



VARIOUS ASPECTS RELATED TO AHARA AS PER AYURVEDA: A REVIEW

Praveen Kumar Mishra^{*1}, Ranjit Narang² and Dipti Sharma³

¹*Reader, Dept. of Samhita Siddhant, Rani Dullaiya Smriti P.G. Ayurved College & Hospital, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

²P.G. Scholar, Dept of Kaumarbhritiya, Rani Dullaiya Smriti P.G. Ayurved College & Hospital, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

³P.G. Scholar, Dept of Agad-Tantra, Rani Dullaiya Smriti P.G. Ayurved College & Hospital, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

***Author for Correspondence: Dr. Praveen Kumar Mishra**

Reader, Dept. of Samhita Siddhant, Rani Dullaiya Smriti P.G. Ayurved College & Hospital, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

Article Received on 06/12/2015

Article Revised on 27/12/2015

Article Accepted on 16/01/2016

ABSTRACT

The normal health mainly depended upon *ahara*. The *ahara* play great role towards the occurrence of disease. Proper diet intake acts as medicine and improper diet may work as disease causative factor. Selection of proper *Ahara* needs consideration of factor like; *prakriti*, *karana*, *samyoga*, *rashi*, *desha*, *kala*, *upayogasamstha*, & *upayokta*. This article discusses various rules mentioned by ayurveda related to the *ahara* which are to be followed while taking food (*ahara*).

KEYWORDS: *Ahara*, *Ayurveda*, *Agni*, *Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatan*.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda described *ahara* amongst three sub-pillars along with *nidra* and *brahmacharya*. *Ahara* should be best suitable for *prakriti* of individual person since compatible *ahara* helps in maintaining good state of health. The *ahara* contributes greatly for normal health as well as disease conditions. The *kaya* mainly physical state, intellect and strength greatly depend upon *Ahara* since it posses various *gunas* like; *veerya* and *vipak*. The *ahara rasas* through *gunas* results *veerya*. The ayurveda also mentioned concept of compatible *ahara* which means different *ahara* regimen suits on different people as per the predominance of *tridoshic* balance. Ayurveda also prescribed specific diet for disease conditions. This article summarizes various considerations related to the *ahara* described by ancient science of medicine ayurveda; these all aspect *hita* values of food and reduces any chances of intake of *ahita ahara*.^[1-3]

AGNI AND AHARA PAKA

Agni transforms consumed *ahara viharadi dravyas* of *vijatiya* origin to *sajatiya* and finally produces energy. *Agni* regulates the procedure of digestion and metabolism. *Agni* is resultant of *tejas* and *mahabhuta*. *Agni* helps in digestion and metabolism of consumed foods and thus responsible for the ultimate utility of *ahara* by producing energy and nutritional values to the body. *Agni* is various types depending upon nature which are as follows:

Jatharagni: Works after the food digestion and absorption.

Bhutagni: Transformation of heterogenous to homogenous material (*vijatiya panchabhautika dravyas* consumed to *sajatiya panchabhautika dravyas*).

Dhatvagni: Perform tissue regeneration process.

Metabolic transformation of *ahara* produces *prasada* and *kitta*. *Prasada* serves nutritional values to the body and help to establish *doshas* and *dhatu*s, etc., while *kitta* excreted from the body in different forms. *Agni* converts food in the form of energy, which is responsible for all the vital functions of our body. *Agni* performs process of digestion through absorption and assimilation. Digestion starts with *madhura bhava* by the action of salivary amylase on starch. The next step of digestion involves *amla bhava* by release of *Accha pitta*. This step generates nutritional nourishment for body built up process. The next stage of digestion involves formation of *vayu* (*Katu bhava*).

The *ahara rasa* which is having *madhura* and *lavana rasa* gets *madhura vipaka*, *amla rasa* gets *amla vipaka*, *katu*, *tikta*, *kasaya rasa* gets *katu vipaka*. *bhutagni*, ignited by *jatharagni* transforms the *vijatiya annarasa* into *sajatiya poshaka dhatu*s. *Jatharagni paka* and *bhutagni paka adya ahara rasa* circulates in the body to reach all tissues.^[4]

AHARA VIDHI VISHESHAYATAN

As per ayurveda there are various aspects which determine the utility of *ahara*; ayurveda suggest consideration of these factors to enhance *hita-guna* of *ahara*, these are:

1. **Prakriti**

2. *Samskara*
3. *Combination*
4. *Matra*
5. *Desha*
6. *Kala*
7. *Rules governing intake of food.*
8. *Idiosyncrasy.*

