



## Understanding Menstrual Cycle Variations through *Deha Prakriti*

Dr. Neetu Singh<sup>1</sup>, Prof. (Dr.) C.R. Yadav<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MD Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharir, NIA, DU, Jaipur, Rajasthan

<sup>2</sup>Professor and Head, Department of Kriya, NIA, DU, Jaipur, Rajasthan

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Neetu Singh

**ABSTRACT:** Deha Prakriti is the unique psychosomatic constitution of an individual determined by the predominance of *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, and it significantly influences physiological functions, including the *Artava Chakra*. Analysis of classical Ayurvedic literature suggests a close association between *Prakriti* types and menstrual characteristics such as cycle regularity, duration, flow, pain, and premenstrual symptoms. Women with *Vata* dominant *Prakriti* commonly exhibit irregular, scanty, and painful menstruation due to the dry and mobile qualities of *Vata*. *Pitta* dominant individuals often present with early cycles, heavier bleeding, burning sensation, irritability, and acne, reflecting the hot and sharp attributes of *Pitta*. In contrast, *Kapha* dominant women generally show regular but comparatively heavier flow with minimal discomfort because of the stable and unctuous qualities of *Kapha*. These constitutional variations highlight the importance of individualized assessment in menstrual health, *Prakriti*-specific dietary measures, lifestyle modifications, and herbal interventions may help to maintain *Doshic* balance and support reproductive well-being. Integration of Ayurvedic principles with modern clinical research can further strengthen personalised gynaecological care.

**KEYWORDS:** *Deha Prakriti*, Menstrual Cycle, *Ayurveda*, *Artava Chakra*, *Vata*, *Pitta*, *Kapha*, *Rajaswala*, *Dosha*-based variations, Personalized Gynaecology

### INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda*, the ancient Indian system of medicine, emphasizes an individualized understanding of health and disease through the concept of *Deha Prakriti*. *Prakriti* is determined at the time of conception by the relative predominance of the three *Dosha Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha* those regulate all physiological and psychological functions of the body<sup>1</sup>. The menstrual cycle is also influenced by these *Dosha* and is considered a natural physiological process. Among them, *Apana Vata* plays the vital role in regulating menstruation, while *Pitta* and *Kapha* contribute to hormonal balance, metabolism, and tissue nourishment<sup>2</sup>. According to *Ayurveda*, women of different *Prakriti* exhibit distinct menstrual characteristics in terms of cycle duration, flow, pain perception, and associated symptoms. In contrast, modern medicine primarily attributes menstrual variations to hormonal, genetic, and environmental factors. Exploring menstrual patterns through the *Ayurvedic* perspective of *Prakriti* may provide deeper insights into individual physiological differences and support the development of personalized approaches in women's healthcare and gynaecological management.

### *Prakriti* and Menstruation: An *Ayurvedic* Perspective

According to *Charaka Samhita*, *Prakriti* refers to the innate constitutional makeup of an individual, which remains stable throughout life<sup>3</sup>. It influences metabolism, tissue nourishment, psychological traits, susceptibility to diseases, and reproductive health. In *Ayurveda*, the menstrual cycle is governed by the balanced functioning of the three *Dosha*:

- *Apana Vata* regulates the downward movement and expulsion of menstrual blood.
- *Ranjaka Pitta* is responsible for blood formation, hormonal activity, and metabolic transformation.
- *Avalambaka Kapha* supports the structural stability and nourishment of the reproductive tissues, particularly the endometrium<sup>4</sup>.

Healthy menstruation is described as *Niroga*, *Samakala*, *Samavarta*, *Alpa Vedana Yukta*, and neither excessive nor scanty in quantity.

#### **Shudha Artva Lakshan-**

मासान्निष्पिच्छदाहार्ति पञ्चरात्रानुबन्धि च।

नैवातिबहु नात्यल्पमार्तवं शुद्धमादिशेत्॥

गुञ्जाफलसवर्णं च पद्मालक्तकसन्निभम् ।

इन्द्रगोपकसङ्काशमार्तवं शुद्धमादिशेत्॥(च. चि. 30/225-226)

According to Acharya Charaka *Shuddha Artava* is described as menstruation occurring every month, lasting for approximately five nights, free from excessive sliminess, burning sensation, or pain, and neither too excessive nor too scanty in quantity. The colour of pure menstrual blood is said to resemble the seed of the *Gunja* fruit, the lotus, lac dye, or the Indragopa insect, all of which are bright red.

