



Ashta Phala Ghrita - A contemporary Ayurvedic formulation commonly used for Gastrointestinal Health

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Ashta Phala Ghrita is a traditional Ayurvedic medicated ghee formulation, highly revered for its therapeutic efficacy in managing gastrointestinal (GI) disorders, particularly Grahani Roga and Agnimandhya. Sourced from the Bhaishajya Ratnavali, this classical preparation integrates eight readily available ingredients, including Triphala and Trikatu, combined with cow's ghee and jaggery, forming a simple yet potent remedy. The formulation is designed to stimulate Agni (digestive fire), digest Ama (metabolic toxins), and rejuvenate the intestinal mucosa, thereby addressing the root causes of chronic digestive dysfunctions like malabsorption syndromes and irritable bowel conditions. The unique lipophilic nature of ghee enhances the bioavailability of herbal actives, while the synergistic action of the ingredients imparts Deepana (appetizer), Pachana (digestive), Rasayana (rejuvenative), and Srotoshodhaka (channel-cleansing) effects. Contemporary research validates the pharmacological activities of the constituent herbs, including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, hepatoprotective, and immunomodulatory properties, aligning with Ayurvedic principles. Ashta Phala Ghrita not only corrects impaired digestion but also restores the structural and functional integrity of the Grahani organ. Its ease of preparation, cost-effectiveness, and high clinical efficacy make Ashta Phala Ghrita a highly relevant and sustainable formulation in both classical and contemporary Ayurvedic practice for GI health. The detailed pharmaceutical process, adherence to traditional Sneha Kalpana principles, and precise ingredient selection ensure optimal therapeutic outcomes. Thus, Ashta Phala Ghrita stands as a valuable, time-tested intervention in the management of complex gastrointestinal disorders through holistic restoration of digestive strength and gut health.

Keywords: Ashtaphala ghrita, GI health, Grahani, Agnimandhya, Gut microbes

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Introduction

Ghrita (medicated ghee) is a crucial dosage form in Ayurveda, renowned for its therapeutic efficacy, bioavailability, and ability to penetrate deep tissues. Prepared by processing clarified butter (ghee) with medicinal herbs, *Ghrita* formulations are widely used for internal and external applications. The unique lipophilic nature of ghee allows it to absorb active phytochemicals, enhancing their stability and facilitating their transport across cellular membranes, including the blood-brain barrier.[1] Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita describe numerous *Ghrita* formulations, each tailored for specific ailments. Notable examples include Brahmi *Ghrita* for cognitive enhancement, Triphala *Ghrita* for eye disorders, and Panchagavya *Ghrita* for detoxification. The preparation process involves prolonged heating of ghee with herbal decoctions, pastes, and juices, ensuring the extraction of fat-soluble and water-soluble bioactive compounds.[2]

Ghrita is extensively used in *Panchakarma* therapy, particularly in *Snehapana* (internal oleation) to facilitate detoxification. Its rejuvenating & nourishing properties make it beneficial for neurological, digestive & respiratory disorders. Modern pharmacological studies have corroborated its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory & neuroprotective effects, validating traditional Ayurvedic claims.[3]

Ashta phala Ghrita is classical Ayurvedic formulation known for its simplicity & effectiveness. This medicated ghee is composed of eight carefully selected ingredients, each contributing unique therapeutic benefits. It is traditionally described in authoritative Ayurvedic text *Bhaishajya Ratnavali*, specifically under chapter *Grahani Roga Adhikara*, which deals with disorders related to gastrointestinal system. This formulation is primarily indicated for conditions such as *Agnimandhya* (digestive fire impairment) & *Grahani* (a condition associated with chronic digestive disturbances, often likened to irritable bowel syndrome or malabsorption syndromes in modern medicine). The ingredients in *Ashta Phala Ghritam* are renowned for their *Deepana* (appetite-stimulating), *Pachana* (digestive), *Rasayana* (rejuvenative), and *Agnivardhaka* (digestive fire-enhancing) properties, making it comprehensive remedy for improving digestion & metabolic activity.[4]

What makes *Ashta Phala Ghrita* particularly appealing is its ease of preparation and the accessibility of its components. All eight ingredients are commonly available, which allows for convenient formulation without the need for rare or costly substances. This not only enhances its practicality for practitioners and patients alike but also ensures its continued relevance in both traditional practice and modern Ayurvedic therapies

