purpose, dhara yantra can be used.

### **AVAGAHA SVEDA**

Warm infusion is filled into a bath-tub and the patient is made to sit in this tub for a prescribed period. This is ideal for inducing perspiration in whole body.

### **JENTAKA SVEDA**

Jentaka sveda is performed in a room specially built for this purpose. Inside the room there will be facility for burning the medicinal plants and space for resting for one person. Initially the medicinal plant is burnt to make the room warm. When all the smoke in the room is entered, patient is allowed to stay in the room for certain period with his body covered with a thick blanket. In this type of the sveda whole body is exposed to heat.

### **ASHMAGHANA SVEDA**

As the name itself indicates, here the svedana is performed on a human size marble slab. Initially, selected medicinal plants are burnt on this slab. When the slab is heated to adequate temperature, the fire is extinguished by sprinkling water. Then the surface of the slab is cleaned, and a silk cloth is spread on the

marble slab, Now the patient is allowed to lie on this warm slab with his body draped by a thick blanket. Warm slab as well as steam from the slab induces sweating in the patient.

### **KARSHU SVEDA**

A pit in the ground specially built with a narrow mouth and wide base is required for this form of svedana. First, medicinal herbs are burnt inside this pit, and a cot is placed over this pit. The cot must be such that its surface is made up of ropes and has plenty of small rents. The patient is asked to lie down on this cot covering his body with a thick cloth. Steam emitting from this pit passes through the cor as well as the patient and thus induces sweating. This special form of svedana procedure is called by the name Karshu sveda.

### **KUTI SVEDA**

This is another form of svedana treatment where special room exclusively built for this purpose is utilized. It is a round small room adequate to accommodate one patient and devoid of any windows for ventilation. The walls of the room pasted with thick paste made out of medicinal plants. Patient is made lit does on a cot placed on the center of the room. And his body is draped with a thick blanket. Simultaneously red-hot coal of burnt medicinal plant is put in an in vessel placed near the cot. In this way the heated room causes perspiration in the patient.

### **BHUSVEDA**

In a breeze free area, human height length of the ground is selected. And the surface of which should be leveled well. In such a surface medicinal plants are fir burnt, and when the ground is adequately heated the fire is extinguished by sprinkling water. The ground is cleaned, and the patient is asked to lie down on this warm ground. His body is draped with thick blanket. The heat and steam from the ground induces perspiration in the patient. This is the procedure of Bhusveda.

### **KUMBHI SVEDA**

Kumbhi means a pot, and a pot is used for svedana purpose in this procedure and hence known as Kumbhi sveda. A large pot is taken and half of it is buried in the ground. Above this a cot is placed. This cot should have the surface made of rope and full of rent. Warm decoction is filled into the pot. Patient is made to lie down on the cot with his body draped with thick cloth. Then an iron ball is heated to red and dipped in the decoction in the pot. This generates steam and which passes across the patient lying on the cot. Thus, this heat induces perspiration in the patient. This is the procedure of Kumbhi sveda

### **KUPA SVEDA**

Here a pit of the size of a cot is made on the ground in an area where there is no breeze. This pit is known as kupa. This pit is filled with medicinal plants and the burnt. When it gets completely burnt as evident by red charcoal, and no smoke is coming out, a cot is placed over this rectangular pit. Once again, the surface of the cot should be made of rope and should have full of rents. The patient is made to lie on the coat and his body is draped with a thick blanket. The heat from the pit reaching the patient on the cot induces perspiration. This is known as Kupa sveda.

## **HOLAKA SVEDA**

In an oven medicinal plants are burnt. When the heat is still radiating, a cot is placed over this oven. It should have plenty of rents on its surface. Patient is asked to lie on this cot and patient's body is draped with a thick blanket. Perspiration can be observed in the patient's body when he is kept in this position. This is known as Holaka sveda

Acharya Sushruta and Vagbhata have classified svedana into four types. The same is elaborated below

## **TAPA SVEDA**

Heating the body parts refers to tapa sveda. Heated substances like, vessels of bronze containing hot water, sand, cloth etc is kept in contact with the body parts. These warm substances heat the body parts inducing perspiration. Mildest form of tapa sveda may be given by heating the palms by holding it in front of the fire, and then placing the palms on the body part where sudation has to be performed. Mild form of the tapa sveda is convenient in delicate patients like children.

