



TROPICAL JOURNAL OF PHARMACEUTICAL AND LIFE SCIENCES

(An International Peer Reviewed Journal)

Journal homepage: <http://informativejournals.com/journal/index.php/tjpls>

CHYAWANPRASH: A TRADITIONAL INDIAN BIOACTIVE HERBAL MEDICINAL FORMULATION TO BOOST IMMUNITY AND RESTORE YOUTHFULNESS

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ARTICLE INFO:

Received: 9th Jan. 2021; Received in revised form: 24th Jan. 2021; Accepted: 11th Feb. 2021; Available online: 27th Feb. 2021

ABSTRACT

Chyawanprash is an Ayurvedic dietary health supplement used for boosting immunity and help in making a person feel young. Chyawanprash is one of the anti-ageing supplements, which is purely herbal in nature. It has Amla as its main ingredient, which is a powerful antioxidant. Master Charaka is the first to mention this herbal medicine. Ayurveda recommends the use of herbal supplements to help the increase immunity, restore drained reserves of life force and to preserve strength, stamina, and vitality, while stalling the course of aging. There are many benefits of chyawanprash. It is useful in cough and cold. It helps in the rejuvenation of the aged and also in proper nourishment of young ones. It is effectively used in the treatments of throat infections. Chyawanprash is formulated by processing around 50 medicinal herbs, minerals sugar, honey, ghee, Indian gooseberry jam, sesame oil, berries and spices. Chyawanprash market has seen a sharp rise of 30 to 40 percent in the period of rising cases of coronavirus. This article focused on immunity boosting herbal medicine in COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Chyawanprash, Immunity booster, Medicinal Herbs, Herbal medicine, Traditional medicine, Ayurveda, Youthfulness.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern scenario due to the bad dietary habits of people and busy life style. The immunity is being compromised and the people are affected by many chronic infections and deficiency of

many nutrients. In *Ayurveda*; *Acharya Charaka* had made a good formulation of more than 48 herbs and many spices mainly containing *Amalaki* fruits known as Chyawanprash. Chyawanprash

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Published by Informative Journals (Jadoun Science Publishing Group India)



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(CP; also spelled as cyavanaprasa, chyavanaprasha, chyavanaprash, chyavanaprasam and chyawanaprash) is a renowned recipe from Ayurveda, and has a long history of ethnic mention in Indian literature as well as Ayurvedic books. That have detailed description in *Charak Samhita* and other *Ayurvedic* texts.¹ In Sanskrit, the word 'Prash' stands for a specially prepared food and 'Chyawan' was the name of the sage for whom this Ayurvedic nutritive formula was concocted to restore his youth & vitality.² Chyawanprash contains various Ayurvedic ingredients that help in boosting immunity, protect against infections, and provides nutrition and energy. Chyawanprash strengthens immune system & increases the activity of NK cells (Natural Killer Cells) which are an essential part of our body's immune system and fights germs, bacteria and infections (invading pathogenic microorganisms) and cancer hence increasing our immunity.^{3,4} In Ayurveda, Chyawanprash is classified under the category of Rasayana, which aims at maintaining physique, vigour and vitality, while delaying the ageing process.⁵⁻⁸ Chyawanprash has potent antioxidant activity along with the ability to nourish brain cells. It may be useful in enhancing memory and improving coordination among various body parts. It also helps in increasing retention and learning ability. Chyawanprash may also be useful in having a calming effect on the central

nervous system. It reduces anxiety and other stress-related disorders. This helps to sleep better.⁹⁻¹⁶

