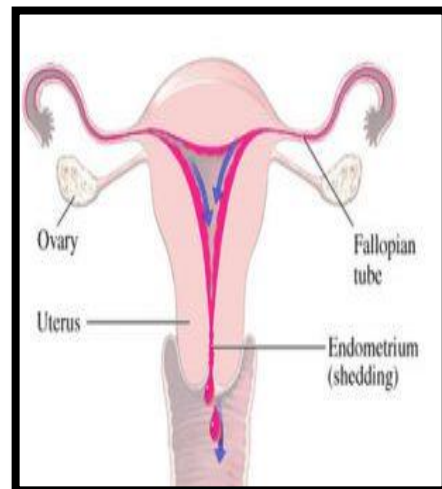


55 - WHAT IS AMENORRHEA AND HOW IT'S TREAT IN AYURVEDA

- What is Amenorrhea?
- **Amenorrhea** is known as an Anartava in [Ayurveda](#). It is a condition mentioned in the **Stree Roga Chikitsa**(female-related diseases). The **Sanskrit term** for amenorrhea is **Anartava or Nashta Artava** (*Nashta* means 'lost, destroyed or missing' while *Aramean's* 'monthly cyclical bleeding or menstruation'). **Anartava** is one of the symptoms of **Vata imbalance**. Amenorrhea is a condition in which there is an absence of menstruation.
- This absence can be considered normal (physiological) – before puberty, after menopause, as well as during pregnancy and lactation. The state of **absence of menstruation after** puberty and before menopause can be considered pathological amenorrhea.
- The absence of menstruation for six consecutive months before menopause in women who have previously had regular periods is also termed **pathological amenorrhea**. This condition is called **Aarav Avro (suspension of menstruation)**.
- Types of Amenorrhea
 - Primary Amenorrhea
 - Primary amenorrhea occurs when a woman reaches 18 years of age and has never had a monthly cycle.
 - Causes of Primary Amenorrhea
 - **Hormonal imbalance**
 - Ovarian failure **and polycystic ovary syndrome**
 - Tumor in the pituitary gland
 - **Disturbed function of the endocrine system** that affects maturation at puberty, i.e. hypothyroidism or hyperthyroidism
 - **Birth defects in the reproductive structures**, i.e. transverse disorders of the functional uterine endometrium and Mullerian anomalies.

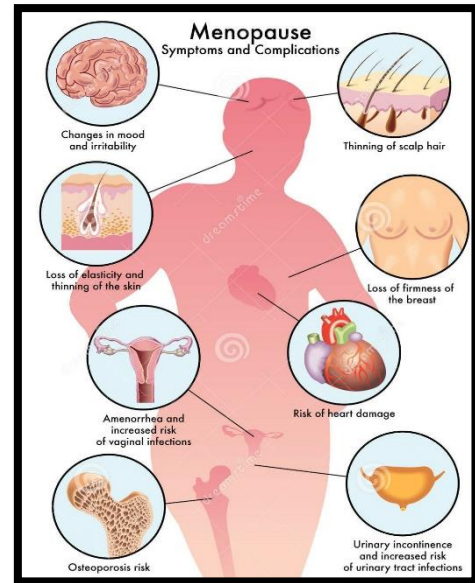


- **Secondary Amenorrhea**

- Secondary amenorrhea is characterized by the lack of menstrual cycle for three or more than three months in women who have had a normal menstrual period before.
- **Causes of Secondary Amenorrhea**
- Problems that affect the **estrogen levels**, e.g. *stress, weight loss, intense exercise, illnesses, hormonal imbalance*
- Problems affecting the **pituitary, thyroid, or adrenal glands**
- **Ovarian tumors** or surgical removal of the ovaries
- Resultant from the intake of birth control pills
- Organs Responsible for the Regular Menstruation
- According to **Charaka Samhita**, “a woman would never suffer from ***gynecological diseases except due to aggravated Vayu***“.
- Therefore, the **aggravated Vayu should** be alleviated first, prior to administering any therapy for *balancing the other energies involved*.
- Causes of Amenorrhea Related to the Condition of the Doshas (Etiology with an Ayurveda Perspective)
- State of the doshas: High Vata and Kapha, low Pitta
- Eating excessively cold, light and dry foods or taking cold or fizzy drinks increases the Vata energy in the body.
- The regular consumption and excessive intake of food that generates gas during digestion (*cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, beans, lettuce, mushrooms, parsley, peas, yeast-based products, white flour and white sugar*) aggravates Vata.
- Excessive consumption of fried foods, heavy creams, and puddings increases the **Kapha energy**. The gradual **aggravation of Vata and Kapha** leads to a blockage of the Artavavahi srotas and causes amenorrhea. The inappropriate and stressful way of life is the main cause of Vata deterioration.
- Excessive physical exercise, improper ways of sexual intercourse, use of artificial objects for reaching orgasm, sedentary lifestyle, lack of exercise, temperature extremes (both cold and hot) also lead to an energy imbalance.

