

## REVIEW ARTICLE

# Water as Medicine: The Therapeutic Role of *Jalapana* in Ayurved

Bhumi Lad\*, Akshar Ashok Kulkarni

Department of Ayurved Samhita and Siddhant, Parul Institute of Ayurved, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat. 391760

Corresponding Author: Email: [bhumilad897@gmail.com](mailto:bhumilad897@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*In Charaka Samhita of Ayurveda, Jala (Water) is classified as a Nitya Sevaniya Dravya, meaning it is a substance to be consumed daily. Water is vital for all living beings on Earth, serving both external and internal purposes. It is essential for the health of both healthy individuals and patients. However, if consumed in contaminated forms or under inappropriate conditions, water can lead to imbalances and diseases. Therefore, understanding the different types of water and their proper indications is crucial. Ayurveda texts describe the use of both hot and cold water, outlining when and when not to use them. Excessive or insufficient water intake is also linked to health issues in these texts. The destructive impact of overconsumption on the body's balance is discussed, along with the qualities of various types of water. Ancient scholars have also specified the ideal quantity of water to be consumed. Additionally, they provide guidelines on the proper method for drinking water, known as Jalapana Vidhi. This article aims to compile the Ayurvedic knowledge on water from various texts, focusing on its role as a causative factor (Nidana), treatment (Chikitsa), and the correct way to consume it.*

**Keywords:** Jala, Jalapana, Ushnodaka, Water, Uttama Jala

Received 10.03.2025

Revised 01.04.2025

Accepted 11.06.2025

### How to cite this article:

Bhumi Lad, Akshar Ashok Kulkarni. Water as Medicine: The Therapeutic Role of *Jalapana* in Ayurved. Adv. Biores., Vol 16 (4) July 2025: 202-206.

## INTRODUCTION

All living beings require essential elements like air, water, and food to sustain life. Water, in particular, is a fundamental component of life. Both healthy individuals and those suffering from illness need water to stay hydrated [1]. The practice of drinking water is referred to as *Jalapana*. Various Ayurvedic texts, written by different scholars, describe the proper methods of drinking water. These texts detail the types of water, seasonal variations, the properties of ideal and contaminated water, the appropriate time and quantity for drinking water, its purification, medicinal benefits, and clinical significance. An imbalance in water intake, either excessive or insufficient, disrupts the body's *Tridosha*, leading to potential health issues [2].

### Need for the Study:

In today's fast-paced, sedentary lifestyle, many individuals suffer from metabolic disorders. People often eat and drink without careful consideration, and improper water consumption can have detrimental effects on the body, leading to various diseases [3]. Therefore, it's important for individuals to be aware of the correct quantity, qualities, indications, contraindications, and types of water before consumption. To review the methods of *Jalapana* as described in Ayurvedic texts.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A comprehensive review of literature like *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Samgraha*, *Ashtanga Hradaya*, *Bhavaprakasha Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Yogaratanakara* is conducted. Available literature from other Ayurvedic books, articles, and previous research, has been explored.

### Observations:

*Jala* has synonyms like *Vari*, *Amrita*, *Jeevana*, *Udaka*, *Ambha*, *Toya*, and *Ambu*, as mentioned in Amarkosh [4]. The water intended for consumption should possess ideal qualities.

**Uttama Jala Lakshana (Ideal water qualities):**

The ideal water possesses qualities like a slightly astringent-sweet taste, is subtle and quickly penetrates the body's channels, clear, easy to digest, does not cause dryness, and does not block or create heaviness in the bodily channels [5].

According to *Acharya Sushruta*, ideal water is odourless (*Nirgandha*), has an undefined taste (*Avyakta Rasa*), quenches thirst (*Trushnaghna*), purifies (*Shuchi*), is cool in nature (*Sheetal*), clear (*Accha*) and easily digestible, and is pleasant to drink (*Hradya*) [5].

*Acharya Vagbhata* emphasized that water should be collected in a clean vessel and free from contamination. In the absence of such water, it should be clear, like rainwater, and stored in a clean, pure place [6].

