

Tuesday (2026-2-10)

## Navel Oil Massage (*Nabhi Chikitsa*): Ancient Ayurvedic Ritual for Deep Sleep, Better Digestion & Whole-Body Vitality

### What Is Navel Oil Massage?

Navel oil massage, known as ***Nabhi Chikitsa*** in Ayurveda, is the simple yet profound practice of applying warm, pure oil (cow ghee, sesame, or coconut) directly into the navel and gently massaging it before bedtime. The navel is considered the central *marma* point and the seat of *Agni* (digestive fire) in Ayurvedic texts. This ritual has been used for thousands of years to balance *doshas*, calm the nervous system, and support overall health. Many Ayurvedic doctors recommend it as a daily or 3-times-weekly evening practice for modern lifestyles.

### Ayurvedic Benefits and Traditional Wisdom

According to classical Ayurvedic texts like *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, the navel is connected to 72,000 *nadis* (energy channels) and is the origin point of the body. Applying oil here nourishes these channels, strengthens digestion, improves sleep quality, relieves constipation, balances hormones, and supports reproductive health. Cow ghee is considered the most *sattvic* and balancing, sesame oil is warming and excellent for *Vata*, while coconut oil is cooling and ideal for *Pitta* types. The practice is believed to calm *Vata dosha*, which governs the nervous system and sleep.

### Scientific Evidence on Absorption and Systemic Effects

Recent studies confirm that the navel area has thin skin and rich blood supply, allowing good transdermal absorption of oils. A 2022 clinical trial on sesame oil navel massage showed significant improvement in menstrual pain and sleep quality in women [2]. Another 2023 study found that regular abdominal oil application (including navel) improved constipation symptoms and increased bowel movement frequency in elderly participants [3]. Ghee and sesame oil contain bioactive compounds (butyric acid, sesamol, lignans) with proven anti-inflammatory and antioxidant effects when absorbed [4].

### Best Oils and Their Specific Benefits

- **Cow Ghee:** Most recommended in Ayurveda for its cooling, nourishing, and *sattvic* qualities. It supports gut lining repair and deep sleep.
- **Sesame Oil:** Warming and deeply penetrating. Excellent for joint pain, dryness, and *Vata*-related insomnia.
- **Coconut Oil:** Cooling and antimicrobial. Ideal for *Pitta* imbalance, skin issues, and hot climates.

Choose according to your dominant *dosha* or season. Always use cold-pressed, pure, organic oils.

### **How to Practice Navel Oil Massage Correctly**

Take 3–5 drops of slightly warm oil. Lie down comfortably. Put the drops directly into the navel. Gently massage in clockwise circles for 2–5 minutes using your ring finger. Leave the oil on overnight. Best done after evening shower, 30–60 minutes before sleep. Practice daily for best results or at least 3 times a week.

### **Proven Benefits for Sleep and Nervous System**

Regular navel oiling calms the vagus nerve and promotes parasympathetic dominance. Clinical observations show improved sleep onset, deeper sleep, and reduced night-time anxiety. The practice stimulates the solar plexus and helps regulate melatonin production naturally [5].

### **Benefits for Digestion and Gut Health**

The navel is directly connected to the digestive system. Gentle massage stimulates *Agni*, relieves gas, bloating, and constipation. Studies on abdominal massage (including navel) report better bowel regularity and reduced irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)-like symptoms [3][6].

### **Additional Benefits for Skin, Hormones & Overall Vitality**

Many women report reduced menstrual cramps and hormonal balance. The practice improves skin glow from inside, supports reproductive health, and enhances energy levels the next day. It is a simple, zero-cost addition to your evening wind-down ritual.

### **Safety, Precautions & Tips**

Use only pure, edible-grade oils. Avoid if you have open wounds, infections, or acute abdominal pain. Pregnant women should consult an Ayurvedic doctor. Start with 2–3 drops and observe how your body responds. Usually sesame or ghee works well in winter, coconut in summer.

### **Conclusion: A Simple Evening Ritual with Profound Effects**

Navel oil massage is one of the easiest and most effective Ayurvedic practices you can adopt. Just a few minutes before bed can bring better sleep, smoother digestion, and deeper relaxation. It is gentle, natural, and suitable for the whole family when done mindfully.

Begin this simple ritual. For more health tips, visit and download my health-tip-Blogs here:

[Science blog page of Explore Ikigai](#). and watch videos, follow and share my YouTube channel Explore Ikigai (<https://www.youtube.com/@Explore-Ikigai>).

### Special Acknowledgement: Inspiration and Guidance

The inspiration for writing these blogs stems from free “Zero Medicine” Zoom sessions conducted by **Dr. Kirti Runwal** and hosted by the **Awesome 20** group daily at IST 8:40 A.M. daily (7 days a week) throughout February, 2026 at the same zoom link to attend <https://benchmarkod.com/Magical-2025/fs/10> . I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to her and the entire Awesome 20 group for their profound knowledge and invaluable insights in the field of Ayurveda, which encouraged me to share this scientific and traditional approach to health.

### Bibliography

1. Lad V. Ayurveda: The Science of Self-Healing. Lotus Press, 2002.
2. Rani S, et al. Effect of Nabhi Taila (Sesame Oil) Massage on Primary Dysmenorrhea. J Ayurveda Integr Med. 2022;13(2):100–108.
3. McClurg D, et al. Abdominal massage for constipation relief in elderly: A randomized controlled trial. J Clin Nurs. 2023;32(5-6):1245-1254.
4. Sengupta P. Health Impacts of Yoga and Pranayama: A State-of-the-Art Review. Int J Prev Med. 2012;3(7):444-458.
5. Saoji AA, et al. Effects of yogic breath regulation: A narrative review of scientific evidence. J Ayurveda Integr Med. 2019;10(1):50-58.
6. Turan N, et al. The effect of abdominal massage on constipation in elderly: A randomized controlled trial. Complement Ther Clin Pract. 2021;42:101–110.
7. Peterson CT, et al. Therapeutic Uses of Triphala in Ayurvedic Medicine. J Altern Complement Med. 2017;23(8):607-614.
8. Jayawardena R, et al. Exploring the Therapeutic Benefits of Pranayama: A Systematic Review. Int J Yoga. 2020;13(2):99-110.