## **USHMA SVEDA**

The term ushma means steam. Application of heat by way of steam and there by inducing sweating is known as ushma sveda.

## **UPANAHA SVEDA**

The process of inducing perspiration by applying warm paste of herbs on body parts is called as upanaha sveda.

## **DRAVA SVEDA**

Svedana procedures performed by pouring warm liquids on the body parts are known as drava sveda. Liquids like milk, oil, ghee, decoctions etc are heated to make it lukewarm and then continuously poured on the affected part.

## **INDICATIONS FOR SVEDANA**

Svedana is beneficial both in healthy and diseased. When carried out in healthy persons it promotes the health. And in diseased persons it is useful as an independent therapeutic procedure or as a preparation of the patient prior to the shodhana procedure when planned. In the following diseases svedana is regarded as an effective treatment.

- Rhinitis
- Cough
- Hikka
- Heaviness of body
- Earache
- Pain in the side of the neck
- Dyspnoca
- Headache
- Hoarseness of voice
- Stiffness of the throat.
- Facial paralysis
- Monoplegia Quadriplegia
- Hemiparesis
- Flatulence
- Constipation
- Lack of ejaculation
- Yawing
- Stiffness of sides of the body
- Stiffness of the back Stiffness of the sacral region
- Stiffness of the sides of the abdomen
- Stiffness of the mandible
- Sciatica syndrome.
- Dysuria.
- Scrotal enlargement
- Pain in the extremities like radicular pain.
- Accumulation of undigested food in the gastrointestinal
- Cold sensations
- Tremors
- Calcareal spur Contractures

- Fatigue
- Prior to the administration of purification therapy
- Puerperal woman
- Complicated labour
- Fistula in ano
- Hemorrhoids and other illness producing projection of tissue in anus
- Urolithiasis
- Malignant tumor

## **CONTRAINDICATIONS FOR SVEDANA**

As the svedana involves heating of the body parts, it may provoke the pitta dosha, and hence is harmful in certain delicate states of health. For the same reasons in specific conditions that are listed below svedana is contraindicated.

- Persons addicted to alcohol.
- Pregnant females.
- Patients suffering from bleeding disorder.
- Patients suffering from diarrhoea.
- Patients suffering from diabetes mellitus.
- Persons having pitta type of body constitution
- Persons suffering from burns.
- Persons suffering from rectal prolapse
- Persons suffering from inguinal hernia.
- Persons suffering from any form of poisoning
- Persons exhausted due to over work.
- Patients who are unconscious.
- Persons who are too obese.
- Patients suffering from abnormal urination due to pitta dosha.
- Persons suffering from excessive thirst.
- Persons who are very much hungry.

- Persons in a state of anger.
- Persons who are in a state of extreme grief.
- Persons suffering from jaundice.
- Persons suffering from accumulation of fluid in the abdomen
- Persons suffering from urahkshata ulceration with in the chest.
- Persons suffering from the involuntary move the legs.
- Persons who are extremely weak
- Persons suffering from depletion of ojas.
- Persons suffering from darkness in front of the eyes.
- Persons suffering from visarpa-fast spreading eruptions in the body
- Persons complaining of loss of body weight.
- Persons suffering from prolapsed rectum:
- Persons who are subjected to therapeutic purgation.
- Persons who have taken ample amount of curds.
- Persons who are taking snehana treatment.
- Female in her menses.

## **BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF SVEDANA**

Snehana and svedana are carried out as a preparatory procedure in clients who will be subjected to shodhana therapy. In conjunction with snehana, svedana renders liquefaction of the vitiated dosha that is ubiquitously distributed in the body. This liquefaction assists easy mobilization of vitiated dosha from the periphery to the gastrointestinal tract; from where the vitiated dosha are easily eliminated by subjecting the client to therapeutic emesis or purgation. Thus, efficiency of shodhana procedure is dependent upon proper mobilization of dosha by the snehana as well as svedana procedure.

