

Review Article

Volume 15 Issue 05

May 2026

ROLE OF *PACHAK PITTA* IN THE REGULATION OF *AGNI*: AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Harsha Gupta¹, Dr Gautam Bhaisare²

¹PG Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, Shree Dhanwantari Ayurvedic Medical college and Research Centre, Mathura, 281401

²Associate Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, Shree Dhanwantari Ayurvedic Medical college and Research Centre, Mathura, 281401

Corresponding Author - Dr. Harsha Gupta, PG Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, Shree Dhanwantari Ayurvedic Medical College and Research Centre, Mathura, 281401

Email id - harshimayank87@gmail.com

Abstract

Agni is one of the most important physiological concepts of *Ayurveda*, responsible for digestion, transformation, metabolism, nourishment, strength, complexion, immunity and maintenance of life. Among the different forms of *Pitta*, *Pachak Pitta* is situated mainly in the region of *Amashaya* and *Pakwashaya*, where it performs digestion of food and supports the function of *Agni*. Classical texts explain that *Pachak Pitta* separates the useful and waste portions of food after proper digestion and also supports other types of *Pitta* through its functional strength. The normal state of *Pachak Pitta* maintains *Samagni*, proper appetite, digestion, absorption and formation of healthy *Dhatu*. Disturbance of *Pachak Pitta* leads to *Agnimandya*, *Ajirna*, *Ama* formation and further development of many gastrointestinal and systemic disorders. This review article explains the role of *Pachak Pitta* in the regulation of *Agni* with special reference to classical Ayurvedic concepts, physiological importance, disease pathogenesis and applied clinical understanding.

Keywords: *Pachak Pitta*, *Agni*, *Jatharagni*, *Agnimandya*, *Ama*, *Ayurveda*

Introduction

Ayurveda considers *Agni* as the basic factor responsible for life and health. The digestion of food, absorption of nutrients, transformation of food into body elements and maintenance of strength depend upon the proper functioning of *Agni*. *Acharya Charaka* clearly states that life, complexion, strength, health, enthusiasm, nourishment, lustre, immunity and vital energy are dependent upon *Agni*. When *Agni* is balanced, the body remains healthy, but when it becomes disturbed, disease manifestation starts gradually.¹

Among all physiological factors involved in digestion, *Pachak Pitta* plays a central role. It is one of the five types of *Pitta* and is mainly responsible for *Pachana Karma*, meaning digestion and transformation of food. It acts at the level of *Amashaya* and *Grahani*, where ingested food undergoes proper digestion. Due to its close relation with *Jatharagni*, *Pachak Pitta* is often considered the functional expression of digestive fire in the body.²

The regulation of *Agni* is not limited only to digestion of food. It also maintains proper formation of *Ahara Rasa*, supports *Dhatu Poshana*, prevents *Ama* formation and maintains the normal balance of *Dosha*. Therefore, understanding the role of *Pachak Pitta* in regulation of *Agni* is important for both preventive and clinical practice. This conceptual review helps to understand how normal *Pachak Pitta* maintains health and how its vitiation becomes the root cause of many diseases.³

Aim and Objectives

Aim

To study the role of *Pachak Pitta* in the regulation of *Agni* from an Ayurvedic perspective.

Objectives

- To review the classical concept of *Pachak Pitta*.
- To understand the relation between *Pachak Pitta* and *Jatharagni*.
- To explain the role of *Pachak Pitta* in digestion and metabolism.
- To study the pathological changes caused by disturbed *Pachak Pitta*.
- To understand the clinical importance of maintaining normal *Agni*.

Material and Methods

The present review was carried out through literary study of classical Ayurvedic texts such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Ashtanga Hridaya* and their available commentaries.

Relevant references related to *Agni, Pitta, Pachak Pitta, Grahani, Ajirna, Ama* and *Agnimandya* were collected, reviewed and analyzed. The conceptual understanding was developed by comparing classical descriptions with their physiological interpretation in digestion, metabolism and disease formation. No clinical trial or experimental work was conducted in this study.