Materials and Methods

In Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals, the preparation of *Ghrita* (medicated ghee) follows a well-established methodology involving three primary components. These include: (1) *Kalka* - This refers to a fine paste made from one or more medicinal substances. It constitutes one part of the total formulation and serves as the active herbal base, contributing the primary therapeutic properties to the final product. (2) *Sneha Dravya* - This is the fatty medium, typically in the form of *Ghrita* (ghee) or *taila* (oil), and it forms four parts of the formulation. The *Sneha* acts as a carrier, helping in the extraction, preservation, and effective delivery of the medicinal properties of the herbs used. (3) *Drava Dravya* - This is the liquid component, which could be in the form of *Kashaya* (herbal decoction), *Swarasa* (fresh juice), *Dugdha* (milk), or other suitable liquids.[5] It is used in sixteen parts and facilitates the cooking process while aiding in the extraction of active constituents from the herbal paste into the *Sneha Dravya*. These proportions - 1-part *Kalka*, 4 parts *Sneha*, and 16 parts *Drava* - are the standard ratios prescribed for most *Ghrita* preparations. However, it is important to note that classical texts occasionally deviate from this general formula. In such cases, the *Acharyas* (ancient scholars) have provided specific quantities for each ingredient based on the desired therapeutic action, the nature of the herbs involved, or the target condition being treated. These deviations are intentional and are rooted in deep clinical insight and experiential knowledge passed down through generations.[6]

Hence, while the standard proportion serves as a guideline, strict adherence to the quantities mentioned in classical formulations takes precedence whenever specific instructions are given. This reflects the precision and flexibility inherent in Ayurvedic pharmaceuticals, allowing formulations to be tailored for maximum efficacy.

Drug Review[7]

SN	Ingredients	Botanical name	Parts Used	Quantity
1.	Shunti	Zingiber officinale	Rhizome	1/6 Bilva
2.	Pippali	Piper longum	Fruit	1/6 Bilva
3.	Maricha	Piper nigrum	Fruit	1/6 Bilva
4.	Haritaki	Terminalia chebula	Fruit	1/6 Bilva
5.	Vibethaki	Terminalia bellirica	Fruit	1/6 Bilva
6.	Amalaki	Emblica officinalis	Fruit	1/6 Bilva
7.	Guda	-	-	1 Pala
8.	Go Ghrita	-	-	8 Pala

Rasapanchaka of the drugs[8]

Drug	Rasa	Guna	Virya	Vipaka	Karma
Shunti	Katu	Lahu, Snigdha	Ushna	Madhura	Deepana, Pacana
Pippali	Katu	Lahu, Snigdha	Anushna Sheeta	Madhura	Rasayana, Deepana, Kaphahara
Maricha	Katu	Laghu, Teekshna	Ushna	Katu	Deepana, Pachana, Shwasahara
Haritaki	Pancharasa except Lavana	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Madhura	Rasayana, Virechana, Tridosahara
Vibethaki	Kashaya	Laghu, Ruksha	Ushna	Madhura	Kapha-Pittahara, Netrahitah, Rasayana
Amalaki	Pancharasa except Lavana	Laghu, Ruksha	Sheeta	Madhura	Rasayana, Tridosahara, Chakshushya, Vrishya
Guda	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Ushna	Madhura	Vatahara, Raktashodhaka, Deepana, Balya
Go Ghrita	Madhura	Guru, Snigdha	Sheeta	Madhura	Medhya, Rasayana, Agnivardhaka, Vata-Pitta Shamaka

Phyto chemicals and pharmaceutical activities of the Drugs:[9,10,11]

Drugs	Phyto chemicals	Pharmacological Activities
Shunti	Gingerol, Shogaol, Zingerone, Essential oils (camphene, cineole, borneol), Flavonoids, Resins	Digestive stimulant, Anti-inflammatory, Carminative, Analgesic, Antioxidant, Anti-emetic, Cardioprotective
Pippali	Piperine, Piperidine, Myrcene, Sabinene. Alkaloids, Lignans	Expectorant, Bronchodilator, Hepatoprotective, Carminative, Immunomodulatory, Neuroprotective
Maricha	Piperine, Chavicine, Terpenes, Flavonoids, Essential oils (β -caryophyllene, limonene)	Bioavailability enhancer, Thermogenic, Antimicrobial, Anti-inflammatory, Antidepressant, Antioxidant
Haritaki	Tannins (Chebulagic acid, Chebulinic acid), Gallic acid, Ellagic acid, Flavonoids, Saponins	Rejuvenative, Laxative, Antimicrobial, Digestive aid, Antioxidant, Hepatoprotective
Vibethaki	Gallic acid, Ellagic acid, Chebulagic acid, Beta-sitosterol, Luteolin	Antidiabetic, Antioxidant, Antibacterial, Laxative
Amalaki	Vitamin C (Ascorbic acid), Tannins (Emblicanin A & B), Gallic acid, Ellagic acid, Quercetin	Rejuvenative, Immunomodulatory, Cardioprotective, Hepatoprotective, Antidiabetic, Neuroprotective
Guda	Phenolic compounds, Flavonoids, Iron, Magnesium, Calcium, B-complex vitamins	Detoxifies body, Energy booster, Respiratory tonic, Digestive aid, Antioxidant
Go Ghrita	Butyric acid, Omega-3 fatty acids, Conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), Vitamin A, D, E, K, Phospholipids	Brain tonic, Rejuvenative, Anti-inflammatory, Immunomodulatory, Cardioprotective