#### **General characteristics of Menstruation-**

Menstruation, commonly referred to as the menstrual period, is the regular shedding of blood and mucosal tissue from the inner lining of the uterus through the vagina. The menstrual cycle is regulated by cyclical hormonal changes involving the rise and fall of reproductive hormones. Menstruation occurs due to a decline in progesterone levels when pregnancy does not take place. During menstruation, women commonly use feminine hygiene products to maintain personal hygiene and comfort.

The onset of the first menstrual period is known as menarche, which generally occurs during puberty between the ages of 11 and 13 years. However, the beginning of menstruation as early as eight years of age may also be considered within the normal physiological range.

रसादेव स्त्रिया रक्तं रजःसञ्ज्ञं प्रवर्तते ।

तद्वर्षाद्द्वादशाद्ध्वं याति पञ्चाशतः क्षयम् ॥(सु. सू. 14 /6)

The *Raja/Artava* in women is produced from *Rasa Dhatu*. It begins to flow from around the age of twelve years and gradually diminishes after the age of fifty years. This indicates that both Ayurveda and modern science consider menstruation to begin around puberty and gradually cease around the age of menopause, showing similarity in their understanding of the reproductive lifespan in women.

#### **Menstrual Characteristics in Vata Prakriti**

Women with *Vata Prakriti* generally possess a lean body frame, dry skin, variable appetite, and psychological tendencies such as anxiety or restlessness. Since *Vata* is characterized by qualities like *Ruksha* (dryness), *Chala* (mobility), and *Laghu* (lightness), these women are more susceptible to menstrual disturbances related to irregularity and scanty. Common menstrual features include:

- *Artavakshaya* (Scanty menstrual bleeding)
- Irregular or delayed menstrual cycles
- *Kashtartava* (Painful menstruation)
- Premenstrual anxiety, insomnia, and mood fluctuations<sup>5</sup>.
- Aggravation of *Apana Vata* may lead to spasmodic uterine contractions, irregular shedding of the endometrium, and delayed or premature menstruation<sup>6</sup>.

#### **Management focuses on specifying Vata through:**

- Warm, nourishing, and unctuous diet
- Adequate rest and stress reduction
- Use of *Vata*-balancing herbs such as *Shatavari* and ghee-based formulations

### Menstrual Characteristics in *Pitta Prakriti*

Women with *Pitta Prakriti* usually have a moderate body build, warm body temperature, sharp digestion, and emotionally intense personalities. *Pitta* possesses qualities such as *Ushna* (heat), *Tikshna* (sharpness), and *Drava* (fluidity), which strongly influence the menstrual cycle. Typical menstrual features include:

- Heavy menstrual bleeding (*Asrigdara*)
- Early or regular cycles with comparatively shorter intervals
- Burning sensation, irritability, and emotional sensitivity during menstruation<sup>7</sup>.

Increased body heat and inflammatory symptoms Because *Ranjaka Pitta* governs blood and hormonal functions, *Pitta*-dominant women may be more prone to excessive bleeding and inflammatory gynaecological conditions.

### Management aims to pacify *Pitta* through:

- Cooling and soothing diet and lifestyle
- Avoidance of spicy and excessively hot foods
- Herbs such as *Lodhra*, *Sariva*, and cooling preparations like coconut water.

### Menstrual Characteristics in *Kapha Prakriti*

Women with *Kapha Prakriti* are generally known for their strong physique, emotional stability, calm nature, and good endurance. *Kapha* is dominated by qualities such as *Snigdha* (unctuousness), *Guru* (heaviness), and *Sthira* (stability), which significantly influence menstrual patterns. Common menstrual characteristics observed in *Kapha*-dominant women include:

- Delayed onset of menarche
- Heavy and prolonged menstrual bleeding
- Little or no menstrual pain
- Tendency for weight gain and fluid retention
- Presence of excessive mucous discharge or sluggish uterine activity<sup>8</sup>.