**Ushna Udaka:**

Boiled water that is free from movement (*Nirvega*), without foam (*Nisphena*), clear (*Nirmala*), and reduced to half of its original volume is known as *Ushnodaka*. Water that is reduced to a quarter of its original volume after boiling is referred to as *Kvathita Jala*. *Ushnodaka* possesses therapeutic qualities: It helps alleviate disorders related to *Kapha*, *Meda* and *Vata*, eliminates *Ama*, enhances digestive power, cleanses the bladder, and treats cough, asthma, and fever. *Acharya Kashyapa* described *Ushnodaka* as promoting healing of wounds and softening tissues [7]. By considering factors such as region, season, and the heaviness or lightness of water, water should be boiled to one-quarter, one-third, or half its original volume. This boiled water, free from foam and movement and is clear, is considered most beneficial for health [8]. *Acharya Yogaratnakara* stated that water boiled to one-quarter of its original volume is beneficial for balancing *Tridosha*, while water reduced to half is effective for pacifying *Vata-Pitta*, and water reduced to three-quarters is considered *Pathya* and helpful for *Vata*-related disorders [9]. Additionally, *Ushnodaka* prepared with *Vishva* and *Yavani* is said to alleviate both *Kapha* and *Vata* imbalance [10].

**Ushnodaka according to seasons:** During the *Sharada*, *Ushnodaka* reduced to one-eighth is recommended; in *Hemanta*, water reduced to three-quarters is advised; in *Shishira*, *Vasanta*, and *Greeshma*, water boiled down to half is recommended; and in *Varsha*, water reduced to one-eighth should be used.<sup>15</sup> *Acharya Bhavaprakasha* stated that water reduced to one-quarter of its original volume helps balance *Pitta*, water boiled to half helps balance *Vata*, and water reduced to three-quarters aids in balancing *Kapha*. He also mentioned that water reduced to one-quarter is considered *Arogyambu*, a source of health and well-being [11].

**Indications of Ushnodaka:**

*Hikka*, *Adhmana*, *Kapha*, *Kasa*, *Shvasa*, *Pinasa*, *Amadosha*, *Medoroga* [12].

*Charakacharya* recommends *Ushnodaka* for individuals suffering from fever, as it helps in digesting *Ama*. However, hot water should be administered after carefully considering the cause, location, and timing of the disease. Hot water aids digestion, alleviates *Vata*, enhances digestive power, reduces *Kapha*, and relieves thirst when consumed in moderate amounts.

**Contraindications for Ushna Jalapana:**

*Pittaja Jvara*, *Daha*, *Bhrama*, *Pralapa* and *Atisara*. Hot water tends to worsen their symptoms, while cold water provides relief [13]. After consuming *Paya* (milk), *Dadhi* (curd), or *Madhu* (honey), hot water should not be consumed. Hot water is also contraindicated in diseases caused by *Pitta* imbalance, *Raktasrava* (blood loss), and *Garbhachyuti* (miscarriage). Additionally, *Ushna Jala* is not recommended for *Madhujanya Ajirna*. However, *Ushna Jala* is generally beneficial in the treatment of *Ajirna* (indigestion) [14].

It is contraindicated in *Tuvaraka* and *Bhallataka Sneha* [15].

**Ushna Jala as Anupana:**

*Ushna Jala* is recommended as an accompanying drink (*Anupana*) for *Accha Sneha*. It aids in digestion and helps cleanse the oral cavity [16].

