

**Taila Abhyanga: An Essential Baby Ritual For Growth And Development****<sup>1</sup>Vd. Kiran Prakash Nandeshwar <sup>2</sup>Vd. Mohini Chandrakant Narke**<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Dept of Kaumarbhritya,  
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Sumatibhai shah Ayurved College, Hadapsar, Pune/ MUHS Nashik, Maharashtra, India.**Abstract:**

*Abhyanga (the Sanskrit name for oil massage) is explained as a therapy in Ayurveda. Abhyanga is not merely a massage or application of oil. It is systematic application of oil over the body, especially head, ears and foot. We grow most rapidly during our childhood years. The bone lengthening, muscles becoming stouter, sense organs getting stronger, brain growing rapidly, so does the immunity. It is necessary for the body to have sufficient care and maintenance which can achieve by healthy and nutritious food that facilitates healthy metabolism and care of body through oil massage.*

*Having a balanced vata dosha essential for the proper growth and development of babies, and according to Ayurveda, Abhyanga (oil massage) is considered best in controlling aggravated vata dosha.*

**Keywords:** Taila Abhyanga, Baby's growth and development, LBW baby, Massage oil by Ayurveda.

**Introduction:**

**A**bhyanga' word is derived from Abhi+ anj (ghanchkrutwa) i.e. Taila mardana (oil massage). Abhyanga this word indicates motion.<sup>[1]</sup> Ayurved classics had mentioned the procedure of abhyanga by Bala tailam in jatmatra paricharya( management of newborn) and this procedure of abhyanga can be practiced daily traditionally for neonatal care.<sup>[2]</sup> The positive effect stated were better growth, good sleep, better strength and prevention of disease. Abhyanga is a fantastic way of developing a bond between mother and child. The touch or tactile sensation creates a sense of security and pleasure in both the mother and the child. Tactile stimulation caused during massage is said to release hormones like oxytocin which creates a pleasurable feeling both in mother and child, it improves their mental bonding. The physical touch done during the massage is found to be helpful in neuromuscular development of the child. Ayurvedic massage oil benefits like weight gain and providing nutrition.<sup>[3]</sup>

Children are the future of any nation and childhood being the most tender stage which builds the foundation of life. Therefore, it is of prime important to take care of their proper growth and development.<sup>[4]</sup>

**Effects Of Taila Abhyanga On Low Birth Weight Baby:**

Low birth weight continues to be a significant public health problem and is associated with a range of short and long-term consequences. Low birth weight means any neonate weighing less than 2500gm at birth irrespective gestational age.<sup>[5]</sup> Ayurveda had described neonatal and infant care in detail with many regimens for prevention and treatment of disease. LBW infants have increased risk of mortality due to infection compared to normal birth weight babies. LBW of a baby is either the result of preterm birth or restricted fetal growth. In Ayurveda it is mentioned that low birth weight condition arises due to vitiated vata<sup>[6]</sup>and lack of nutrition during intrauterine life.<sup>[7]</sup> Abhyanga is mentioned as the best therapy for vata shamana and nourishment of the body.<sup>[8]</sup>

**Benefits Of Taila Abhyanga To Baby:**

- Abhyanga is known to increase the strength and nourishment of the body, improves skin texture and accelerates the healthy growth and development of the newborn i.e. varna-balaprada.<sup>[9]</sup>
- Abhyanga in specific direction improves blood circulation, facilitates removal of the toxins from the tissues, relieves physical and mental fatigue, betters the functioning of the musculoskeletal system, clears stiffness and heaviness in the body and leads to feeling of lightness.<sup>[10]</sup>

- The body is compared to the tree. If the root of tree is given water regularly, then it lives for a long time. Similarly if the body of baby is oiled properly through abhyanga, then baby lives for a long time without any decay of disease.<sup>[11]</sup>
- Klesh-sahatva: increase pain bearing capacity by the sturdiness due to Abhyanga, body becomes capable to tolerate the stress and strains of life.
- Swapanakara- It helps the individuals to get sleep. The Abhyanga is very useful to overcome sleeplessness and other mental ailments.
- Pushtikara- it helps in nourishment of the body. It nourishes all the seven dhatus of the body and builds immunity of the child.
- Ayushyakara- It promotes longevity of an individual. The functions of the vital organs and tissues are improved and life span is promoted.
- It improves thermoregulation and cause weight gain.