Due to the predominance of *Kapha*, tissue growth and accumulation tend to occur gradually but excessively. As a result, these women may be more susceptible to conditions such as *Artava Vriddhi*, hormonal sluggishness, and disorders like PCOD. Management primarily focuses on reducing excess *Kapha* and improving metabolic activity (*Agni*). Recommended approaches include:

- Use of *Lekhana* (scraping and reducing) herbs such as *Triphala*, *Guggulu*, and *Mustaka*
- Regular physical exercise and *Udvardana* (dry herbal powder massage)
- *Langhana* and *Deepana* therapies to enhance digestion and stimulate metabolism<sup>9</sup>.

### Menstrual Characteristics According to *Deha Prakriti*

Features	<i>Vata Prakriti</i>	<i>Pitta Prakriti</i>	<i>Kapha Prakriti</i>
Dominant Qualities	<i>Ruksha</i> (dry), <i>Chala</i> (mobile), <i>Laghu</i> (light)	<i>Ushna</i> (hot), <i>Tikshna</i> (sharp), <i>Drava</i> (fluid)	<i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous), <i>Guru</i> (heavy), <i>Sthira</i> (stable)
Body Constitution	Lean, thin body frame	Moderate build, warm body	Well-built, sturdy physique
Menstrual Cycle Pattern	Irregular, delayed, variable	Early or regular cycles	Regular but delayed tendency
Menstrual Flow	Scanty ( <i>Artavakshaya</i> )	Moderate to heavy	Heavy and prolonged
Pain During Menstruation	Severe pain, spasmodic dysmenorrhea	Burning sensation with moderate pain	Minimal or absent pain
Premenstrual Symptoms	Anxiety, insomnia, mood swings	Irritability, anger, acne, heat	Lethargy, heaviness, water retention

Associated Dosha Dysfunction	Aggravated <i>Apana Vata</i>	Increased <i>Ranjaka Pitta</i>	Excess <i>Kapha</i> accumulation
Common Gynaecological Tendency	Dysmenorrhea, irregular menstruation	Menorrhagia, inflammatory disorders	PCOD, obesity-related menstrual issues
Psychological Traits	Restless, anxious	Emotional intensity, impatience	Calm, emotionally stable
Dietary Recommendation	Warm, oily, nourishing food	Cooling, mildly sweet diet	Light, warm, spicy diet
Lifestyle Advice	Rest, oil massage, stress reduction	Cooling practices, avoid heat/stress	Exercise, Udvartana, active lifestyle
Helpful Herbs	<i>Shatavari, Ashwagandha, Bala</i>	<i>Lodhra, Sariva, Yashtimadhu</i>	<i>Guggulu, Trikatu, Haritaki</i>
Suitable Yoga & Pranayama	Gentle Yoga, Anulom-Vilom	Sheetali, Chandra Bhedana	Kapalabhati, Bhastrika

### Comparative Clinical Studies and Evidence

Recent studies have supported the classical *Ayurvedic* understanding of *Prakriti*-based menstrual variations. Shirodkar et al. (2016) conducted a clinical study correlating menstrual patterns with *Deha Prakriti* and found:

- *Vata Prakriti*: More prone to dysmenorrhea and irregular cycles
- *Pitta Prakriti*: Higher incidence of menorrhagia and PMS (Premenstrual syndrome)
- *Kapha Prakriti*: Tendency toward heavier flow and delayed menarche<sup>10</sup>.

Similarly, a study conducted by Mehta et al. suggested that *Prakriti*-based assessment may be useful as an early screening approach for menstrual disorders. The researchers observed that understanding an individual's constitutional type can help predict susceptibility to specific gynaecological conditions and support more personalized treatment planning.

Another large observational study by Bhalerao et al. reported significant associations between *Prakriti*, metabolic activity, and reproductive patterns. The findings further strengthened the relevance of classical *Ayurvedic* principles in modern women's healthcare.

### Integrated Ayurvedic Approach for Menstrual Health

*Ayurveda* emphasizes individualized treatment based on both *Prakriti* and *Dosha* predominance. This personalized approach is particularly important in menstrual health, where even subtle constitutional differences can influence symptoms and disease tendencies. Management therefore includes a combination of diet, lifestyle modification, Yoga, and herbal support tailored to each constitutional type.