It is also beneficial when there is uncertainty about the digestion of digested or undigested oils, as it promotes *Udgara Shuddhi*, provides a sense of lightness in the body, and increases the desire for food (*Ruchi*). [17]

**Shruta Sheeta Jala:**

Water that is cooled after boiling is considered light, *Aruksha*, and fatigue-relieving. It helps alleviate *Pitta-Kapha* imbalances and *Sannipatika Vikara*. [18]

**Sheetal Jala:**

It helps alleviate conditions such as fainting, *Pittaja* diseases, *Ushna Kala*, burning sensation, *Visha Avastha*, *Rakta Vikara*, *Madatyaya* (intoxication), *Bhrama* (dizziness), *Klama* (fatigue), *Vamathu* (vomiting), *Raktapitta*, and thirst.[19]

**Contra-indications for Sheetodaka:**

*Parshvashula, Pratishtyaya, Vataroga, Galagraha, Sneha Peeta* etc. Arunadatta advised against drinking cold water during the day, and particularly at night, for the treatment of ear diseases. [20]

**Pipasa Vega Nigraha:**

Suppressing the urge to drink can lead to conditions such as dryness of the throat and mouth, *Badhirya, Shrama, and Angasada*. [21]

**Jaladhikya Parinama:**

Excessive water consumption leads to an increase in *Ama*, which then causes a weak digestive fire. A weakened digestive fire results in indigestion, which leads to *Jvara*. Fever causes a depletion of the bodily tissues, ultimately resulting in *Sarva Roga*. [22]

**Atiambupana Nishedha:**

Sushrutacharya advises against excessive water intake during the *Varsha*. [32] *Jalapana* is contraindicated in cases of *Udararoga*. [23] *Ama Ambupana* (consumption of unboiled water) should be avoided after consuming garlic. [24]

**Toyapana as Arishtalakshana:**

If a patient suffering from *Prameha* or *Atisara* drinks water, it is considered a sign of impending danger or adverse prognosis. [25]

**Jalapana mentioned in other places:**

In the case of *Pishtanna*, *Sushrutacharya* recommends consuming double the usual quantity of water. *Bhoja* advised that patients suffering from *Vrana*, abdominal disorders, *Asthapanapeedita, Prameha, Chhardi*, and *Atisara* should be given *Koshna Drava*. [26] Warm water is indicated for *Rashasheshajirna* (indigestion caused by leftover toxins). [27] Avoiding *Jalapana* for seven days in cases of *Linganasha Vyadhi*. [28]

**Jalapana as Nidana:**

- **Excessive water consumption** is a causative factor for *Dhvajabhanga*. [29]
- **Cold water consumption** increases thirst caused by *Vata* imbalance. [30]
- **Contaminated water** is one of the causes of *Tridosha Prakopa*. [43]
- Water from different regions and **excessive water intake** causes *Pratishtyaya*. [31]
- **Cold water** is a cause of *Shvasa Roga*. [32]
- **Excessive water drinking** leads to *Atisara*. [33]
- **Unboiled water** and **excessive water intake** are causative factors for *Jalodara*. [34]
- **Excessive water drinking** causes indigestion. [35]
- **Drinking water at night** and **excessive water consumption** cause *Kaphaparakopa*. [36]
- **Contaminated water** is a cause of *Sannipatajaparakopa*. [37]
- If *Amajala* or *Atiambu* is consumed immediately after beginning *Snehapanadi*, it acts as a cause for *Dakodara*. [38]

**Jalapana Matra:**

A person should drink water based on their individual capacity (*Shakti Anusara*). [39]

**Udaka Paka (Digestion of water): [40]**

*Ama Jalapana* (unboiled water) takes 1 *Yama* (3 hours), *Shruta Sheeta Jalapana* (cooled boiled water) requires ½ *Yama* (1 ½ hours), while *Shruta Kadushna Jalapana* (lukewarm boiled water) takes ¼ *Yama* (45 minutes) to digest.

**Effects of Jalapana: [41]**

- Drinking water before a meal leads to *Krushata* (emaciation of the body).
- Drinking water during a meal results in *Samyata* (balance of health).
- Drinking water after a meal leads to *Sthulata*.
- Excessive water intake causes indigestion of food. Similarly, not drinking water causes the same effect.
- Frequent water consumption promotes *Agni Vardhana*.