• **Symptoms besides amenorrhea**

- Weight loss (in hyperthyroidism) or weight gain (in myxedema or PCOD)
- Absence of menstruation
- Changes in breast size
- Breast discharge
- Abnormal hair growth and acne on the face (for PCOD)
- Vaginal dryness (related to Vata vitiation) / Changes in voice



• **Laboratory Tests Required**

- **Hemogram:** to rule out Pandu (anemia), and WBC count to rule out infection
- **Thyroid function**(Vata and Pitta vitiation causes hyperthyroidism while Vata and Kapha vitiation causes hypothyroidism)
- **Ultrasound imaging**(USG abdomen, to rule out bicornate uterus or infantile uterus)
- **HSG (hysterosalpingography)** to rule out Srotorodha (Fallopian tube obstruction)

• **Ayurvedic Pathogenesis of Amenorrhea**

- When digestion is impaired (by *Vata* or *Kapha*, or both), instead of **healthy nutrient plasma**, **Ama** or **toxins** are produced. Ama accumulates in the weaker channels of the body. When toxins accumulate in the **Rasavahi srotas** (which carries the nutrient plasma), **Artavavahi srotas**(which carries the menstrual flow) or **Purishvaha Srotas**(responsible for the downward movement) and block them, the flow of menstruation stops, which can lead to amenorrhea. This is principally **Samana, Vyana, and Apana Vayu Pathology**.
- Aggravated Vata and Kapha increase the cold aspect of the body, which leads to low Pitta, or a decrease in the hot aspect. Menstrual blood is analogous to Pitta. Thus, low Pitta or a low hot aspect leads to a decrease or loss of menstrual blood.

- **Panchakarma and Amenorrhea**

- Women with amenorrhea should consider a series of [Ayurvedic Panchakarma treatments](#). The first stage is cleansing the body. Sroto rodha (blockages in the micro- and macro channels of the body system) will be relieved and proper nourishment will take place.

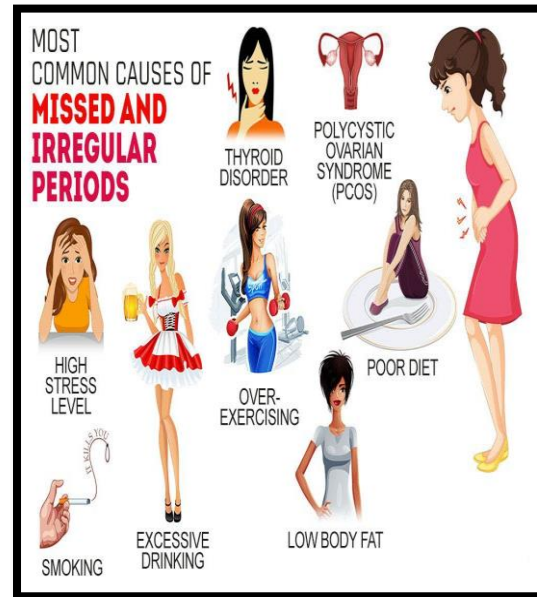
- **Oil Massage and Steam (Abhyanga, Seka, Swedana)**

- Oil [ayurvedic massages](#) and steam baths are beneficial as these treatments are Vata-pacifying and very nourishing to the system. The **Dhanwantaram Tailam** oil is particularly appropriate. The Udvartnam treatment with Triphala churnam is very effective in combating amenorrhea.

- **Medicated Enema**

- Different kinds of medicated enemas also help for treating the condition.
- **Basti – Anuvasana vasti**(oil-containing enemas)
- **Uttara Basti**– medicated oils are applied directly inside the uterus. Phala Ghritham is used for Uttara Basti. In case of an underdeveloped uterus, the therapy is performed with Kshara Tailam. Kasis Tailam is used for patients with blocked tubes.
- **Anuvasana and Uttara Basti**help to encourage the **downward movement of Vata**. This is known as **Anuloman**, meaning to facilitate the downward movement through action. The therapy has a **Vata-pacifying effect** (Vata Shaman) while also unblocking the **Artavavahi and the Purishvaha srotas**.
- Shirodhara
- Shirodhara with various oils such as **Jatamansi and Brahmi can help pacify Vata**, relieve anxiety and stabilize the mind. It also works on the pituitary gland and thus helps in hormonal regulation. **Shirodhara with a Triphaladecocion** is another possible option.
- These treatments would be most helpful if the woman repeated them several times per month until her menstruation returned.

- Herbs to Treat Amenorrhea
- Aloe vera
- Aloe vera juice is best for primary amenorrhea.
- Shatavari
Asparagus racemosus roots known as Shatavari are used medicinally in Ayurveda. Shatavari is a heavy and oily tonic often used for **gynecological purposes by**



Ayurveda, as well as to strengthen female hormones.

