



Review Article

**PRAVICHARANA SNEHAPANA IN SHODHANA THERAPY: A CRITICAL REVIEW**

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**Article info**

**Article History:**

Received: 19-11-2025

Accepted: 21-12-2025

Published: 20-01-2026

**KEYWORDS:**

Ayurveda,  
Panchakarma,  
Shodhana,  
Pravicharna,  
Snehana.

**ABSTRACT**

In current scenario *Panchakarma* has attained outstanding place in the management of the ailments through various therapies. Also, the demand for specialized *Panchkarma* therapies has skyrocketed because of its multifaceted benefits i.e., promotive, preventive and curative. Similar to how a tree cannot grow without its roots, *Panchakarma* removes the *Doshas* from their causative roots so diseases cannot revert after. The *Panchkarma* therapy which is also known as *Shodhana* therapy is designed to remove the vitiated *Doshas* from the body. For removal of these vitiated *Doshas* it is necessary to bring them from periphery to central channels which is achieved by two primary means i.e., *Snehana* and *Swedana*. *Snehana* and *Swedana* act as a *Purva Karma* for *Shodhana*. When *Snehapana* is done correctly it will give fruitful effect of *Shodhana* therapy but if it is not done properly, it would not achieve the desired *Shodhana* effects and may leads to various complications. Often there is trouble in administrating the *Achha Sneh* to the patients and there is poor compliance to it. This non-compliance poses a significant challenge for physicians, as it directly affects the success of the purification process. So, there is need to adopt *Pravicharana Snehapana* as *Shodhananga Snehana*. *Pravicharana* is less utilized and generally ignored as a *Purva Karma* in daily Ayurvedic practice. So, here is an attempt to explore the concept of *Pravicharana* for *Shodhana* purpose for its fruitful benefits.

**INTRODUCTION**

Though *Achha Sneh* (pure/unmixed *Sneh*) stands as the most potent and preferred method of internal oleation in Ayurveda, *Pravicharana* (processed) *Sneh* offers a more flexible and patient-centred alternative. Unlike the structured regimen of *Achhapana* (intake of unprocessed/pure ghee), *Pravicharana* (processed ghee) adapts to individual needs through multiple routes of administration- oral, topical, nasal, rectal, and vaginal, making it especially suitable for those with poor digestion or aversion to consuming fats directly<sup>[1]</sup>. Its versatility not only enhances patient comfort and compliance but also allows practitioners to tailor the therapy with precision. *Pravicharana* (processed) *Sneh* is thoughtfully classified based on its purpose, timing,

and method of preparation, reflecting the nuanced and personalized nature of Ayurvedic healing.

The market offers countless permutations and combinations of tastes and flavours for every substance. Recognizing this long ago, our *Acharyas* described various *Pravicharanas* (processed *Sneh*) like *Yusha* (pulse soup), *Odana* (boiled rice) and *Vilepi* (thick gruel) etc. crafted through diverse procedures and enhanced with different *Rasas* (tastes). These diverse applications serve therapeutic goals such as nourishment, rejuvenation, and preparation for purification.

Although traditionally associated with *Shamana* (palliative) treatments, *Pravicharana Sneh*'s flexibility also makes it suitable for *Shodhana* (purificatory) therapies. Studies have shown that it can effectively achieve *Samyak Snigdha Lakshana* (signs of optimal oleation) even with lower doses, leading to improved patient outcomes and fewer complications.

*Vicharana* (mixed/processed) *Sneh* is a unique method of administering *Sneh* by combining it with different food items and applying it through external treatments<sup>[2]</sup>. This approach is particularly

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	<a href="https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v13i12.3955">https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v13i12.3955</a>
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suited for individuals who are unable to handle large amounts of oil or find it unpleasant. In such scenarios, *Sneha* (unctuous substance) is given in minimal, concealed quantities, typically blended into food or medicinal preparations to enhance its acceptability<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **Snehana**

*Sneha* means *Snigdhatā* (lubrication). *Snehana* (oleation therapy) means the process which provides lubrication to the body. *Acharya Charaka* has defined *Snehana* as the treatment, which produces viscosity, softness, solubility and *Kleda* (moisture) in the body<sup>[4]</sup>.