Acharya Kaviraj Govinda Das Sen has clearly specified the quantities of the ingredients to be used, offering precise guidance for its preparation. This attention to detail highlights the depth of traditional Ayurvedic knowledge and ensures the formulation is both effective and consistent in its therapeutic action. According to the *yoga* (formula), the *Kalka Dravya* - which is the herbal paste - is prepared using six potent ingredients: *Shunti* (dry ginger), *Pippali* (long pepper), *Maricha* (black pepper), *Haritaki*, *Vibhitaki*, and *Amalaki*. These six herbs are to be taken in equal proportions,

Collectively weighing 1 *Bilva*, which is equivalent to 48 grams. Therefore, each individual herb is measured as 1/6th of a *Bilva*, amounting to 8 grams per ingredient. In addition to these six herbs, *Guda* (jaggery) is also incorporated into the *Kalka*, in a quantity of 1 *Pala* or 48 grams. The herbs and jaggery are thoroughly ground together to form a uniform paste, which serves as the *Kalka* for the preparation. For the *Sneha Dravya*, *Go Ghrita* (cow's ghee) is used in a quantity of 8 *Pala*, which equals 384 grams. *Ghrita* acts as the lipid medium in which the herbal components are processed and infused.

As for the *Drava Dravya* (liquid medium), the original yoga does not explicitly mention a specific liquid to be used. In such cases, traditional Ayurvedic practice allows for the use of *Jala* (water) as a default *Drava Dravya*. Following the standard ratio for *Sneha Kalpana* (medicated ghee/oil preparations) - 1-part *Kalka*, 4 parts *Sneha*, and 16 parts *Drava* - the amount of water to be used is calculated accordingly. With 48 grams of *Kalka*, the proportionate quantity of *Drava Dravya* would be 16 times that amount, which comes to approximately 768 millilitres. However, to ensure optimal extraction and absorption of the medicinal properties during the preparation process, a slightly higher amount of water—approximately 1.5 liters - is commonly used. This also compensates for evaporation losses during the slow and prolonged heating process required for *Ghrita* preparation.[12]

The methodical process of cooking medicated ghee with herbal pastes and liquids. The procedure begins by gently warming *Go Ghrita* (cow's ghee) in a clean and dry *Patra* (vessel) over a low flame. It is important to maintain mild, controlled heat throughout the process to ensure that the medicinal qualities of the ingredients are preserved and not destroyed by overheating.[13]

Once the ghee is sufficiently warmed, the *Kalka* (herbal paste) - which in this case is made from the six powdered herbs (*Shunti*, *Pippali*, *Maricha*, *Haritaki*, *Vibhitaki*, *Amalaki*) along with *Guda* (jaggery) - is added to the vessel. Following this, the *Drava Dravya* (liquid medium) - typically *Jala* (water) in this formulation - is poured in. The mixture of *Ghrita*, *Kalka*, and *Drava* is then allowed to simmer slowly and uniformly, with continuous stirring to prevent the contents from sticking to the bottom or burning.

The boiling continues until the entire aqueous portion (water) evaporates, and only the medicated ghee remains. This is a critical phase in *Sneha Kalpana*, as the efficacy and safety of the final preparation depend on accurately identifying the endpoint, known as *Sneha Siddhi Lakshanas* - signs that indicate the proper cooking of the medicated ghee. These include: **Varthi Sankhya** (Wick Test) - A small portion of the *Kalka* (residual herbal paste), when rolled between the thumb and index finger, should form a *Varthi* (wick-like shape). This indicates the *Kalka* has reached the proper consistency and moisture has evaporated.

Nirghosha (Sound Test) - When a bit of this *Kalka* is placed on a flame, no crackling sound should be heard. This confirms the complete evaporation of water content, which is essential to prevent spoilage and to enhance the shelf life of the *Ghrita*. **Phena Shanti** (Cessation of Frothing) - During boiling, frothing occurs due to the presence of water. The disappearance of foam or froth from the surface is a clear sign that the water has evaporated, and the ghee has reached the desired state of preparation. [14]

These *Sneha Paka Lakshanas* must be observed carefully to ensure the proper transformation of the ingredients into a stable and potent medicated *Ghrita*. Once these signs are evident, the heating is stopped, and the *Ashta Phala Ghritam* is filtered and stored in a clean, dry container for therapeutic use.

