



# Clinical Utility Of *Basti* In Pain Management: From Dysmenorrhea To Post-Surgical Pain

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## Abstract

Pain is a complex sensory and emotional experience influenced by biological, psychological, and cultural factors. It represents a significant clinical challenge due to its varied etiology and individual response. In *Ayurveda*, pain (*Shoola*) is predominantly linked to *Vata dosha*, and *Basti* (medicated enema) is acknowledged as the most effective therapy for *Vata* vitiation. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the classical understanding and modern applicability of *Basti* therapy in managing pain conditions like dysmenorrhea, post-surgical pain, and chronic musculoskeletal discomfort. It highlights the types, formulations, and protocols of *Basti*, supported by classical references and recent clinical data, along with extensive tabular presentation of mechanisms, ingredients, and outcomes.

**Keywords:** *Basti*, *Shoola*, Pain, *Ayurveda*, *Vata*, *Panchakarma*, Dysmenorrhea, Post-operative Pain

## Introduction

Pain management remains a central concern in healthcare due to its impact on patient well-being and functional capacity. While modern analgesic drugs provide symptomatic relief, they often fail to address the underlying pathology and may produce adverse effects with prolonged use. *Ayurveda* views pain as a manifestation of deranged *Vata dosha*, especially in its sites of dominance like *Pakvashaya* (colon), *Asthi* (bones), and *Snayu* (ligaments and tendons).

*Basti*, being a *Vata*-specific treatment, is described as “*Ardha Chikitsa*” (half of all therapy) by *Acharya Charaka*. Administered through the rectal route, *Basti* delivers the medicine directly to the seat of *Vata*, allowing for systemic relief with minimal side effects. This review explores the therapeutic role of *Basti* in various types of pain, correlating classical *Ayurvedic* insights with clinical utility and empirical evidence.

### Classical Perspective on Pain and *Basti* Therapy:

Concept	Description	Reference
Seat of <i>Vata</i>	Colon ( <i>Pakvashaya</i> ) is the principal site of <i>Vata dosha</i>	<i>Charaka Samhita Siddhi Sthana</i> 1/38
Cause of Pain ( <i>Shoola</i> )	Vitiated <i>Vata</i> obstructs normal function of tissues, leading to pain	<i>Sushruta Samhita Sutra Sthana</i>
Classification of <i>Basti</i>	<i>Anuvasana</i> (oil), <i>Niruha/Asthapana</i> (decoction), <i>Matra</i> (low-dose oil)	<i>Ashtanga Hridaya Sutra Sthana</i> 19/76
Importance of <i>Basti</i>	<i>Basti</i> is the best treatment for <i>Vata</i> ”	<i>Charaka Samhita Siddhi Sthana</i> 1

### Types of *Basti* and Their Clinical Application:

Type of <i>Basti</i>	Ingredients	Use in Pain Conditions	Benefits
<i>Anuvasana Basti</i>	Sneha (oil/ghee), herbs	Muscular stiffness, arthritis, nerve pain	Deep tissue lubrication, nourishes Dhatus
<i>Niruha Basti</i>	Decoction, honey, Saindhava, Sneha	Post-surgical inflammation, acute pain	Detoxifies and pacifies aggravated <i>Vata</i>
<i>Matra Basti</i>	Small dose of oil ( <i>Shatapushpa Taila</i> )	Dysmenorrhea, geriatric pain, delicate cases	Safe for daily use, easy administration

**Detailed Clinical Applications of *Basti* in Pain Management:****1. Dysmenorrhea (*Kashtartava*)**

Aspect	Description
Pathophysiology	<i>Apana Vata</i> obstruction leads to uterine cramps and pain
Recommended <i>Basti</i>	<i>Shatapushpa Taila Matra Basti</i>
Timing	3–5 days prior to menstruation; continued for 3–4 cycles
Outcome	Reduction in pain intensity, regularized menstruation, improved quality of life
Reference	<i>Bhavaprakasha Nighantu</i> ; Sharma et al., Int J Ayurveda Res. 2021