It is one among the *Shadvidhopakramas* which are *Langhana* (fasting), *Brihana* (nourishment), *Ruksana* (drying), *Snehana* (oleation), *Swedana* (sudation), *Stambhana* (astringent)<sup>[5]</sup>.

The therapy which provides the body with *Snigdhatā* (lubrication) as well as it makes the vitiated *Doshas* easily extractable.

*Snehana* is of two types, i.e., the *Abhyantara* (internal) and *Bahya Snehana* (external oleation) both are related with the *Purva Karma* (pre operative) of *Shodhana Chikitsa* (detoxification therapy). The aim of *Shodhana* (bio-purification/detoxification) therapy is to prepare the body for *Shodhana Karma*, i.e. to bring the *Doshas* (humors) situated in *Shakha* (periphery) to the *Koshtha* (alimentary tract) so that they can be easily expelled out<sup>[6]</sup>.

Importance of *Snehana-Swedana* (oleation & sudation) before *Shodhana* is quoted in *Samhita* that, if without these, *Shodhana* is induced; the body will break like a dry wood<sup>[7]</sup>. *Sneha* helps in loosening the *Doshas* which are adherent to the wall of minute channels. According to *Charaka*, *Kaphadi Doshas* are easily expelled out from the *Snigdha* body as from a smooth container, contents get easily separated without any effort<sup>[8]</sup>.

*Snehana* is amongst the two major preparatory procedures to be performed before *Shodhana*. The entire *Shodhana* procedure depends upon the proper mobilization of *Doshas* from the *Shakha* towards *Koshtha* which can only be achieved with the help of proper *Snehana* and *Swedana*.

### **Definition<sup>[9]</sup>**

स्नेहनं स्नेहविष्यन्दमार्दवक्लेदकारकम् ॥

The procedure by which *Snigdhatā* (oiliness), *Vishyandana* (liquefaction), *Mardavata* (softness) and *Kledana* (moistness) is achieved is known as *Snehana*.

### **Classification**

Based on the route of administration, *Snehana* is categorized into two types: *Abhyantara Snehana* (internal administration) and *Bahya Snehana* (external application). *Abhyantara Snehana* can be further divided into *Achhapana* (pure/unprocessed) and *Vicharana* (mixed or processed). It is also classified based on its purpose: *Shodhananga Sneha*,

*Shamananga* (palliative) *Sneha*, and *Brihananga Sneha* (nourishing).

### **Achha Snehapana**

*Achha Sneha* means intake of large quantity of *Sneha* alone, without mixing with any other substances. Physicians give emphasis regarding the intake of *Achha Sneha* as the best *Snehana* therapy<sup>[10]</sup>.

Taking large quantity of *Sneha* after the digestion of previous night meal especially for *Shodhana* is known as *Achha Sneha*<sup>[11]</sup>. Commenting on this, *Arunadatta* opined that, if *Achha Sneha* is taken during *Kshudha Kala* (at the time of hunger), it does not serve the purpose of *Shodhana* because of *Deeptagni* (increased digestive fire).

In *Amara Kosha* the meaning of word "*Achha*" is given as 'clear'. *Achha* also means *Aghana* (not solid). The synonym of *Achha Sneha* is *Kevala* (only) *Sneha*, which means according to *Dalhana*, a medicated or non-medicated (*Samskritam Asamskritam Va*) *Sneha* when given alone is to be considered as *Achhapana*.

### **Pravicharna Sneha**

#### **Etymology**

प्र – इति प्रकर्षेण - Pre-eminently, in a high degree

The root “णिच्” means to separate, divide, to distinguish or to discriminate.

And “अवचारण्” refers mode of proceeding, application or employing.

So, by applying “प्र” prefix to the root verb “णिच्” the word “प्रविचारण” (feminine gender) is derived<sup>[12]</sup>.

In many other Ayurvedic texts and dictionaries the word ‘*Pravicharana/Vicharana*’ has different meanings in various contexts as –

- *Pravicharana- Upayogabheda* means different mode of applications
- *Pravicharana- Kalpanapurvaka Bheda* means different formulations.
- *Vicharana-* Means examination, discussion or investigation.
- *Pravicharana -* Means distinction, division etc.