Ayurvedic Review

Agni

Agni is the biological fire responsible for digestion and transformation in the body. It acts at different levels, including *Jatharagni, Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni*. Among these, *Jatharagni* is considered the most important because it starts the primary digestion of food. If *Jatharagni* is normal, further metabolism by *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni* also remains proper.⁴

Pachak Pitta is the main digestive component of *Pitta*. It is responsible for breaking down food, separating useful and waste portions, stimulating appetite and supporting the function of *Agni*. Its normal state leads to proper digestion, while its abnormal state results in digestive weakness, burning sensation, sour belching, hyperacidity, indigestion, loose stool or formation of *Ama* depending on the type of disturbance.⁵

In simple terms, *Pachak Pitta* can be understood as the active digestive and metabolic principle that supports *Agni*. It helps in the transformation of ingested food into absorbable nutrients. When *Pachak Pitta* is balanced, digestion remains proper and *Samagni* is maintained. When it becomes reduced, *Mandagni* develops. When it becomes excessive, *Tikshnagni* develops. When disturbed by *Vata*, irregular digestion or *Vishmagni* is produced.⁶

Agni is described as the main factor responsible for digestion, metabolism and maintenance of life. *Acharya Charaka* has mentioned that the normal state of *Agni* supports *Ayu, Varna, Bala, Swasthya, Utsaha, Upachaya, Prabha, Ojas* and *Tejas*. This shows that *Agni* is not only related to digestion but also connected with total body nourishment and immunity. When food is taken, it cannot directly nourish the body. It must first be processed by *Agni*. After proper digestion, food becomes suitable for absorption and nourishment. If *Agni* is weak, even wholesome food may not be properly digested and may lead to *Ama* formation. Therefore, *Agni* is considered the central factor in both health and disease.⁷

Concept of *Pachak Pitta*

Pachak Pitta is one of the five divisions of *Pitta*. It is mainly located in the region between *Amashaya* and *Pakwashaya*. Its main function is *Pachana*, meaning digestion of food. It helps in transformation of food into useful and waste parts. It supports the digestive process and maintains the activity of *Jatharagni*.

The word *Pachak* itself indicates the function of cooking, digesting or transforming. In the body, this function is performed through *Pachak Pitta*. It digests the food and prepares it for further metabolism. It also supports the function of other types of *Pitta*, such as *Ranjak Pitta*, *Sadhak Pitta*, *Alochaka Pitta* and *Bhrajaka Pitta*, because primary digestion is the base for all further physiological activities.⁸

Relation between *Pachak Pitta* and *Jatharagni*

Jatharagni and *Pachak Pitta* are closely related. *Jatharagni* is the digestive fire, while *Pachak Pitta* is the functional medium through which digestion takes place. Classical texts describe that *Pitta* has *Ushna Guna*, which helps in digestion and transformation. Because of this hot and penetrating nature, *Pachak Pitta* supports the activity of *Agni*.

If *Pachak Pitta* is normal, *Jatharagni* remains balanced. If *Pachak Pitta* becomes weak, digestion becomes slow and *Mandagni* develops. If *Pachak Pitta* becomes excessive, digestion becomes too sharp and *Tikshnagni* develops. If *Pachak Pitta* becomes irregular due to *Vata* influence, *Vishamagni* develops. Thus, the condition of *Pachak Pitta* directly influences the state of *Agni*.⁹

Role of *Pachak Pitta* in Digestion

The main function of *Pachak Pitta* is to digest the ingested food. After intake, food reaches the digestive tract and undergoes softening, breakdown and transformation. *Kledaka Kapha* helps in moistening the food, *Samana Vayu* helps in movement and stimulation of digestion, while *Pachak Pitta* performs the actual digestive transformation. After proper digestion, *Pachak Pitta* helps in separation of *Sara Bhaga* and *Kitta Bhaga*. *Sara Bhaga* nourishes the body and supports formation of *Ahara Rasa*, while *Kitta Bhaga* forms waste products like *Mala*. In this way, *Pachak Pitta* has an important role in both nutrition and waste separation.¹⁰