### Dietary Recommendations

#### Importance of *Pathya- Apathya-*

पथ्येसतिगदार्तस्य किमौषधनिषेवणैः ॥

पथ्येऽसति गदार्तस्य किमौषधनिषेवणैः ॥ (Vaidya Jeevanam)

When wholesome diet and lifestyle are properly followed by the patient, medicines become unnecessary; but when wholesome diet and lifestyle are not followed, medicines become ineffective.

*Vata Prakriti*: Warm, nourishing, and unctuous foods are preferred to balance dryness and irregularity.

*Pitta Prakriti*: Cooling, mildly sweet, and soothing foods help reduce excess heat and irritability.

*Kapha Prakriti*: Light, warm, spicy, bitter, and astringent foods are beneficial for stimulating metabolism and reducing heaviness<sup>11</sup>.

## Lifestyle Guidelines

*Vata*: Regular oil massage, proper rest, and maintaining warmth are advised.

*Pitta*: Exposure to excessive heat and stress should be minimized, while calming and cooling practices are encouraged.

*Kapha*: Daily exercise, dry therapies, and early morning waking help maintain balance and metabolic activity<sup>12</sup>.

## Yoga and Pranayama

Specific yogic practices can help regulate *Doshic* imbalance and support menstrual well-being:

For *Vata*: Gentle *Yoga* postures and calming breathing techniques such as *Anulom-Vilom*

For *Pitta*: Cooling *Pranayama* practices like *Sheetali* and *Chandra Bhedana*

For *Kapha*: More active *Yoga* routines along with energizing techniques such as *Kapalabhati* and *Bhastrika*<sup>13</sup>.

## Herbal Support

*Ayurveda* recommends different herbs according to constitutional predominance:

*Vata*: *Ashwagandha*, *Bala*, and *Shatavari*

*Pitta*: *Sariva*, *Lodhra*, and *Yashtimadhu*

*Kapha*: *Guggulu*, *Trikatu*, and *Haritaki*<sup>14</sup>.

This integrative and constitution-based approach helps in maintaining menstrual balance, preventing disorders, and promoting overall reproductive health.

## DISCUSSION

This study highlights the significant role of *Prakriti* assessment in understanding individual variations in menstrual health and in planning personalized management strategies. *Ayurvedic* principles, which emphasize constitutional individuality, are increasingly being supported by contemporary research findings. Unlike the generalized approach commonly seen in conventional medicine, *Ayurveda* focuses on bio-individuality, prevention, and maintenance of overall balance. Menstrual disturbances are often considered early manifestations of deeper systemic imbalances. Through proper *Prakriti* evaluation, clinicians can move beyond symptomatic treatment and work toward restoring *Dosha* equilibrium, thereby reducing the risk of chronic gynaecological conditions such as Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, Endometriosis, and infertility. This personalised framework also supports early intervention, lifestyle correction, and preventive healthcare. Incorporating *Ayurvedic* concepts into public health programs, adolescent counselling, and gynaecological practice may therefore provide a more holistic and sustainable approach to women's reproductive health.

## CONCLUSION

The menstrual cycle is not merely a reproductive event but an important indicator of a woman's internal physiological balance and overall health status. *Ayurveda* provides a unique constitutional framework through the concept of *Deha Prakriti*, which helps explain the wide variations observed in menstrual patterns among women. *Vata*-dominant women are more susceptible to irregularity, pain, and deficient flow due to the mobile and dry qualities of *Vata*; *Pitta*-dominant women commonly exhibit heavy bleeding, heat-associated symptoms, and inflammatory tendencies; while *Kapha*-dominant women often experience stable yet prolonged cycles, heaviness, and metabolic sluggishness. Understanding these *Prakriti*-based differences offers a highly individualized and preventive approach to menstrual health assessment and management. Rather than treating menstruation through a generalized symptom-based model, *Ayurveda* emphasizes correction of underlying *Dosha* imbalance through personalized *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Yoga*, and herbal interventions. Such an approach has the potential to improve quality of life, reduce the burden of chronic gynaecological disorders, and support long-term reproductive wellness. In the present era of

personalized medicine, the *Ayurvedic* concept of *Prakriti* holds immense clinical relevance. Integrating classical *Ayurvedic* wisdom with evidence-based modern research may contribute significantly toward developing holistic, patient-centered gynaecological care. Further interdisciplinary studies, standardized clinical trials, and academic integration are essential to scientifically validate and incorporate *Prakriti*-based menstrual assessment into mainstream healthcare systems.

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