

# Upanaha

**T**he word upanaha is derived from the Sanskrit word upanahan, meaning bandage. The procedure of applying warm herbal paste to the diseased parts of the body followed by bandaging is referred by the name upanaha sveda.

This unique type of svedana therapy is usually preferred for performing the svedana for limited portion of the body. This procedure is inconvenient if the whole body has to be subjected to svedana.

Application of heat by the warm herbal paste induces sweating, and hence brings about the benefits of the svedana therapy.

In addition to this the herbs used in the preparation of the paste have got their own pharmacological actions, as these drugs may be absorbed through the dermis.

## Indications

Salvana upanaha sveda is effective in imbalances of vata dosha.

Dhatura patra upanaha is used to relieve pain in arthritis.

Nirgundi upanaha sveda is beneficial in painful joint disorders.

Kakolyadi gana upanaha sveda is useful in imbalances of pitta dosha.

Surasadi gana upanaha sveda is beneficial in disorders of kapha dosha.

Dashanga lepa is useful in inflammatory conditions like vidhradhi (abscess).

Masha saindhava upanaha alleviates pain and swelling.

## REQUIREMENTS

Herbal paste according to the prescription.

Bandaging cloth: 2 feet square cotton cloth folded diagonally to make a triangular bandage.

Leaves of eranda (*Ricinus communis*)

## **PROCEDURE**

The affected part is smeared with herbal paste and is then covered with leaves of eranda (*Ricinus communis*).

This is followed by bandaging with cotton cloth. This application is left undisturbed for certain period.

This is the procedure of upanaha sveda and is methodically done in the following steps.

## **PREPARATION OF THE PATIENT**

The upanaha sveda may be accomplished any time during the day or night depending upon the requirement.

The herbal paste applied in the morning is kept undisturbed till the evening and then removed. In contrast to this, the herbal e applied in the evening is left overnight undisturbed.

Upanaha sveda paste is always preferred immediately after the bath, or else the part to be treated is cleaned well before the application of the paste.

The client is then placed comfortably either in lying down or sitting upright position so that the therapist can easily approach the part to be treated.

To begin with the therapist chants the svastivachana hymn or prayer and then starts smearing the herbal paste.

## **APPLICATION OF THE PASTE**

Warm herbal paste is applied all around the joint with the help of a spatula. The thickness of the application should be approximately 3 to 5 mm.

## **COVERING WITH LEAVES**

The leaf of eranda (*Ricinus communis*) is cut into appropriate size and is then placed over the herbal paste applied.

In this way the herbal paste is completely covered with the leaves all around the joint. Alternatively one can spread the herbal paste on the leaf of eranda (*Ricinus communis*) and then is placed over the joint to cover it.

## **BANDAGING**

The application of the herbal paste covered with leaves of eranda (*Ricinus communis*) is secured in position by bandaging.

For this a 2 feet square cotton cloth is divided diagonally from corner to corner to make it a triangular bandage.

The method of applying the same to the knee, ankle and hand is described here.

### **BANDAGING THE HAND WITH STHAGIKA BANDHA**

When the hand below the wrist is treated with upanaha sveda, bandaging is done by method of sthagika bandha. For this the triangular bandage is spread on the working table. The client is asked to place his pronated hand with palm downwards on this bandage with his fingers facing the point of the bandage and the wrist at the middle of lower border of bandage. Now the point of the bandage is turned over the back of the hand. Then the two ends of the bandage are crossed and brought around the wrist. The bandage is fastened with the reef knot at the wrist. The point is then turned on the knot and pinned.

### **BANDAGING THE KNEE WITH SVASTIKA BANDHA**

Bandaging is best done in the supine position of client with knee extended. For bandaging the triangular bandage is spread on the knee with the lower border of the bandage is about 2 inches below the knee joint. The corners of the bandage are now turned backwards and crossed behind the knee joint and then are carried above and in front of the knee in a figure of eight. The corners of the bandage are now fastened with reef knot at the lower end of the thigh. The point of the bandage is turned over the knot and then fastened with a safety pin. In the similar fashion the wrist and elbow are also bandaged by the method of svastika bandha.

### **BANDAGING THE ANKLE WITH SVASTIKA BANDHA**

The triangular bandage is spread on the table. The client is asked to place his heel on the middle of the lower border of the bandage with the point of the bandage directed backwards. The corners of the bandage are turned on the dorsum of the foot and then crossed in front of the ankle to carry these to the back of the ankle. At the back of the ankle the point of the bandage is turned to cover the back of the ankle. The corners of the bandage at the back of the ankle are now fastened with a reef knot. The point is turned on the reef knot and pinned.

## **DURATION**

Herbal paste applied in the morning is allowed in position till the evening. Similarly, the upanaha applied in the evening is kept undisturbed overnight.

## **AFTER PROCEDURE**

Bandage and the herbal paste are removed. And the area is properly cleaned with hot water.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

Consistency of herbal paste, thickness of application and maintenance of wetness during the treatment all have to be considered to obtain the desired effect from the upanaha sveda. In this regard following aspects of upanaha have to be carefully planned.

The herbal paste applied should not be allowed to get dry. Dried application is likely to irritate the dermis. Also dried up application hinders the absorption of medicine through the skin and hence one cannot get the desired effect.

The thickness of the application should be approximately 2 to 5 mm. An unusually thin application is likely to get dry early and is not desired.

In contrast this if the application is too thick it is likely to cause more perspiration and irritation of the skin precipitating skin eruptions and itching.

The herbal paste should have proper consistency. It must not be unusually watery thick. If it is watery or thick it may not properly adhere to the skin preventing absorption of the medicine.

Before the next application the earlier application should be properly cleaned. Application of the herbal paste over the earlier one is likely to cause irritation of skin and may predispose to skin eruptions and itching.