So, in nutshell *Pravicharana* can be considered as different applications of *Sneha* or eminent discussion upon the employment of different mode of *Sneha*'s.

#### **Definition**

प्रविचार्यते अवचार्यतेऽनुकल्पेऽनुपयुज्यतेऽनयेति प्राविचारणा ओदनादयः।<sup>[13]</sup>

*Sneha* when classified applied and used as a substitute or alternative for primary one (*Prathamakalpika*) it is called as ‘*Pravicharana*’.

प्रकर्षेण विशेषाच्चर्यते भक्षणलेहाभ्यान्जादिरूपेण उपसेव्यते यत्तत् प्राविचारणा।<sup>[14]</sup>

*Gangadhara* noted that, when *Sneha* is pre-eminently and particularly used in the form of

*Bhaksha, Pana, Leha, Abhyanjana* etc. it is called as 'Pravicharana'.

रसमद्याद्यैर्यथा रूचि यथासात्म्यं मिश्रितः एष विचारणाख्यः ।<sup>[15]</sup>

While describing the 'Brinhana Snehapana' Hemadri says that - *Rasa, Madya* etc. when mixed according to taste, palatability and *Satmya* of the individual in the *Sneha* is called as 'Vicharana'.

So, the methodical administration of *Sneha* along with various preparations like *Odana, Vilepi*, etc., is known as *Pravicharana Sneha*. This includes even external administration of *Snehas* without admixture.

According to *Vagbhata*, *Sneha* which is administered for drinking is *Achha Sneha* and the *Sneha* used for *Murdhadi* (external application of *Sneha* on head) and *Tarpanadi Karma* (retention of oil on specific organ like eyes i.e. *Akshitarpana*) is **Varieties of Pravicharana**<sup>[18]</sup>

*Vicharana*<sup>[16]</sup>. In some persons, it is very difficult to consume it in the pure form due to dislike and in that case, it may be administered by mixing it with some diet articles or by making it as some palatable preparations and then it is known as *Pravicharana*.

### Synonyms

*Pravicharana* (*Charaka*) *Vicharana* (*Vagbhata*)  
*Saannasneha* (*Shanrangadhara*) *Sabhakta Sneha* (*Sushruta*)

### Indications<sup>[17]</sup>

*Pravicharana* is indicated to all those who are *Snehdweshi* (those who hate ghee), *Snehnitya* (those who consume ghee daily), *Mridukoshthi* (soft bowel), *Madyanitya* (those who consume alcohol daily), those who can't tolerate miseries.

<i>Odana</i>	Boiled rice (1:5)
<i>Vilepi</i>	Thick gruel (1:4)
<i>Mamsa Rasa</i>	Meat soup (1:4)
<i>Paya</i>	milk
<i>Dadhi</i>	Curd
<i>Yavagu</i>	Thick gruel (1:6)
<i>Supa</i>	Soup (1:16)
<i>Shaka</i>	Preparation with green leafy vegetable
<i>Yusha</i>	Pulse soup (1:16)
<i>Kamblika</i>	Preparation of sesame with curd, oil, salt etc..
<i>Khada</i>	Cooked buttermilk with leguminous grains or leafy green vegetables
<i>Saktu</i>	Roasted flour of barley, horse gram etc..
<i>Tilapishta</i>	Paste of sesame seeds
<i>Madya</i>	Fermented preparation (alcohol)
<i>Leha</i>	Confections
<i>Bhakshaya Anna</i>	Eatables
<i>Abhyanjana</i>	Oil massage
<i>Basti</i>	<i>Anuvasan Basti</i>
<i>Uttar Basti</i>	Urethral and vaginal enema
<i>Gandusha</i>	Oil pooling
<i>Karantaila</i>	Ear pooling
<i>Nastakarma</i>	<i>Snehan Nasya</i>
<i>Karantarpana</i>	Filling ear with oil/ghee
<i>Akshitarpana</i>	Filling eye with oil

### Types of Vicharana Sneha

*Pravicharana* can be classified in various groups

#### 1) According to Administration

##### Internal

Internal use of *Pravicharana* can be as follows- e.g.

Oral route - along with *Odana* (boiled rice) etc.