Time to Take Chyawanprash¹⁷

Chyawanprash is one of the best medicines used in anti-ageing treatment, called rasayana therapy. Here, after Panchakarma treatment, the patient is made to take chyawanprash for a few weeks to a few months time. In the traditional Rasayana anti ageing therapy, the patient is made to eat chyawanprash replacing the breakfast and is asked to consume milk to quench his thirst. Chyawanprash mainly improves respiratory immunity. So, for a person with early morning allergies, who suffers from air pollution and pollen allergies throughout the day, or who has more asthma attacks during day time, taking Chyawanprash in the morning is very helpful. Most of the respiratory disorders involve Kapha imbalance. If we divide day time into three equal parts, the morning one third is dominated by Kapha Dosha. Hence, Chyawanprash in the morning is very useful. If one takes it before food, when the digestion strength is more, a maximum amount of phytonutrients from Chyawanprash will be absorbed into the body, making the immunity a lot stronger. So, morning, before breakfast with milk is the best time to take Chyawanprash.

Table1: Ingredients of Chyawanprash^{18,19}

S.No.	Medicinal Plants/ Special Additives	Common names	Uses
1.	<i>Adhatoda vasica</i> Nees	Adusa, Vasaka	Cardiotonic, expectorant, diuretic, cardiac & respira-tory disorders.
2.	<i>Aegle marmelos</i> Correa	Bilva, Bel	Useful in chronic dysentery, diarrhoea & dyspepsia.
3.	<i>Aquilaria agallocha</i> Roxb.	Agar, Agarkashta	Aromatic, neurotrophic, carminative & aphrodisiac.
4.	<i>Boerhaavia diffusa</i> Linn.	Punarnawa, Punarnava, Gad-hapuran	Cardiotonic, hematinic, diuretic & helps in anemia

5.	<i>Cinnamomum tamala</i> Nees & Ebrm.	Tamalpatra, Tejpatra, Patra	Helps in general debility, anorexia & indigestion, uterine stimulant.
6.	<i>Cinnamomum zeylanicum</i> Breyn.	Dalchini	Anemia, general debility, abdominal distension & anorexia
7.	<i>Curcuma zedoaria</i> Rosc.	Kachur, Sathi kehora	Stimulant, tonic, depurative, vertigo & during pregnancy
8.	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i> Linn.	Nagarmotha, Mustak, Motha	Neurotrophic, carminative, helps in constipation, hepatoprotective
9.	<i>Desmodium bulbifera</i> Desv.	Shalparni, Sarivan	General debility, nervine tonic, cardiac, blood & respiratory disorders.
10.	<i>Elettaria cardamomum</i> Maton	Elaichi, Cardamum	General tonic, useful in anorexia and flatulence.
11.	<i>Emblica officinalis</i> Gaertn.	Amalaki, Amla, Awala, Indian Gooseberry	Rejuvenative, neurotrophic, hepatoprotective, antioxidant, cardiostimulant, rich source of vitamin C.
12.	<i>Gmelina arborea</i> Roxb.	Gambhari, Khambhari, Kash- marya	Promotes lactation & helps in indigestion.
13.	<i>Inula racemosa</i> Hook.	Pushkarmool, Pohkarmool	Cardiotonic, carminative, antiseptic, diuretic, dys-pepsia, indigestion, chronic cough and general debility.
14.	<i>Leptadenia reticulata</i> Wight & Arn.	Jivanti	Cooling, eye tonic, nutrient and aphrodisiac.
15.	<i>Martynia diandra</i> Glox.	Kaknasa, Kakakshi, Kauathodi	Hepatotonic, cholagogue, laxative, anorexia, indiges-tion & constipation.
16.	<i>Mesua ferrea</i> Linn.	Nagkesar	Nutrient, cardiostimulant, brain tonic, carminative and appetizer
17.	<i>Nelumbium speciosum</i> Willd.	Kanwal, Neelkamal	Neurotrophic, cardiostimulant & helps in general debility.
18.	<i>Oroxylum indicum</i> Vent.	Arlu, Sona patha, Shyonak	General debility, diarrhoea & dysentery.
19.	<i>Phaseolus trilobus-sensu</i> Ait.	Mudgparni, Van- mug, Mataki	Aphrodisiac, mild sedating, fatigue, general debility, malnutrition.
20.	<i>Phyllanthus niruri</i> Linn.	Bhumyaamalaki, Bhumi- amla, Bhueawala	Appetizer, cholagogue, laxative, hepatoprotective & antiviral.
21.	<i>Piper longum</i> Linn.	Pippali	General debility, dyspepsia, flatulence, respiratory tract infection.