**Ushapana: [42]**

Drinking 8 *Prasriti* (640 ml) of water in the morning, before sunrise, helps a person live healthy for a hundred years. (1 *Prasriti* equals 80 ml)

**Indications for Jalapana:**

- A person should not be provided water that was boiled the previous night whether he is a patient or a healthy individual.
- *Ushnodaka* prepared during the day should not be consumed at night, and vice versa. [59]

- *Shruta Sheeta Jala* is recommended for individuals suffering from diseases caused by alcoholism, *Pitta* imbalance, *Sannipataja Roga*, *Daha*, *Atisara*, *Raktaja Vikara*, *Visha Roga*, *Murchha*, *Trushna*, *Chhardi*, and *Bhrama*. [60]
- One should not drink water from a different source until the water previously consumed is fully digested.
- *Pakva Jala* should not be consumed until the previously consumed *Apakva Jala* is digested.
- Similarly, one should avoid drinking *Apakva Jala* after consuming *Pakva Jala*.
- *Sheetal Jala* should only be consumed after the digestion of the previously taken *Ushna Jala*.
- Individuals with weak strength or imbalanced *Doshas* and *Agni* should refrain from drinking *Apakva Jala*, even in small quantities.
- Even healthy individuals should drink less water during seasons other than *Greeshma* and *Sharada*.
- Limited water intake is advised for those with loss of appetite, abdominal disorders, skin diseases, fever, eye diseases, wounds, diabetes, nasal congestion, excessive sweating, and weak digestion. [43, 44]

#### **Clinical Importance of Jalapana:**

- Drinking water helps maintain proper hydration levels.
- It regulates body temperature, aids in food digestion, and helps eliminate waste.
- Water supports the movement of food through the gastrointestinal tract and prevents constipation.
- *Mahendra Jala* or any *Satmya Jala* is considered the best *Anupana*, with *VataKapha-Ushna Jala* and *Pitta-Sheeta Jala* being key examples.
- Drinking excessive amounts of water can lead to diseases, while insufficient water intake also causes problems. Therefore, regulating water intake is essential.
- The quantity of water consumed should be adjusted according to the seasons.

#### **DISCUSSION**

- Water boiled at night should not be given to healthy individuals or patients, as it becomes *Amla* (sour) in its *Vipaka* and aggravates *Shleshma*. [44]
- *Trushna* is considered a life-threatening condition, while water is essential for sustaining life. [45]
- *Trushna* leads to *Moha* and ultimately results in *Prananasha*. Therefore, water, referred to as *Jeevaniya* (life-giving), is given to sustain life.
- *Ama Jala* takes longer to digest, whereas *Shruta Sheeta Jala* is easier to digest. Since *Apakva Jala* contains more moisture, and *Shruta Sheeta Jala* is *Anabhishtandi* and *Laghu* due to the boiling process, it is more easily digestible.
- *Visha Vikara* or *Ama Doshaja Vikara* are inherently hot in nature, while water is cold. Therefore, cold water helps pacify *Vishavikara*.
- *Visha* is life-ending, whereas water is life-sustaining. Hence, cold water is useful in treating *Vishaja Vikara*.
- *Vidaha* causes *Trushna*, while water relieves *Trushna*. Therefore, water is indicated in *Vidaha*.

#### **CONCLUSION**

When water is consumed in the right amount and after proper analysis, it acts as *Amrita* (nectar), but if consumed improperly, it can act as *Visha* (poison). Water should be consumed in the correct quantity. Proper management of water intake can help prevent diseases.