Role of *Pachak Pitta* in Metabolism

The role of *Pachak Pitta* does not stop at digestion. It also supports metabolism by preparing food for further action of *Bhutagni* and *Dhatvagni*. If the primary digestion is proper, the nutrients formed are suitable for tissue nourishment. This leads to proper formation of *Rasa Dhatu*, followed by sequential nourishment of other *Dhatu*. If *Pachak Pitta* is disturbed, the first stage of digestion becomes improper. As a result, poorly digested material enters the system and causes *Ama*. This *Ama* blocks *Srotas*, disturbs *Dosha* and affects *Dhatu Poshana*. Therefore, normal *Pachak Pitta* is essential for healthy metabolism.¹¹

Role of *Pachak Pitta* in Maintenance of *Samagni*

Samagni is the balanced state of digestive fire. In this state, food is digested properly within proper time without discomfort. Appetite remains normal, bowel habits are regular and there is no heaviness, sour belching, burning or abdominal discomfort. Normal *Pachak Pitta* is essential for the maintenance of *Samagni*. Balanced *Pachak Pitta* supports regular hunger, proper digestion, clear belching, lightness of body, proper stool formation and enthusiasm. It also prevents accumulation of undigested material. Therefore, maintenance of *Pachak Pitta* is the foundation for prevention of *Agnimandya* and related disorders.¹²

Pathological Role of Disturbed *Pachak Pitta*

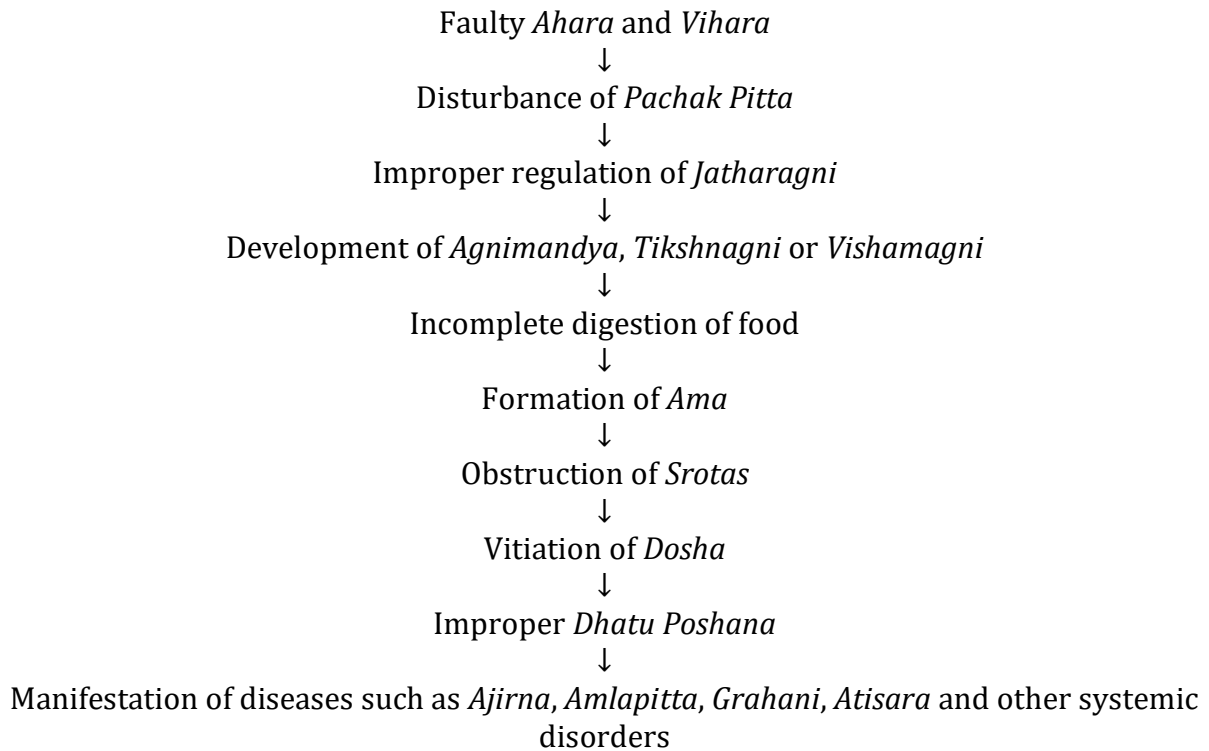
When *Pachak Pitta* becomes weak, food is not digested properly and *Mandagni* develops. This leads to heaviness, loss of appetite, abdominal discomfort, coated tongue and *Ama* formation. When *Pachak Pitta* becomes excessive, it produces symptoms like burning sensation, excessive hunger, thirst, sour belching, acidity and loose stool. When *Pachak Pitta* becomes irregular due to association with *Vata Dosha*, digestion becomes unpredictable. Sometimes food is digested quickly and sometimes slowly. This state may produce bloating, irregular appetite, abdominal pain and irregular bowel habits. Thus, different abnormalities of *Pachak Pitta* lead to different types of *Agni Dushti*.¹³