- Its demulcent properties help to nurture the mucous membranes. It acts simultaneously by nourishing and cleansing the blood and the female reproductive organs.
- Vidarikand
- Vidarikand or 'Ipomoea digitate' falls into the category of rasayana and demulcent herbs. Vidarikand has a marked **estrogenic and progesteronogenic activity** with no toxicity. In addition, patients have responded positively when taking Vidarikand as a replacement for routine hormonal therapies.
- Turmeric
- **Turmeric (Curcuma longa)** helps to regulate menses by cleaning the liver. It is an important herb to decongest the Artavavahi srotas, which also works on the metabolism of fats by **reducing Kapha and Ama**, and increasing Pitta.
- Classical Ayurveda Formulations Used to Treat Amenorrhea
- Asokarishtam / Aswagandharishtam / Kumaryasavam
- Dasamularishtam / Saraswatarishtam / Rajatha Bhasmam
- Vasantakusumakararasam / Hinguvachadi Churnam
- Phalasarpi / Gulguluthiktham Kashayam
- Sukumaram Kashayam / Kulathadi Kashayam / Rajahpravarthini Vati

- Herbal Tea or Drinks..Medicated wines such as ***Drakshasavam or Kumaryasavam***, half-diluted takra, curd and cumin tea, ginger tea, and cinnamon tea are recommended to remove blockages, increase Pitta, and pacify Vata and Kapha. They also increase menstrual flow.
- Diet and Lifestyle Advice
- A diet that will stimulate Pitta while pacifying Vata and Kapha is advised.
- Unhealthy diet – not recommended for patients with amenorrhea
- **Intake of excessively cold and dry foods** that increase Vata in the body;
- **Consumption of gas-producing vegetables** such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, beans, lettuce, mushrooms, parsley, peas, as well as excessive yeast-based products, white flour and white sugar products, as these all increase Vata;
- **Excessive consumption of fried foods**, heavy creams, and puddings, as these increase Kapha;
- **Dry lentils, dry food, fried potatoes**, etc. should be avoided by patients with indigestion.
- Healthy diet – recommended to alleviate the symptoms of amenorrhea
- **Grains**: red lentils, mung dhal and their boiled watery essence should be included in the diet;
- **Vegetables**, such as snake gourd, viper gourd, banana green, white pumpkin, fenugreek leaf, and mint leaf are good for the condition;
- **Pickles**: lemon pickle, orange pickle, or ginger pickle in sesame oil or sunflower oil are recommended;
- **Fruit**: grapes, raisins, apples, sweet oranges, and papaya are good to consume;
- **Non-vegetarian**: mutton and goat meat can be used in moderation (twice weekly);
- **Butter milk**: fresh, without cream;
- **Milk**: low-fat cow's milk is advisable
 . Add a pinch of turmeric or ginger powder to the milk before you warm it up for drinking. This helps to reduce the Kapha-increasing qualities of the milk;



- **Spices such** as black pepper, cinnamon, coriander, cardamom, fennel, ginger, cumin, black pepper, fenugreek, clove, celery seed, salt, soya seed and mustard seed can be used for garnishing the foods.
- Lifestyle **Follow a lifestyle that** will stimulate Pitta and pacify Vata and Kapha. Practicing Surya Namaskar (the Sun Salutation) every morning will help correct Pitta and metabolism in general;
- **Negative feelings such** as stress and tension should be avoided;
- **Do not undertake physical or mental work** beyond your capacity;
- **Excessive intercourse should be avoided.** The recommended frequency of intercourse differs as per the season – it is higher in winter and lower in summer. It also depends on age. Individuals below 22 are not advised to practice sex routinely;
- **Normal sleep and** normal walking exercise are essential;
- If possible, **avoid chemical contraceptives**;
- Follow an active lifestyle, yet only take exercise according to your individual capacity.
- Daily Physical Activity and Yoga
- 30 minutes of walking and a full range of motions focusing on inversions, twists, and backbends. Inversions increase blood circulation and **balance your endocrine system, backbends tone your liver, and twists massage your internal organs.**
- **Surya Namaskar (the Sun Salutation)** – this is the best pose for amenorrhea. It is recommended to be repeated 6-7 times.
- **Pawanmuktasana (Wind-Relieving pose)**– stimulates the organs in the pelvic cavity, for example the intestines, urine bladder, uterus etc. to perform the correct function and stimulate the menstrual cycle;
- **Chakrasana (Wheel pose)**– puts a greater stretching or pressure effect on the abdominal organs of the body, especially those in its middle and lower parts. Chakrasana helps to stimulate the function of the uterus;
- **Paschimottanasana** is a seated forward bend with the upper body over the legs. There are different versions of it, e.g. ardha baddha padma paschimottanasana, tring mukhaikapda paschimottanasana, urdhva mukha paschimottanasana, parivrtta paschimottanasana, all of which are used to treat amenorrhea;
- **Matsyasana (Fish pose)** – both Matsyasana and ardha Matsyasana are helpful in stimulating the ovarian function. They are also recommended for patients with polycystic ovary syndrome.