**Proper Way And Time Of Taila Abhyanga:**

- Different techniques of massage are explained in Bhavishya Purana, which specifies importance of pressure on different parts as, light pressure should be given on face neck, more pressure to be given on thighs and back and usually massage should be done in the direction of hairs.<sup>[12]</sup>
- Taila abhyanga should be done preferably in the morning or in the evening on an empty stomach. If the baby has been fed, it is best to wait for an hour before doing the massage.
- Oil should be slightly warm by indirect heat before apply.
- Abhyanga should always be followed by lukewarm water bath. Water should comfortable for the baby.
- After abhyanga baby should be well covered and kept warm. Baby should never be exposed to cold wind.
- Care giver's hand and nails have to be hygienically maintained while massaging babies. Nails should be trimmed to avoid injuring sensitive skin.
- Some babies may be allergic to few oils, apply a drop on hands to see to check for any reactions. Contact of oil with eyes has to be avoided.
- Sufficient care should be taken while holding the baby and massaging, to prevent fall and injury.<sup>[3]</sup>

**Order Of Massage<sup>[13]:</sup>**

1. Shirobhyanga
2. Padabhyanga

3. Abhyanga to arms and hand
4. Abhyanga to abdomen and chest
5. Back
6. Special to hip
7. Special to abdomen.

**Contra- Indication For Abhyanga<sup>[3]:</sup>**

1. Taila abhyanga should be avoided when the baby has a cold, cough, fever, etc.
2. It should not be done soon after feeding.
3. It should be avoided if there are signs of indigestion like vomiting, loose stools, etc.

**Mode Of Action Of Taila Abhyanga:**

Dalhana has explained in detailed about the absorption of sneha used in abhyanga procedure, accordingly the oil used in abhyanga can reaches upto the different dhatu if it is applied for the sufficient time. Drugs used in the abhyanga get absorbed by the skin. As Snehana drug reaches to the particular dhatu it subsides or cures the diseases of that particular dhatu.

The oil used in Abhyanga reaches: ( Dalhana on Su.S.Ci.24/30)

<b>Root of hair of skin</b>	<b>300 Matras (95 sec)</b>
<b>skin</b>	400 Matras (133 sec)
<b>Rakta</b>	500 Matras ( 160 sec)
<b>Mansa</b>	600 Matras (190 sec)
<b>Meda</b>	700 Matras (228 sec)
<b>Asthi</b>	800 Matras (240 sec)
<b>Majja</b>	900 Matras (285 sec)

Thus, Abhyanga should be done at least 5 minutes if wants to get it's effect in deeper tissue like Majja.<sup>[14]</sup>

Abhyanga oil application conserves internal body heat probably by reducing insensible water loss and reduce convective heat loss. Hence, less calories required to maintain the body temperature.

Weight gain effect due to abhyanga is related to change in vagal tone during massage and change in gastric motility. Stimulation of vagal activity leads to more efficient food absorption through increased gastric motility and release of hormones insulin and IGF (insulin like growth factor) to promote growth of newborn and improves Agnibala due to above reason.

Abhyanga increases the peripheral circulation and vasodilation which is responsible for increase in the blood supply to the muscles and helps to produce energy in fatigue and shows improvement in activity.

**Absorption:**

Acharya Sushruta in Shareerasthna explains – out of 4 tiryakgata dhamanis, each divide gradually into 100 and 1000 times and covers the body like network and their opening are attached to Romakoopa. Through them only veerya of tailas used in Abhyanga, Parisheka, Avagaha, Alepa enter into the body after undergoing paka with Bhrajaka pitta in skin.<sup>[15]</sup> Acharya Vagbhata in Ashtanga Hridaya also explains that Bhrajaka pitta will do pachana of drugs used in Abhyanga, Parisheka and lepa. Veerya of the taila is absorbed through romakoopa after undergoing paka by Bhrajakapitta.<sup>[16]</sup> Then this veerya enters into the teeryakgata dhamanis which are attached to romakoopa. Afterwards it starts circulating in the body through dhamanis and enters the dhatus one after the order in the stipulated time.

**Massage Oil By Ayurveda:**

For infants abhyang with tila taila, Eranda taila, Sarsapa taila and narikela taila has been practiced in different localities in different seasons. However medicated oils like Ashwangandha Bala Lakshadi taila, Bala taila, chandan Bala Lakshadi taila, prasaini taila, Ksheerbala taila, etc. are under practice in special condition of different Ayurvedic hospitals.

**Bala Taila:-** Ayurveda describes til taila as a best amongst vegetables oils. But Ayurveda specifies ‘ bala taila’ for abhyanga in neonates, instead of til taila. Bala ( Sida Cordifolia), as a name suggests is a drug used to increase strength, promote growth and it is also best in Vatashamana. Hence, ‘Bala Taila’looks more useful in low birth weight babies.<sup>[2]</sup>

Ashwangandhadi taila is described by Yogratnakar for the treatment of rajayakshma. It also has the phalshruti ( additional property) of “ Sarvadhatu Vivardhanam” and this Brimhana effect of Ashwangandhadi taila helpful in LBW babies. Ashwangandha is a populr herb to promotes immunity, muscle and bone strength, promotes growth and nourishment.<sup>[17]</sup>

**Conclusion:**

Ayurvedic texts mentioned the neonatal care in detail. Ayurveda mentioned very scientific approach towards newborn care as Jatamatra Paricharya; means the neonatal protocols. Taila abhyanga is one of these protocols. It can be useful in low birth weight by it’s Vata-shamana and nourishing property. Taila abhyanga increase the strength, nourishes the body, improves skin texture and accelerates the healthy growth and development of newborn. Weight gain, reduced pain, enhanced attentiveness reduced depression and inhance immune function are some advantages of taila abhyanga.

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