- Svedana corrects the imbalances of vata dosha if any.
- Svedana reduces the stiffness and hence improves the flexibility of the body parts.
- Svedana increases digestion as well as metabolism.
- By subjecting to svedana treatment skin becomes soft.
- Interest to consume the food is increased by the svedana treatment.



- Svedana clears the body channels at all levels.
- Svedana improves the activity of sense organs, and hence reduces sleep and drowsiness.
- Svedana relieves the stiffness in the joints and thus improves range of joint movement.
- Svedana is an easy method to get quick relief from pain.

### **ASSESSMENT OF THE PROCEDURE**

Client's body is exposed to heat by different means in the process of svedana treatment. If the application of the heat is excessive definitely it burns the integument. If the application of the heat is inadequate it will not give desired results. If the application of the heat is proper then only one can expect the beneficial effects of the procedure. Therefore, therapist should take adequate care while exposing the patient to heat treatment. Svedana procedure shows most of its therapeutic effects immediately in the body. These effects become apparent in the form of certain symptoms. The same symptoms are observed in client to analyze the effect of the procedure. For practical purposes the effects may be graded as deficient svedana, perfect svedana and excessive svedana. Following lines reveal clinical symptoms indicative of these different degrees of svedana effect. Therapist should ensure the symptoms indicative of perfect svedana.

### **SYMPTOMS INDICATIVE OF PROPER EFFECT**

- Pain is subsided
- Reduction of stiffness in the body parts
- Alleviation of sense of heaviness.
- Improvement in the softness of the body parts exposed to heat treatment.
- Appearance of sweating
- Remission of the illness.
- Desire to expose oneself to cold breeze.

### **SYMPTOMS INDICATIVE OF INADEQUATE EFFECT**

- Absence of symptoms indicative of perfect svedana.
- Absence of perspiration.
- Persistence of feeling of cold.
- No desire of cold atmosphere.

## **SYMPTOMS INDICATIVE OF EXCESSIVE EFFECT**

- Vitiating of pitta dosha
- Burning sensation
- Fainting
- Sense of exhaustion in the body parts exposed to svedana
- Reduction in the voice
- Reduced tone of the limbs
- Pain in the joints
- Black or reddish patches.
- Appearance of blisters.
- Giddiness
- Excessive thirst
- General sense of exhaustion.
- Fever
- Vomiting

## **MANAGEMENT OF OVER EXPOSURE OF SVEDANA**

As soon as the client develops any above said symptoms indicative of excessive treatment, svedana procedure should be immediately stopped. To relieve the effect of the over treatment following measures should be undertaken:

- Client is offered with sweet, cold, oily, liquid food.
- Client is asked to take sweet and cold non-carbonated beverages.
- Cold water may be given for drinking.
- Rice is ideal food.
- Client should avoid intake of alcohol.
- Client should avoid salty, sour or hot foods.

- Client is allowed to stay in a cool room.
- Application of paste of sandal wood may be advised to relieve burning sensation.
- Cold breeze from a hand fan impregnated with decoction of sandal wood is permitted
- Sitting in a garden of cold atmosphere also relieves exhaustion.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

Contrary to the above said descriptions, in the absence of perspiration if the patient develops symptoms indicative of excessive svedana like giddiness, it suggests the delicate constitution of the client and his intolerance for heat. such situations the svedana has to be stopped.

## **AFTER THE PROCEDURE**

- After the svedana procedure patient is asked to take rest in a chair for a while, about 15 minutes.
- After this the client is asked to take bath and to feel refreshed.
- Any tiredness experienced during the svedana procedure will abolish soon after the hot water bath.
- After the sudation procedure and bath, client is asked to take light liquid food and enjoy rest for few minutes.
- He should avoid immediate exposure to cold breeze, immediate exposure to open air and contact with cold water.