Nasal route - *Nasya*

Genital /Urethral Rectal route - *Basti* (medicated enema)

**External**

Externally *Pravicharana* can be used in the subsequent forms- e.g.

Oral route – *Gandusha* (oil pooling)

Skin – *Abhyanga* (massage)

Eye - *Akshi Tarpana* (filling eye with oil/ghee)

Ear - *Karna Taila* (filling ear with oil)

**2) According To Rasa (63)**

*Eka Rasa* (6), ii. *Dwi Rasa* (15), iii. *Tri Rasa* (20), iv. *Chatur Rasa* (15), v. *Panch Rasa* (6), vi. *Shad Rasa* (1)

**Sadyo Snehana Pravicharana**

*Sadyo Snehana* (immediate oleation) is a procedure of administration of *Sneha* to achieve *Snigdha Lakshana* immediately or within shorter duration. It is based on the principles of *Pravicharana Snehana*. Many references and indications of *Sadyo Snehana Pravicharana* are available in the classics some of them are described here –

- *Pippali, Saindhava*, four *Snehas* and *Dadhi Mastu* all this taken together.
- Intake of *Snigdha Yavagu* fried in *Mamsarasa*, well prepared and added with plentiful soup.
- Intake of *Sukshma Yavagu* of little rice cooked in milk and added with ghee.
- *Pippali, Saindhava, Ghrita, Tila Pishta*, and *Varaha Vasa* all taken together.
- Milk of cow milked in to a vessel containing ghee mixed with powdered sugar. This *Yoga* is indicated specially for *Ruksha* persons.
- Ghee cooked with decoction of *Yava, Kola* and *Kulatha*, milk, curd and *Sura* added with paste of *Pippali*. This *yoga* indicated for *Raja* and *Rajasamebhya* persons.
- *Mamsa Rasa* prepared by boiling large quantities of meat of animals of *Jangala* or *Anupa* region.
- *Mamsa Rasa* along with *Sneha Bharjita Yavagu*.
- *Phanita* along with *Snehayukta Tila Churna*.
- *Krishara* along with *Sneha* and *Phanita*.
- *Sadyo Dugdha* with *Ghrita* and sugar or *Ghrita* and salt.
- Ghee processed with curd, *Vyosha*, juice of *Amalaki* and *Draksha*.
- *Payasa* prepared with addition of *Masha* and many kinds of fatty substances.
- *Pancha Prasrita Peya*: *Pancha Prasrita Peya* is prepared with one *Prasrita* each of *Chatuh Sneha* and one *Prasrita* of rice.

**Chira Kalin Sneha Pravicharana:** All the other *Pravicharana* comes under this category. This can be used as *Shamana* (palliative) and *Brinhana* (nourishing).

**Difference Between Achha Sneha and Pravicharana Sneha**

अच्छपेयस्तु यः स्नेहो न तामाहुर्विचारणाम् । स्नेहस्य स भिषग्दृष्टः कल्पः प्राथमकल्पिकः ॥<sup>[19]</sup>

*Achha Sneha* refers to the consumption of a substantial amount of *Sneha* in its pure form, without blending it with any other substances. This is considered as the best oleation therapy by the physicians.

केवलस्नेहपानं तु स्नेहनेशक्यतिशयत्वेन न विचरणासंज्ञयोच्यते ॥<sup>[20]</sup>

Due to its superior power unmixed *Sneha* cannot be narrated as *Vicharana*. *Acharya Chandranandana* has given some reasons for narrating the word *Vicharana* as-

स्नेहस्याल्पत्वात् - Less quantity of *Sneha*

अभिभूतत्वात् अन्नेन- Greater predominance of dietary components over *Sneha* (unctuous substance).

विविधेन सहोपयुक्तस्य स्नेहस्य अभिभवः -

*Sneha* becomes subdued when combined with certain other substances.

S.no.	Achhapana	Pravicharana
1	Only <i>Sneha</i> ( <i>Ghrita</i> or oil)	<i>Ghrita</i> mixed with food item
3	Great potency	Mild potency
4	<i>Prathamakalpika</i> (Principle method)	Alternative to <i>Achha Sneha</i>
5	Oral route	Oral + external

**Significance and Utility of Pravicharana**

सातत्यात्स्वाद्भावद्वा पथ्यं द्वेष्यत्वमागतम् ।

कल्पनाविधिभिस्तैस्तैः प्रियत्वं गमयेत् पुनः ॥<sup>[21]</sup>

Sometimes, a healthy routine can feel unpleasant due to frequent use. However, such beneficial yet unpalatable routines can be made more acceptable by modifying them through various dosage forms.