Clinical Importance of *Pachak Pitta*

In clinical practice, assessment of *Pachak Pitta* is very important. Appetite, digestion, thirst, belching, stool pattern, abdominal comfort, burning sensation and heaviness are useful indicators. Treatment of many diseases starts with correction of *Agni*. Therefore, medicines having *Deepana* and *Pachana* actions are commonly used to regulate *Agni* and correct disturbed *Pachak Pitta*. Diet and lifestyle are also important in maintaining *Pachak Pitta*.

Food should be taken in proper quantity, at proper time and according to digestive capacity. Excessive spicy, sour, salty, oily, stale and incompatible food may vitiate *Pachak Pitta*. Similarly, fasting for long periods, overeating, irregular eating, anger, stress and day sleep may disturb digestion and produce *Agni Dushti*.¹⁴

Samprapti of Disease Due to Disturbed *Pachak Pitta*



Findings of Study

- *Pachak Pitta* is the main functional factor responsible for digestion of food.
- *Pachak Pitta* and *Jatharagni* are closely related to each other.
- Normal *Pachak Pitta* maintains *Samagni* and supports proper digestion.
- Disturbed *Pachak Pitta* leads to abnormal states of *Agni* like *Mandagni*, *Tikshnagni* and *Vishmagni*.
- Weak *Pachak Pitta* causes improper digestion and *Ama* formation.
- Excessive *Pachak Pitta* may lead to burning sensation, sour belching, increased thirst and hyperacidity-like symptoms.
- *Pachak Pitta* helps in separation of *Sara Bhaga* and *Kitta Bhaga* after digestion.
- Proper function of *Pachak Pitta* supports *Dhatu Poshana* and strength.
- Correction of *Agni* is an important principle in the management of many diseases.
- Maintenance of proper diet, lifestyle and mental balance helps in preserving normal *Pachak Pitta*.

Discussion

The present review shows that *Pachak Pitta* is the key digestive component responsible for regulation of *Agni*. Although *Agni* is described as a separate fundamental principle, its practical action in the digestive system is mainly carried out through *Pachak Pitta*. The digestive, transformative and separating actions of *Pachak Pitta* make it essential for proper processing of food. Without the normal function of *Pachak Pitta*, food cannot be converted into absorbable and nourishing form.¹⁵

The relationship between *Pachak Pitta* and *Agni* also explains the Ayurvedic understanding of metabolic balance. When *Pachak Pitta* is balanced, *Samagni* is maintained and digestion occurs smoothly. In this condition, proper *Ahara Rasa* is formed and further nourishment of *Dhatu* takes place. However, when *Pachak Pitta* becomes weak, excessive or irregular, the state of *Agni* also changes accordingly. This gives rise to *Mandagni*, *Tikshnagni* or *Vishamagni*, which are important pathological states mentioned in *Ayurveda*.¹⁶

From a clinical point of view, many diseases begin with disturbance of *Agni*. The concept of *Ama* formation due to improper digestion is especially important. Disturbed *Pachak Pitta* causes incomplete digestion, leading to *Ama*, *Srotorodha*, *Dosha Dushti* and poor *Dhatu Poshana*. Therefore, treatment should focus not only on symptoms but also on correction of *Pachak Pitta* and restoration of *Agni*. This supports the Ayurvedic principle that maintaining proper digestion is the first step in maintaining health.¹⁷