Discussion

Ashta Phala Ghrita is one of the unique *Ghrita* preparations mentioned in *Bhaishajya Ratnavalli* with very less and easily available ingredients like *Triphala* and *Trikatu*. The name *Ashta Phala Ghritam* maybe due to 2 reasons (1) total of 8 ingredients being used or (2) *Ghrita* taken in the preparation in the quantity of 8 *Phala*. *Ashta Phala Ghritam* is indicated in *Grahani Roga* and *Agnimandhya*.

Probable mode of action on *Grahani* and *Agnimandhya*

Nidanas disturb the *Jatharagni*, leading to *Mandagni* (low digestive fire). As a result, food is not properly digested, leading to *Ama Utpatti* (formation of toxins). The undigested material and vitiated *Doshas* accumulate in the *Grahani*, leading to dysfunction. The structural and functional capacity of *Grahani* is compromised.[15] **Doshic Involvement:** **Pitta:** Increases *Tikshna* (sharpness) → leads to burning, diarrhoea. **Vata:** Increases *Ruksha* (dryness), *Chala* (instability) → causes irregular bowels, gas. **Kapha:** Increases *Manda* (sluggishness), *Snigdha* (stickiness) → leads to heaviness, mucus in stool. *Doshas* + *Ama* localizes in *Grahani*. [16] This impairs the retention and proper processing of food. The improperly digested food is either passed early (as in *Atisara*) or retained excessively (as in *Vibandha*). Resulting in Malabsorption, *Ama* formation and Nutritional deficiencies.[17]

In *Ashta phala Ghrita* both *Triphala* and *Trikatu* are present. *Trikatu* is known for its *Tikshna Deepana* (Potent stimulant of *Jatharagni*; used when *Mandagni* is severe) and *Srotoshodhana* (Clears *Annavaha Srotas*, enhancing absorption).[18] *Triphala* has *Mala Shodhana* (Acts as a mild *Rechana*, balancing both *Atisara* and *Vibandha*), *Grahi* (Despite being mildly laxative, it stabilizes absorption in chronic *Grahani* by regulating intestinal tone) and Antioxidant which supports gut microbiome, helps restore mucosal lining.[19] Both *Triphala* and *Trikatu* are having *Ama Pachana* which clears *Ama*. All the drugs except *Maricha* have *Madhura Vipaka* even though there are *Ushna* in *Virya*, this *Madhura Vipaka* and *Rasayana Karma* of the drugs enhances cellular repair, gut mucosa healing, prevents tissue depletion (*Dhatu Kshaya*). *Guda* has *Snigdha* + *Ushna* properties help pacify *Vata*, which is often aggravated in *Vataja* or *Sannipataja Grahani* useful in bloating, dryness, irregular bowels.[20] *Ghrita* acts as a *Yogavahi* which enhances bioavailability of other drugs, *Rasayana* and *Pithashamaka*. Hence *Ashta Phala Ghrita* pacifies *Agnimandhya* which in turn leads to suppression of *Grahani Roga*. [21] This formulation, although minimalistic in terms of the number of ingredients, showcases a deeply holistic and multifaceted therapeutic action. The combination of *Triphala* and *Trikatu* harmoniously integrates both rejuvenative and eliminative approaches: where *Trikatu* acts as a powerful *Deepana-Pachana* (appetizer and digestive stimulant), *Triphala* supports gentle detoxification, while also regulating absorption and promoting intestinal health. The inclusion of *Guda* (jaggery), often considered just a sweetener, plays a subtle yet important role by providing *Vata*-pacifying and *Agni*-stimulating properties, especially beneficial in chronic and *Vata*-dominant *Grahani* conditions. *Ghrita*, being *Rasayana*, *Pitta-Shamana*, and *Yogavahi*, not only heals the gut lining but also potentiates the overall effect of the formulation by enhancing bioavailability and tissue-level absorption.

The thoughtful synergy between these drugs addresses all the core aspects of *Grahani Samprapti* from *Agnimandhya* and *Ama* formation to *Dosha* vitiation and *Dhatukshaya*. It clears the *Srotorodha* (channel obstruction), enhances *Agni*, and supports intestinal mucosal repair, ultimately breaking the pathological cycle of *Grahani*. [22]

Conclusion

Aṣṭa Phala Ghṛita is a shining example of how a well-balanced Ayurvedic formulation rooted in classical wisdom can provide a comprehensive, safe, and sustainable solution to complex digestive disorders. It not only aims to relieve symptoms but also corrects the root cause by restoring *Agni*, clearing *Ama*, and rejuvenating the gut, thereby reinstating the physiological function of *Grahani* as the seat of digestive health. *Aṣṭa Phala Ghṛita* is a brilliant therapeutic formulation for correcting *Agnimandhya*, Eliminating *Ama*, restoring *Grahani* structure and function. It's simple yet synergistic combination of *Triphala*, *Trikatu*, *Guda*, and *Ghrita* makes it. A cost-effective, easily available, and clinically effective remedy in *Grahani Roga*.

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