This led to the concept of *Pravicharana*, which emerged when *Acharya* observed aversion to *Sneha* in certain individuals. *Pravicharana* is particularly recommended for those who are *Snehadweshi* (have aversion towards *Sneha*). Individuals who are sensitive to or have an aversion to *Sneha* experience reduced palatability of *Achhapana*, resulting in challenges in *Snehapana* (oral intake of *Sneha*).

**How Pravicharna Enhances Taste and Palatability**

- It modifies the texture and physical form of *Sneha* by combining it with different substances.
- Through *Samskara* (processing), it slightly alters its chemical properties.

- Most importantly, it makes *Sneha* more flavourful and enjoyable based on individual taste preferences.

### Mode of Action

In the Ayurvedic literature, mode of action is not mentioned separately. So, it can be understood same as that of *Achha Sneha*.

In *Siddhithana*, *Charaka* elaborates the effects of *Snehana Karma* as<sup>[22]</sup>:

- *Sneho Anilam Hanti* (*Sneha* pacifies *Vata*): *Sneha*'s unctuous nature counteracts *Vata Dosha*, promoting *Vatanulomana* (proper *Vata* flow) and

guiding peripheral *Doshas* back to the *Koshtha* for effective elimination.

- *Mridu Karoti Deham* (softens the body) *Avridhikara*: *Sneha* imparts suppleness to tissues and channels, facilitating *Dosha* mobilization and progression to the *Utklesha* stage.
- *Malanam Vinihanti Sangam* (clearing obstructions): By alleviating *Srotorodha* (channel blockages), *Sneha* restores smooth excretory function through its liquefying and lubricating properties.

### Actions Based on *Sneha's Gunas* (Properties)<sup>[23]</sup>

Guna (Property)	Action
<b>Drava (Liquid)</b>	Liquefies <i>Doshas</i> and moistens channels
<b>Sukshma (Subtle)</b>	Penetrates microchannels for deep action
<b>Sara (Mobile)</b>	Enhances <i>Dosha</i> mobility and flow
<b>Snigdha (Unctuous)</b>	Lubricates and loosens rigid <i>Doshas</i>
<b>Pichhila (Slimy)</b>	Coats <i>Doshas</i> , maintaining their mobilized state
<b>Guru (Heavy)</b>	Promotes <i>Dosha</i> aggregation for elimination
<b>Sheeta (Cold)</b>	Regulates <i>Dosha</i> movement and increases <i>Kapha</i>
<b>Mridu (Soft)</b>	Induces softness and loosening of morbid <i>Doshas</i>

### CONCLUSION

*Pravicharana Snehapana* represents a patient-centric and adaptable approach, offering a balanced integration of efficacy, palatability, and practicality. Its inclusive nature, particularly in accommodating individuals unable to tolerate high doses or unmodified medicated fats, makes it a valuable alternative to *Achhapana Sneha*, especially in contexts where strong purificatory effects are not feasible.

Notably, *Pravicharana* blurs the conventional boundaries between *Shamana* and *Shodhana Sneha*, aligning more closely with *Shamana* principles while retaining flexibility in application. Emerging evidence supporting the use of *Vicharana Snehapana* as *Shodhananga Snehapana* further underscores its therapeutic potential and opens new avenues for innovation that merge nutritional and medicinal benefits.

Given its wide applicability, diverse classifications, and promising clinical outcomes, *Pravicharana Sneha* warrants deeper exploration in both research and practice. Its thoughtful integration into treatment regimens marks it as a pivotal subject for advancing personalized and effective Ayurvedic care.

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**Cite this article as:**

Kumari Saneha, Bhardwaj Anil, Supriya Charu. Pravicharana Snehapana in Shodhana Therapy: A Critical Review. International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research. 2025;13(12):123-128.

<https://doi.org/10.47070/ijapr.v13i12.3955>

**Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared**

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