1. **Prakriti:** This describes specific *guna* of *ahara* as per the nature of food article like some foods are heavy in nature while others are light in nature. As per traditional text of medical science various *ahara* possess different *tridoshic* predominance, depending upon the *prakriti* foods becomes compatibility to the persons while same foods may be incompatible to the other person. Thus the consideration of *ahara prakriti* greatly enhances utility of food articles.
2. **Samskara:** This means transformation of raw qualities of *ahara* by means of various processes like; *soaking, churning, cooking, roasting* etc. These all steps are very essential to suppresses *ahita-guna* of *ahara*. Improper *samskara* may enhance *doshic-prakriti* of food material and leads to the various diseases. *samskara* transform food articles in eatable forms and due to this quality of foods gets changed.
3. **Combination:** Compatible combination of various foods may enhance utility of food articles. Similarly incompatible food articles may causes harmful effect if taken together.
4. **Matra:** Quantity (*matra*) of food also plays important roles towards the *hita* and *ahita guna* of food articles. *Matra* of *ahara* depends upon the *agni* of an individual. Person with suppressed *agni* should consumed less quantity of food. The *agni* vary person to person thus the food consumption capacity also differ person to person. The appropriate amount of foods easily gets digested without disturbing the equilibrium of *dhatu*s & *dosh*as. Heavy food articles should be consumed in fewer amounts as compare to light food articles.
5. **Desha:** *Desha* involves *Bhoomi, Ahara Dravya Desha* and *Atura Desha*. The specific habitant people prefer particular type of diet which also suit for their body but similar diet regimen may not be suitable for other habitant people.
6. **Kala:** *Kala* describes suitable time to take *ahara*. It considers condition of *rugna* and *vayah, nityaga kala* etc. *Kala* greatly influences impact of *ahara*. There are various food articles which are compatible and incompatible as per the *kala*. Ayurveda described *ahara* which should be taken as per the different *ritu kala*. As per ayurveda light food articles should be consumed in *ratri kala* two hours before the sleeping time. Similarly ayurveda described food regimen as per the early and late day time.

The Ayurveda prescribes specific diet for different seasons.

Summer season – Cold, liquid, sweet and oily diet is advised. Excessive hot, spicy, sour salty diet should be avoided.

Rainy season – *Vatashamaka* sweet, sour and salty food and drinks are preferred.

Winter season – *Vataghna pittavardhaka* diet hot, sweet, sour and salty food, sugarcane, oils and fats are advised.

7. **Rules for Taking Food:** The *vata* and *pitta* pacifying *ahara* should be consumed initially that may have sweet taste and then sour & salty substances can be consumed to increase the digestive juices. Lastly bitter and pungent taste food should be taken to pacify *kapha*. Healthy individuals as well as patients should consider various factors related to the *ahara* like; one should eat food in proper quantity which is hot, unctuous & not contradictory. *Ahara* best suited if consumed after the digestion of the previous meal, with all the accessories, without talking & laughing, not too fast or too slowly.^[5]
8. **Idiosyncrasy.** Type of *ahara* mainly depends upon the person who is going to consume it; the properties of *ahara* must be considered depending upon the needs of person.

DISEASE SPECIFIC DIET

Ayurveda prescribed diet specific to various disease condition. Followings diet regimen need to be consider in various diseased conditions^[6]:

Ahara for Joint Pain

- Garlic, ginger, black pepper
- Warm water and light diet are beneficial in this condition

Ahara for Madhumeha

- Green leafy Seeds of barley, wheat, beans like green gram, horse-gram etc.
- Black berry, *amla* and other sour fruits.

Ahara for Digestive Problem

- Banana, black berry and garlic
- Wheat, barley and beans
- Sugarcane juice, radish, Indian goose berry, and juices etc.

Ahara for Hridroga

- Banana, mango, pomegranate, raisin.
- Garlic, onion, dry ginger.
- Honey and meat soup, etc.

DIET FOR ELDERLY

The diet regimens for elderly persons are very different from the young one since with the age body's metabolic rate slows down and the activity levels decrease thus elderly require fewer quantities of food as compared to young one. Cereals, whole pulses, starchy vegetables and fruits like sweet potato, banana should be preferred.

Excessive use of oil and fat should be avoided Pulses, milk and milk products especially cow milk should be considered as sources of protein for elderly person. They help in tissue repair process and maintain immunity. Fruits and fruits juices, vegetables and soup are rich in vitamins and easy to digest also thus elderly person need to involve these food articles in their routine food intake. Spicy, salty and uncooked foods are avoided in old ages.

REFERENCES

1. Charaka Samhita (1994) Ayurveda Deepika Commentary by Chakrapani Datta: *Shareera Sthana* 6/12, Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, India.
2. Sharma Pv. *Charaka Samhita, Vimana Sthana*. Chapter 1. Vol. 9. Varanasi, India: Chaukhambha, Orientalia; 2007; 311-316.
3. Acharya Yt; Agniveshakrita Charaka Samhita Chakrapani Commentary, Sutrasthan 25, Varanasi, Chaukhambha Sanskrita Sansthan, 2009.
4. Goverdhanam Vani J. S. R. A. Prasad, Concept of *Agni* and *Ahara Paka* (Metabolic Transformation) in Ayurveda, IAMJ: 2013; 1(4): 1-7.
5. Chapple Jagruti, Concept of Aahara Dravya With Respect to *Ahara-Vidhi-Visheshayatan* Concept of *Aahara Dravya* with Respect to *Ahara-Vidhi-Visheshayatan*, 6-9.
6. Das Banamali Concept of Dietetics and Its Importance in Ayurveda, Ayurveda. J Homeop Ayurv Med, 3: 149. 1000149.