22.	<i>Pistacia integerrima</i> Stewartex Brandis		Brandis Kakdashingi, Karkatshingi, Shringi	Expectorant, carminative, anorexia, cholagogue, cough & asthma.
23.	<i>Premna integrifolia</i> Linn.		Arni, Agnimantha	Laxative, helps in indigestion & cough.
24.	<i>Ptertocarpus santalinus</i> Linn.f.		Lal Chandan	Skin, blood & eye disorders, used as disinfectant to mucus membranes of genito-urinary & bronchial tracts.
25.	<i>Sesamum indicum</i> Linn.		Til oil, Sesame oil	Cooking oil, tonic, nutrient, aphrodisiac, diuretic, cures dry cough, asthma, lung diseases, inflamma-tion, ulcers, urinary diseases, migraine & vertigo.
26.	<i>Sida cordifolia</i> Linn.		Bala, Bariyara	Cardiotonic, stomachic, aphrodisiac & general tonic.
27.	<i>Solanum indicum</i> Linn.		Brihati, Bari kateri, Vanbhantha	Cardiac tonic, astringent, carminative & helps in flatulence
28.	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i> Schrad. & Wendl.		Kantakari, Chhoti kateri, Kashta-kari	Mucolytic, expectorant, allergic bronchitis, bronchial asthma, and common cold.
29.	<i>Stereospermum</i> <i>suaveolens</i>		Parul, Patla, Patha, Padhal	General debility, dyspepsia, blood disorders, cough & acidity.
30.	<i>Teramnus labialis</i> Spreng		Mashparni, Van- udadh, Mashvan	Aphrodisiac, mild sedative, general debility, malnu-trition & fatigue.
31.	<i>Terminalia chebula</i> Retz.		Harde, Haritaki, Harad, Abhaya	Neurotrophic, carminative, infertility, cardiac and liverdisorders.
32.	<i>Tinospora</i> <i>cordifolia</i> Miers ex Hook f.& Thoms.		Guduchi, Giloy, Amrta	General tonic, immunomodulator, helps in degenera-tive disorders.
33.	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i> Linn.		Gokhru, Gokshura	Aphrodisiac, diuretic & cardiotonic.
34.	<i>Uraria picta</i> Desv.		Prishniparni, Pithwan, Devala	General debility, nervine tonic, cardiac & blood dis-orders, antidote for snake venom.
35.	<i>Vitis vinifera</i> Linn.		Draksha, Munnaka	Nutrient, stomachic, demulcent, laxative, anorexia, hepatoprotective, dyspepsia & constipation.
36.	<i>Eugenia caryophyllus</i> Linn.		Lavang, Clove	Antiseptic, aromatic, carminative, stimulant & flavoring agent.
37.	Not a Plants	Animal fat	Ghee	Nutrient
38.		Honey	Obtained from honey bees	Mild laxative, bactericidal, sedative, antiseptic, useful for cold, cough, fever, sore eyes, throat, tongue, duo-denal ulcers & liver diseases.

