

## THE RELATION BETWEEN WEANING AND TEETHING – A LITERARY REVIEW

### Review article

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### ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda samhitas* there is much discussion on weaning process in infants and eruption of teeth. As per *Ayurveda* weaning should be started when eruption of teeth starts in infant. Weaning can be known as *stanyaapanayanam*[weaning] and teething is known as *jatadashana*[Teething]. A gradual replacement of breast milk with other nutrients rich foods is a crucial step of growth and development in an infant. To find the relationship between weaning and eruption of teeth, a literary study was conducted which includes *Samhitas* mainly *Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata* and *Kashyapa* along with various databases available on relevant sites. In *Kashyap samhita* detailed description of ejection of breast milk, its qualities, its effects and symptoms of vitiated breast milk and its treatment is mentioned. *Acharya Charak, Acharya Sushruta* and *Acharya Vagbhata* have quoted the different stages of development according to diet in children. According to them *Ksheerap avastha*[0-12months] from birth to 12 months is for exclusive breast milk feeding, *Ksheerannad avastha*[1-2 years] from 1 year to 2 years is for both breast milk and food and the last stage is *Annada avastha*[2years and above] from 2 years onwards exclusively for solid food only and breast milk feeding should be stopped. As per the above description we can see that weaning should be done post the age of 2 years. But still *Acharya Vagbhata* has mentioned that weaning should be started when the dentition starts.

As per the above reference if we look into eruption of teeth, it generally starts from the 8<sup>th</sup> month, thus weaning from breast milk should coincide with this timeline.

In this article we are dealing with following points.

- A. What is weaning?
- B. Types of weaning
- C. What is dentition?
- D. Relationship between weaning and teething

All the information regarding these points is studied thoroughly through many sources.

Weaning is gradual cessation of breast feeding. It is the dietary transition from breast milk to liquid diet to semi-solid diet to solid foods ultimately. It is a complex process, which varies with each child. Most children in traditional societies are completely weaned between two and four years of age. Weaning should be started with mixed feeding when early eruption of incisor teeth starts and should be completed before the permanent first molars erupt.

**Key Words:** Ayurveda, weaning, teething, *Ksheerap, ksheerannada, Annada, jatadashana, stanyaapanayan*

## INTRODUCTION:

In *Ayurveda samhita* there are very few references to understand weaning process in infants and teething. As per *Ayurveda* weaning should be started when teething starts in infant. Weaning can be known as *stanyaapanayan* and teething is known as *jatadashana*. A gradual replacement of breast milk with other nutrients rich foods is a crucial step of growth and development in an infant. Breast milk provides nutrition and immunological support for the developing infant [1]. World health organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life in developing and developed countries [2].

To find the relationship between weaning and teething, a literary review study was conducted which included *Samhitas* mainly *Charaka samhita*, *Sushruta samhita*, *Ashtang Hridaya* and *Kashyapa samhita* along with other modern sources both offline and online.

In *kashyap samhita* detailed description of ejection of breast milk, its qualities, its effects and symptoms of vitiated breast milk and its treatment is mentioned. *Acharya Charak*, *Acharya Sushruta* and *Acharya Vagbhata* have quoted the different stages of development according to diet in children [3]. As per them *Ksheerap avastha* from birth to 12 months is for exclusive breast milk feeding, *Ksheerannad avastha* from 1 year to 2 years is for both breast milk and food and the last stage is *Annada avastha* from 2 years onwards exclusively for solid food only and breast milk feeding should be stopped [3,6,7]. As per the above description we can see that weaning should be done post the age of 2 years. But still *Acharya Vagbhata* has mentioned that weaning

should be started when the dentition starts [1].

As per the above reference if we look into eruption of teeth, it generally starts from the 8<sup>th</sup> month, thus weaning from breast milk should coincide with this timeline [3].

As per an online research article [8]-

Human breastfeeding and weaning practices (BWPs) have been modelled into four stages or periods:

- 1) Exclusive breastfeeding (diet consists entirely of breast milk);
- 2) Diet consisting of a combination of breast milk and complementary foods (nutritionally rich and relatively sterile foods used to feed infants and toddlers);
- 3) Breastfeeding plus complementary and adult foods (foods typically used by the juveniles and adults of the population) and;
- 4) Exclusive consumption of adult foods.

During the weaning period (stages 2 and 3), breast milk still remains an important source of nutrients and immunity to the infant's body systems, with complementary and adult foods increasingly contributing to infant's total food intake while the frequency of suckling diminishes gradually until the end of the weaning process [8].

## AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this article is to re-establish the relation between teething and weaning. The objective of this article is to delve into the knowledge sources of both ancient *Ayurveda Samhitas* and the contemporary modern medicine to determine the existing relationship between teething and weaning.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This is a type of literary research. All existing articles on teething and weaning along with the literary references related to the above topic from both ancient

Ayurveda texts and modern sources were collected for this review article.

