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## *Haritaki*; a comprehensive herb, a review

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### **Abstract:**

*Ayurveda has described the ways to live a healthy life. It describes number of herbs and other drugs in form of potent medication. Also they are been use for maintaining the health and for prevention from diseases. Haritaki is one such important herb mentioned in Ayurveda. Most noble medication along with primly stated as main Rasayana in Charaka Samhita, Haritaki proves its utility in various conditions. Here the herb Harikati is studied with its Panchabhautik Gunas, comprehensive clinical utility along with its number of applications in various forms.*

**Keywords:** *Haritaki, Rasayana, Panchabhautik Gunas*

### **Introduction:**

Terminalia chebula is one of the important drug mentioned in Ayurveda classics. Owing to its vivid applications, it is used in conditions related to digestion, skin health, metabolism, immunity, bowel health rejuvenation etc. *Acharya Charaka* had given prime place to *Haritaki* by mentioning it in first chapter of *Rasayana Adhikar – Abhayamlki Rasyana Pada*. Also number of Ayurveda classics had given various types of application of *Haritaki* in respective health conditions. *Bhavprakasha* had mentioned the *Rasayana* use of *Haritaki* with respect to each season – *Rutu* and is termed as *Rutu Haritaki*. Considering the all-round qualities of this drug – *Haritaki* a comprehensive review is stated for its health applications.

*Haritaki*

Latin name -Terminalia chebula

*Rasa – Pancha rasa*

*Phala Majja – Madhura,*

*Snayu – Amla*

*Vrunta – Tikta*

*Twak – Katu*

*Asthi - Kashaya*

*Virya – Ushna*

*Vipaka – Madhur*

*Doshaghata – Tridoshaghna*

*Guna –*

हरीतकी पञ्चरसां उष्णं अलवणां शिवाम्

दोषा अनुलोमन..... |

- *Charak Chikitsa I*

*Acharya Charaka* had described the qualities of *Haritaki* in details. *Acharya* states that *Haritaki* is *Lagu*, *Deepan Pachaka*, *Vyaya Sthapak*, *Budhi Indriya Bala Dayak*, and can be used in various conditions like *Kushta*, *Vishamjwara*, *Shirorog*, *Atisara*, *Vibandha*, *Kasa*, *Prameha*, *Anaha* etc.

चर्विता वर्धयत्यग्नि पेषिता मलशोधिनी |

स्विन्न संग्राहिनी पथ्या भृष्टा प्रोक्ता त्रिदोषनुत | |

Here the multi-dimensional use of *Haritaki* fruit is explained. If one use it by chewing – it ignites digestive fire and improves digestion, when consumed by breaking it in form of *Churna* – it acts as *Malashodhini* which helps in clearing the bowel, by application of steam when it is cooked and used the it acts like *Samgrahi* and when used by just subjecting it to normal frying it acts on all three *Dosha*.

वर्ण्य मुष्णं सरं मेध्यं दोषघ्नं शोथ कुष्ठनुत |

कषायं दीपनं चाम्लं चक्षुष्यं चाभयाफलं | |

- *Sushrut S.*

*Acharya Sushrut* states the qualities of *Haritaki* as *Sara*, *Medhya*, *Shotha – Kushtaghna*, *Deepana* and *Chakshushya*.

*Acharya Charaka* had categorized and stated in following *Mahakashayas*, *Arshoghna*, *Kushtaghna*, *Kashara*, *Jwarahara*, *Prajasthapana* and *VayaSthapana*. While *Acharya Sushrut* had stated the *Haritaki* in best of *Phala Virechana Gana*.

There are seven types of *Haritaki* mentioned in classics. Owing their properties or the geographical location of cultivation they were categorized. These are, *Jevanti*, *Pootana*, *Amruta*, *Vijaya*, *Abhaya*, *Rohini* and *Chetaki*. Among these varieties the *Abhaya* is said to be the most useful and is used widely.

The medicinal use which is relevant in present day context is that of *Rutu Haritaki*,

सिन्धूत्य शर्करा शुण्ठी कणा मधुगुडैः सह |

वर्षादिश्वभया सेव्या रसायनगुणैषिणा | |

Here *Haritaki* is to be administered in the form of powder with one *Anupana* in the respective *Rutu*. Each *Rutu* has the *Dosha Prakopa – Prasham* and *Chaya*. Accordingly the six *Rutu* and their *Anupana* to be taken along with *Haritaki* are as follows,

<i>Rutu</i>	<i>Haritaki + Anupana</i>
<i>Shishira</i>	<i>Pippali – Kana</i>
<i>Vasanta</i>	<i>Madhu – honey</i>
<i>Grishma</i>	<i>Guda – jagary</i>
<i>Varsha</i>	<i>Saindhava – salt</i>
<i>Sharada</i>	<i>Sharkara – sugar</i>
<i>Hemanta</i>	<i>Sunthi</i>

The above stated method of use of *Haritaki* is *Rasayana*. But if we study the *Rutu* and their *Dosha Sthiti* or position, we can easily use the mentioned *Haritaki* formulation of *Rutu Haritaki* elsewhere according to *Dosha* vitiation. Like if one gets over exhausted or fatigued due to excess of heat – *Pitta* in body, then one can use the *Shishir* or *Grishma Rutu Haritaki* formulation in such condition, this will pacify the heat factor and also will be soothing for the person. Same is applicable for *Vata* vitiation, *Vata Dosha* is vitiated in *Varsha Rutu* so in *Vata* vitiation when it occurs in body we can use the *Rutu Haritaki* mentioned in *Varsha Rutu* – i.e. *Haritaki* along with *Saindhava lavana*. The mature fruit of *Terminalia Chebula* contains Chebulic acid, triethyl ester, gallic acid, palmitic acid, terchebulin along with punicalagin and teaflavin. These chemical constituents impart it with laxative, antifaltulent, digestive, antioxidant and stomachic properties.

There are many medicinal formulations stated in Ayurveda classics which contains *Haritaki* as one of the ingredient. Some of which are as follows,

#### ***Triphala –***

This is the combination of three herbs viz; *Hirida*, *Amla* and *Behda* in equal quantity. It is useful in many disease conditions and balances *Tridosha*. It also act as mild laxative. It can be used in various forms, doses, with different *Anupana* according to diseases and also at different *Aushadha Sevana Kala* to get multidimensional effects.

**Abhayarishtha –**

It is the alcoholic extract of *Haritaki* and other drugs. This classical preparation is mainly used in treatment of hemorrhoids and disturbed gastric fire – *Jatharagni*.

*Haritaki* in *Churna* form –

हरीतकी स्यात्सह भोजनेन |

अन्नपान कृतान्दोषान वात्पित्तकफोत्भवान् | |

If the powder of *Haritaki* is taken along with food, it is said to neutralize the untoward effects caused by faulty food and thereby balance *Tridosha*.

**Gandharva Haritaki –**

*Haritaki* prepared by frying it in castor oil is termed as *Gandharva Haritaki*. It is mild purgative in nature and used in constipation. It also alleviates the *Vata* disorders elsewhere in the body.

There are many formulations mentioned in both *Brihatrai* and *Laghutrai* which includes *Haritaki* as one of the important ingredient. Besides this, there are some formulations which are in vogue are listed as follows,

*Gomutra Haritaki*

*Guda Haritaki*

*Shivshar Pachak Churna*

*Haritakyadi Churna*

*Abhyadi Modaka*

*Agastya Haritaki* etc.

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