Conclusion

Pachak Pitta plays a central role in the regulation of *Agni* and maintenance of digestive and metabolic health. It performs digestion, transformation and separation of food into useful and waste components. Balanced *Pachak Pitta* maintains *Samagni*, supports *Dhatu Poshana* and prevents *Ama* formation. Disturbance of *Pachak Pitta* leads to *Agni Dushti*, which becomes the root cause of many diseases. Therefore, preservation and correction of *Pachak Pitta* should be considered an important principle in Ayurvedic prevention and management of disease.

Conflict of Interest- Nil

Source of Support - None

References

1. Sharma RK, Dash B, editors. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Grahanidosha Chikitsa, Chikitsa Sthana*, Adhyaya 15, Shloka 3-4. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; Reprint edition 2014. p. 1-2.
2. Gupta A, editor. *Ashtanga Hridaya of Vagbhata, Dosha Bhediya Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 12, Shloka 10-12. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Prakashan; Reprint edition 2016. p. 121.
3. Sharma RK, Dash B, editors. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Grahanidosha Chikitsa, Chikitsa Sthana*, Adhyaya 15, Shloka 5. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; Reprint edition 2014. p. 2.
4. Sharma RK, Dash B, editors. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Grahanidosha Chikitsa, Chikitsa Sthana*, Adhyaya 15, Shloka 6-8. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; Reprint edition 2014. p. 3.
5. Shastri A, editor. *Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Dosha Dhatu Mala Kshaya Vriddhi Vijnaniya Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 15, Shloka 3. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan; Reprint edition 2017. p. 73.
6. Gupta A, editor. *Ashtanga Hridaya of Vagbhata, Dosha Bhediya Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 12, Shloka 11-12. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Prakashan; Reprint edition 2016. p. 121.
7. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editors. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Grahanidosha Chikitsa, Chikitsa Sthana*, Adhyaya 15, Shloka 3-4. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Bharati Academy; Reprint edition 2016. p. 452.
8. Gupta A, editor. *Ashtanga Hridaya of Vagbhata, Dosha Bhediya Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 12, Shloka 10. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Prakashan; Reprint edition 2016. p. 120.
9. Tripathi B, editor. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Grahanidosha Chikitsa, Chikitsa Sthana*, Adhyaya 15, Shloka 3-8. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan; Reprint edition 2015. p. 551-553.
10. Shastri A, editor. *Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Annapana Vidhi Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 46, Shloka 500-503. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan; Reprint edition 2017. p. 261.
11. Sharma RK, Dash B, editors. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Grahanidosha Chikitsa, Chikitsa Sthana*, Adhyaya 15, Shloka 15-16. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office; Reprint edition 2014. p. 8-9.

12. Tripathi B, editor. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Trividhakukshiya Vimana, Vimana Sthana*, Adhyaya 2, Shloka 3-5. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan; Reprint edition 2015. p. 675.
13. Gupta A, editor. *Ashtanga Hridaya of Vagbhata, Roganutpadaniya Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 4, Shloka 1-3. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Prakashan; Reprint edition 2016. p. 45.
14. Shastri K, Chaturvedi G, editors. *Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Maharoga Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 20, Shloka 11. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Bharati Academy; Reprint edition 2016. p. 399.
15. Gupta A, editor. *Ashtanga Hridaya of Vagbhata, Doshopakramaniya Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 13, Shloka 25-27. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Prakashan; Reprint edition 2016. p. 132.
16. Sharma PV, editor. *Sushruta Samhita of Sushruta, Dosha Dhatu Mala Kshaya Vriddhi Vijnaniya Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 15, Shloka 48. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Visvabharati; Reprint edition 2013. p. 163.
17. Murthy KRS, translator. *Ashtanga Samgraha of Vagbhata, Dosha Bhediya Adhyaya, Sutra Sthana*, Adhyaya 20, Shloka 6-8. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; Reprint edition 2012. p. 364.