#### **REFERENCES**

1. Gupt, A. (2011). *Ashtanga Samgraha*, Vol 1. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.51
2. Supriya.B M, Prabhu C Nagalapur, Chandrashekaraddi S Karamudi. (2022): Righteous Way of Jalapana Vidhi-An Ayurvedic Review. *AYUSHDHARA*;9(4):101-105.
3. Johnson RJ, García-Arroyo FE, Gonzaga-Sánchez G, et al. (2022): Current Hydration Habits: The Disregarded Factor for the Development of Renal and Cardiometabolic Diseases. *Nutrients*. ;14(10):2070. Published 2022 May 15. doi:10.3390/nu14102070
4. Shukla, V. (2013). *Charaka Samhita*, Vol 1. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.409
5. Shashtri, AD. (2017). *Sushruta Samhita*, Vol 1. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. p.219
6. Tripathi, B. (2017). *Ashtanga Hridaya*. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.65
7. Shashtri, L. (2022). *Yogaratnakara*. Chaukhambha Prakashan, Varanasi. p.93
8. Shashtri, AD. (2017). *Sushruta Samhita*, Vol 1. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. p.221
9. Sharma, H. (2022). *Kashyap Samhita*. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. p.25
10. Gupt, A. (2011). *Ashtanga Samgraha*, Vol 1. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.52

11. Shashtri, L. (2022). Yogaratnakara. Chaukhambha Prakashan, Varanasi. p.94
12. Murthy, KR. (2009). Bhavaprakasha, Vol 2 MK. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.11
13. Shukla, V. (2013). Charaka Samhita, Vol 1. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.577
14. <https://vedotpatti.in/samhita/Vag/esangraha/?mod=read>, Asthanga Samgraha Sutrasthana 6 Shloka 62, Shashilekha Vyakhya of Indu
15. <https://vedotpatti.in/samhita/Vag/esangraha/?mod=read>, Asthanga Samgraha Sutrasthana 25 Shloka 26, Shashilekha Vyakhya of Indu
16. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.208
17. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.1004
18. Shukla, V. (2013). Charaka Samhita, Vol 1. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.123
19. Shashtri, AD. (2017). Sushruta Samhita, Vol 2. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. p.610
20. Shukla, V. (2013). Charaka Samhita, Vol 2. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.305
21. <https://vedotpatti.in/samhita/Vag/esangraha/?mod=read> Ashtanga Samgraha Uttartantra Adhyaya 49 Shloka 116 Shashilekha Vyakhya of Indu
22. Shashtri, AD. (2017). Sushruta Samhita, Vol 1. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. p.154
23. Shashtri, AD. (2017). Sushruta Samhita, Vol 1. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. p.286
24. Acharya, JT. (2022). Sushruta Samhita. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. p.93
25. Kunte, A. (2019). Ashtanga Hridayam. Chaukhambha Orientalia, Varanasi. p.154
26. Gupt, A. (2011). Ashtanga Samgraha, Vol 2. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.249
27. Shukla, V. (2013). Charaka Samhita, Vol 2. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.775
28. Gupt, A. (2011). Ashtanga Samgraha, Vol 1. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.365
29. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.467
30. <https://vedotpatti.in/samhita/Vag/esangraha/?mod=read> Ashtanga Samgraha Uttartantra Adhyaya 23 Shloka 2 Shashilekha Vyakhya of Indu
31. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.1013
32. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.454
33. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.483
34. <https://vedotpatti.in/samhita/Vag/esangraha/?mod=read> Ashtanga Samgraha Nidanasthana Adhyaya 8 Shloka 3 Shashilekha Vyakhya of Indu
35. Shukla, V. (2013). Charaka Samhita, Vol 2. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.298
36. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.516
37. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.140
38. Gupt, A. (2011). Ashtanga Samgraha, Vol 1. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.346
39. Tripathi, B. (2017). Ashtanga Hridaya. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Pratisthan, Delhi. p.67
40. Murthy, KR. (2009). Bhavaprakasha, Vol 1 PK. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.96
41. Murthy, KR. (2009). Bhavaprakasha, Vol 1 PK. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.116
42. Shashtri, L. (2022). Yogaratnakara. Chaukhambha Prakashan, Varanasi. p.95
43. Murthy, KR. (2009). Bhavaprakasha, Vol 1 PK. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.451
44. Shashtri, AD. (2017). Sushruta Samhita, Vol 1. Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi. p.221
45. Murthy, KR. (2009). Bhavaprakasha, Vol 2 MK. Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi. p.9

**Copyright: © 2025 Author.** This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.