39.	Sucrose	Sugar	Sweetening agent
Substituents for Ashtavarga (Ridhi, Vridhi, Medha, Mahamedha, Jeevak, Rishabh, Kakoli & Ksheerkakoli) Ashtavarga is a group of 8 herbs ('Ashta' meaning eight and 'Varga' meaning Group) which are considered to have health benefits. The maximum health benefits are obtained by mixing the herbs and using it together.			
40.	<i>Asparagus racemosus</i> Willd	Shatavari, Shatavar, Substituent for Medha, Mahamedha	Aphrodisiac, nutrient, potent galactagogue, good tonic for lactating mothers
41.	<i>Dioscorea bulbifera</i> Linn.	Varahikand, Varahi, Substituent for Ridhi, Vridhi	aphrodisiac, useful in acidity & ulcers.
42.	<i>Ipomoea digitata</i> Linn.	Vidarikand, Substituent for Jeevak, Rishabh	Aphrodisiac, tonic, helps in nervous debility, skin problems, hepatic disorders & constipation.
43.	<i>Withania somnifera</i> Dunal	Ashwagandha, Asgandh, Substituent for Kakoli, Ksheerkakol	Aphrodisiac, antioxidant, loss of memory, loss of muscular energy.
Special Additives			
44.	Ayurvedic Preparation	Abhrak Bhasam	General debility, useful in asthma & cough.
45.	Ayurvedic preparation	Shukti Bhasam	As calcium supplement, neurotrophic, useful in cardiaand bone disorders.
46.	Ayurvedic preparation	Shring Bhasam	Useful in pneumonia, rheumatic pain & cough.
47.	Ayurvedic preparation	Makardhawaj	Aphrodisiac, nervine tonic and helps in rheumatic pain.
48.	-----	Chandi, Silver foil	General debility and improves overall physical fitness.

Preparation of Chyawanprash²⁰

The standard method of preparation of Chyawanprash is: 50 g of each of medicinal herbs, such as *Bael*, *Agnimanth*, *Kashmarya*, *Shyonak*, *Paatla*, *Gokshur*, *Sarivan*, *Barikateri*, *Kantakaari*, *Kakdasingi*, *Draaksha*, *Haritaki*, *Guduchi*, *Bala*, *Bhumyamalaki*, *Vasa*, *Jivanti*, *Kachur*, *Pushkarmul*, *Musta*, *Mudagparni*, *Mashaparni*, *Shalparni*, *Pithawan*, *Pipali*, *Kaknasa*, *Varahi*, *Vidaarikand*, *Punarnava*, *Neelkamal*, *Aguru*, *Chandan*, *Shatavar*, and *Asgandh*, are suspended in 16 L potable water. Five-hundred *Amla* fruits (each fruit having a weight of around 15–20 g, total weight: 6.5 kg)

are swathed in clean cotton cloth to form a bale (*pottali*) and submerged into the aforementioned combination of herbs. Thereafter, the admixture is boiled until decoction is reduced to 1/4th. After taking off the *pottali*, seeds are removed from *Amla*; the remaining pulpy portion is rubbed on a clean muslin cloth, *Amla* fibers are separated, and *Amlapishthi* (wet paste of *Amla* pulp) is collected. Decoction is then strained, and mare is discarded. After this, *Amlapishthi* is mixed with *Yamakadravyas* (lipids: 500 g cow ghee and sesame oil each) in an iron container and fried until it gets brownish-red and the *Yamaka* (lipids) starts separating. Sugar syrup is then prepared by

adding sugar in the herbal decoction. Fried *Amlapishthi* is added to this decoction syrup and heated until attainment of viscosity of two strings. Then, when the heating is stopped, *Prakshepadravaya* (herbal powders of 150g *Vanshalochan*; 100g *Pipali* and *Nagakesar*; Elaichi, *Tamalpatra* and *Dalchini*, 10g each) are added and stirred until a homogeneous mixture is obtained. After cooling the mixture, 250g honey (old, natural, pure) is uniformly mixed, and the finished product is obtained and packed in airtight sterile containers. Finally, the prepared Chyawanprash is of a dark brown color, having wet paste-like appearance and consistency.

Chyawanprash Immunity Booster and Restore Youthfulness

An important and effective Ayurvedic health supplement, Chyawanprash is well known for boosting immunity and treating various infections like cold and cough. A fruit jam-like tonic that tastes sweet, sour, and spicy, Chyawanprash has therapeutic potential, which has been proved scientifically.