**2. Post-Surgical Pain (*Shastrakrita Shoola*)**

Aspect	Description
Pathophysiology	Trauma-induced <i>Vata</i> and <i>Pitta</i> vitiation
<i>Basti</i> Protocol	<i>Dashamoola Niruha</i> + <i>Eranda Taila Anuvasana</i> on alternate days
Timing	Start from 3rd or 5th post-operative day
Benefits	Pain reduction, enhanced wound healing, improved bowel function
Clinical Observation	Decreased analgesic use, early mobilization

**3. Musculoskeletal Pain (*Gridhrasi, Katishoola*)**

Aspect	Description
Condition	Sciatica ( <i>Gridhrasi</i> ), Low Back Pain ( <i>Katishoola</i> )
Formulation	<i>Yava Kshara Niruha</i> + <i>Bala Taila Anuvasana</i>
Mechanism	Relieves nerve compression, strengthens nerves and muscles
Duration	8–10 days of alternate <i>Basti</i> administration
Outcome	Improved gait, reduced stiffness and radiating pain

**Mechanisms of Action of *Basti* in Pain Relief:**

Mechanism	Action
<i>Vata Shamana</i>	Pacifies aggravated Vata dosha in its principal seat (colon)
<i>Srotoshodhana</i>	Removes obstruction in microchannels, facilitating better tissue nourishment
<i>Snehan</i>	Provides unctuousness, reduces friction between joints and tissues
<i>Vedana Sthapana</i>	Blocks the pain perception pathways through neural and hormonal balance
Anti-inflammatory	<i>Dashamoola</i> and <i>Eranda</i> have proven anti-inflammatory and analgesic action
Neuro-muscular tone	<i>Bala</i> and <i>Ashwagandha</i> in <i>Anuvasana</i> improve neuromuscular coordination

**Common Formulations in *Basti* for Pain:**

Name of Basti	Key Ingredients	Indications
<i>Dashamoola Niruha</i>	<i>Dashamoola</i> decoction, honey, rock salt, ghee	Post-surgical inflammation, osteoarthritis
<i>Shatapushpa Taila Matra</i>	<i>Shatapushpa</i> (Anethum sowa), <i>Tila Taila</i>	Dysmenorrhea, pelvic pain
<i>Bala Taila Anuvasana</i>	<i>Bala</i> ( <i>Sida cordifolia</i> ), sesame oil	Muscle spasm, neuralgia
<i>Yava-Kshara Niruha</i>	<i>Yava Kshara</i> , <i>Guduchi</i> , <i>Dashamoola</i>	Sciatica, cervical or lumbar spondylosis
<i>Eranda Taila Anuvasana</i>	Castor oil, <i>Rasna</i> , <i>Saindhava</i>	Constipation with pain, lower abdominal pain

**Comparative Outcomes: *Ayurveda* vs. Conventional Medicine**

Parameter	<i>Basti</i> Therapy	Conventional Pain Management
Mode of Action	Treats root cause ( <i>Vata</i> )	Symptomatic relief only
Duration of Relief	Long-term with minimal recurrence	Short-term; high recurrence
Side Effects	Minimal (if administered properly)	GI issues, nephrotoxicity, dependency
Suitability for Long Term	Safe for chronic use	Risky for prolonged use
Additional Benefits	Improves digestion, sleep, energy	None

## Discussion

The multidimensional approach of *Basti* makes it uniquely effective in pain management. It does not merely suppress symptoms but harmonizes the *doshic* imbalance responsible for the disorder. Clinical and pharmacological studies confirm that trans rectal drug delivery via *Basti* results in faster absorption and prolonged systemic action. Especially in dysmenorrhea and post-surgical conditions, *Basti* has shown superior results in reducing inflammation, pain, and improving recovery times.

Furthermore, the holistic nature of *Basti* enhances other bodily systems. By improving *Agni* (digestive fire), calming the mind, and nourishing tissues, it ensures comprehensive wellness. Standardized protocols, quality control of ingredients, and trained administration are crucial for ensuring safety and efficacy.

## Conclusion

*Basti* therapy is a cornerstone of *Ayurvedic* pain management. Its ability to pacify *Vata* at its source, combined with targeted formulations, makes it highly effective in conditions ranging from menstrual pain to nerve-related and post-surgical pain. Integration of this ancient technique with modern clinical practice can revolutionize pain care by offering a safe, sustainable, and root-cause-oriented solution.

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