### Discussion of Literary Sources

The infant has 20 teeth, the youth 28, and an adult 32. The eruption of all 20 teeth completes between 30<sup>th</sup> -36<sup>th</sup> month in an infant. They all are deciduous teeth. They start to lose at the age of about seven years to 8 years. At 13 years to 14 years age all permanent teeth start erupting. But sometimes it is seen that in one child first milk tooth appears in 4<sup>th</sup> month while in another it might appear at the end of 1 year. Generally middle inferior 2 incisors appear first with an interval of 1 to 8 days [5].

The teeth of infants come out in groups.

1. **First group** – middle inferior incisors at about 8 months
2. **Second group** –superior middle incisors appear at about 10 months
3. **Third group** –two lateral superior incisors at a year.
4. **Fourth group** -two lateral inferior incisors and the first four molars at fourteen to sixteen months.
5. **Fifth group** –four cuspids[canine] at eighteen months to two years
6. **Sixth group** -four second and last molars at thirty to thirty-six months.

When it has brought out its last group, the process of dentition is over. The group of dentition has connection with weaning.

An important fact is that, after appearance of each group, the child has a short period of repose, and this is the propitious occasion for weaning.

One should observe this closely otherwise child will have affliction of bowels, cholera.

The timing of weaning should never be decided without closely examining the circumstances of dentition.

The most favourable time for weaning is undoubtedly the interval which separates the fourth from the group. This is a favourable time as 12 teeth have developed and there is repose of two months during which the child can prepare for further weaning.

In the best practice weaning should never begin in the interval after the evolution of first group, as the infant is too young during this time.

The period of dentition is liable to situations such as alimentary canal disturbances, restlessness, lack of sleep, violent crying, sucking on fingers, nipple biting, refusal to take supplementary nourishment, sometimes refusal to nurse, red gums and irritation of mucous membrane of the mouth.

In most children dentition is accompanied with diarrhoea. During diarrhoea, weaning should not be done.

In summer season, the disorders attending dentition are generally of the intestine and rarely of the respiratory passages [5].

*Ayurveda* has classified stages of life in three groups-*Balya avastha* , *Madhyam avastha* and *Vruddha avastha*

*Balya avastha* is again divided into three stages. *Kshirapa( stanyavrutti )*– taking only milk (breastfeeding) up to one year.

*Ksheerannada avastha (stanya-aharavrutti)*- taking milk along with supplementary food that is one year to two years.

*Annada avastha(Ahaarvrutti)*– main source of food is solid ( *Anna* ) it is up to 16 years .

So, correlating with the ideal timings we must start weaning at about one year of age. The liquid food which doesn't require chewing should be started after 6 months, after *Annaprashan samskaran* infant should be introduced with food items

which are *chushya* (which requires sucking) *peya* (which requires swallowing), *lehya* (licking semisolid like not spilling out of spoon) after a year *bhakshya* and *bhojya* (that requires vigorous chewing)<sup>[1]</sup>.

During the second and third year gradually, one should increase the food types that requires vigorous chewing (*bhakshya* and *bhojya*) So that a child can digest it very well<sup>[6]</sup>.

Robert Hutchinson said after the third year a child should be fed much like a grown-up person.

*Kashyap* mentioned *Phalprashan*[fruit consumption] at 6<sup>th</sup> month of age<sup>[3]</sup>. *Sushruta* and *Vagbhat* recommended to start cereals (rice) at this age<sup>[1,6]</sup>.

Cereal feed is recommended by *Kashyapa* at 10<sup>th</sup> month after *Jata Danta*, i.e., after teeth eruption<sup>[3]</sup>.

While starting weaning process one should consider *Ahara vidhi visheshayatana*[the procedure of dietary consumption]

1. *Prakriti* of a child
2. *Karan* – modification of cereal with *Agni* and preferably *peya* and *vilepi*, *mand* and *yavagu*.
3. *Samayoga* – combinations of cereals, combinations should not be started simultaneously. One single cereal should be given at a time
4. *Rashi* – Optimum quantity of cooked cereal as per hunger of an infant.
5. *Dasha*–habitat of an infant and parents according to that culture.
6. *Kaal* – Seasons should be considered, timings of the day, introducing any new food to a child is preferably given in morning times. The status of the previously taken food i.e. digested or indigested.

7. *Upayogasamstha* – food should be introduced with rules of paediatric dietetics.

8. *Upayokta* – weaning depends on the child (consumer of food), it should be as per *satmya* and preference of child. Generally, it has been observed that whatever mother eats at the time of pregnancy, those foods are not harmful to her children. So *upyokata* can be mother or both parents' preferences<sup>[7]</sup>.

### CONCLUSION:

Thus, from the above literary sources we can come to some conclusions-

1. For weaning of an infant, the time of dentition [eruption of teeth] is the primary criteria and should be taken into account. This means that till the time of eruption of teeth exclusive breastfeeding should be continued.
2. But if dentition starts before 6 months weaning should not be started as the infant's gastric tract is not that well developed to digest food other than breast milk. Hence, in such conditions when the eruption of teeth is quite early and sometimes the baby is born with already erupted teeth weaning should never be started till, he/she reaches the age of six months.
3. Now, if dentition starts after one year, breastfeeding should be continued along with *Phalprashana* till the age of one year.

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