Immunity Booster^{11,13,21-24}

Amla, the main ingredient in Chyawanprash, is rich in Vitamin C. This antioxidant boosts immunity. Studies have shown that vitamin C has a positive effect on bolstering immunity. In addition, Amla has adaptogenic properties, which helps the body to adapt to stress. Chyawanprash helps the body to produce haemoglobin and white blood cells. Amla detoxifies the body and cleanses the blood, liver, spleen and the lungs, promoting healthy muscle mass. The presence of antioxidants and rich in vitamin C, which is responsible for strengthening the immune system, Chyawanprash offers an absolute remedy for improving the immune system, fighting microbes and shielding the body against various infections. It also portrays the presence of strong anti-viral, anti-bacterial, and antifungal properties, which is extremely effective in preventing infections like fever, common cold, sore throat, and other respiratory anomalies. It is also helpful in maintaining the appropriate moisture level in the

respiratory tract. These properties together help fight infections better thus reducing the incidence of common cold.

Soldiers manning the border posts in Kashmir that has some of the coldest battlefields in the world, including the Siachen glacier, have a reason to cheer now. A Chyavanprash has been developed by the country's premier research laboratory Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) to help them withstand the bone-chilling cold on the Himalayan heights bordering Pakistan and China. Pre-clinical and clinical trials of this ayurvedic preparation have been successfully conducted by Dr. Sathya Murthy, an allopathic practitioner attached to the research and development (Medical) unit of DRDO, the secretary-general of New Delhi-based Vijnana Bharati, Jayakumar Appukuttan. The Chyawanprash has been tested among the soldiers serving in high altitudes and it has yielded good results. The trials have revealed that soldiers after consuming this Chyawanprash have shown that they could not only withstand the sub-zero temperatures, but also could extend their stay in the cold region, said Mr. Jayakumar, who is coordinating the IV World Ayurveda Congress.²⁵

Restore Youthfulness

Chyawanprash is rich in antioxidants, Amla the main constituent of Chyawanprash is a powerhouse of Vitamin C. The antioxidative properties of Chyawanprash produce anti-aging properties by scavenging the free radicals that damage the cells.²⁶ It also provides cellular nutrition, promotes longevity, and thus helps delay the aging of cells. Chyawanprash an anti-aging herbal tonic that can prevent wrinkles and graying of hair. Its potent antioxidant and rejuvenating herbs delays the aging of cells, provides proper nutrition, and promotes youthfulness and longevity.^{27,28} It builds Ojas the essence of immunity and youthfulness. It pacifies vata, pitta, and kapha and is considered a rasayana (rejuvenative) for all of the tissues in the body.²⁹

Other Benefits of Chyawanprash^{30,31}

- Slows Ageing Process
- Promotes Digestion
- Promotes healthy skin
- Strengthening bones
- Improves sexual life
- Improves respiratory health
- Improves memory
- Strengthens the heart
- Improves gastrointestinal functions
- Stabilizes blood pressure
- Boosting metabolism
- Supports urinary health
- Purifies the blood and detoxifies the body
- Helps in the production of hemoglobin and white blood cells
- Enhances Fertility and Libido
- Skin Augmentation

CONCLUSION

According to above information, we can say that Chyawanprash act as an immunity booster and restore youthfulness due to repairing damage tissues, slow down aging process and having health promoting activity for all age groups and acts as a natural food supplement for present era.

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How to cite this article: Tamboli, F., More, H., Khairmode, S., Patil, D., Tambare, P., Shinde, A., Jadhav, N., & Bhandari, S. (2021). CHYAWANPRASH: A TRADITIONAL INDIAN BIOACTIVE HERBAL MEDICINAL FORMULATION TO BOOST IMMUNITY AND RESTORE YOUTHFULNESS. *Tropical Journal of Pharmaceutical and Life Sciences*, 8(1), 21-29. Retrieved from <http://informativejournals.com/journal/index.php/tjpls/article/view/66>

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