

**IMPORTANCE OF AYURVEDIC DIETARY REGIMEN IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS
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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a life science that focuses on promoting and maintaining human health. Lifestyle and diet are key elements that affect a person's health in today's technological and competitive age. Diet and eating habits play an important role in maintaining good health. Nutrition provides the building blocks for the development of new things. *Dhatus* are reservoirs of energy that come in all shapes and sizes. *Dhatus* are constantly being mined for energy. Therefore, supplementing with high quality *Dhatu* is essential. A balanced diet is important for this. In *Ayurveda*, food stimulates the mind. These *Sattvic*, *Rajasic* or *Tamasic Gunas* depend on the food we eat. Let my food be my medicine Health depends solely on what we eat. Strength, health, and life depend on *Agni*. But *Agni* is also constantly replenished with food. Therefore, in order to maintain *Sama Agni*, eating balanced foods is essential. Toddlers and preschoolers need adequate intake to reach their full growth and development potential. Malnutrition impairs children's cognitive development and their ability to explore their environment.

KEYWORDS: *Aahar*, *Agni*, *Ayurveda*, *Dhatus*, Growth, Nutrition.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda is a life science that focuses on promoting and maintaining human health.^[1] Diet plays a key role in *Ayurvedic* life. *Ahara* (Diet) *Nidra* (Sleep) and *Brahmacharya* (Temperance) are the three *Upastambha* (Sub-pillars) necessary for the smooth running of life.^[2] Out of the three *Upastambhas*, *Ahara* is considered the best advocate of life.^[3] From the earliest stages of fetal development through birth through infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age, adequate nutrition and good nutrition are essential for survival, physical growth, mental development, performance, and productivity and vital to health and well-being.

In *Ayurveda*, a balanced diet is planned in view of the well-known composition of *Panchabhautic* and the influence of *Tridoshic* on the living human body. *Ahara* (Diet) and *Vihara* (lifestyle) have a significant impact on overall health, and the rapid increase in metabolic and degenerative diseases is a result of modern lifestyle adjustments.^[4] According to Acharya, *Kashyapa Ahara* is considered *Mahabhaishajya* or great medicine. *Acharya Charaka* clarifies the importance of food, stating that food sustains the life of all living beings and that complexation, clarity, good voice, longevity, genius, happiness, contentment, nourishment, strength, and intellect are conditioned by food.^[5] The right quantity of food is defined as the amount of food that is digested and processed in a timely manner without upsetting the

body's balance (*Dhatu* or *Dohas*). *Chakrapani*, a commentator on the *Charaka-samhita*, believes that the light food is *Vayu* and *Agnimahabhuta* predominate, while the heavy food is *Prithvi* and *Jala Mahabhuta* predominate.^[6] Nutrition's provides the building blocks to create new *Dhatus*. *Dhatus* are energy storage in various forms. The *Dhatus* are consistently provides energy in different form. Therefore, replenishing good qualities of *Dhatus* is essential and a balanced diet is very important for this.

Ahara is divided into *Hitahara* (wholesome) and *Ahitahara* (unhealthy). In a similar context, the terms *Pathya* and *Apathya* are also used to denote the acceptability and suitability of a particular food in any context. *Acharya Charaka* provides a list of wholesome and unwholesome diet that should and should not be used regularly.^[7] Let my food be my medicine. Toddlers and preschoolers need adequate intake to reach their full growth and developmental potential. Children's cognitive development and their ability to explore their environment are inhibited by malnutrition. With adequate nutrition and community support, the long-term effects of malnutrition (cognitive impairment) can be avoided or mitigated.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

In Ayurveda importance of nutrition:

Acharya Charaka said that the source of life for all living things is food and that all living things are food and the whole world is looking for food. Skin colour, clarity, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, contentment, size, strength, and intelligence are determined in diet. Anything conducive to worldly happiness, Vedic sacrifices leading to heaven and all activities leading to spiritual salvation are said to be produced through food.^[8] Nutrition of a child begins even before birth. Poor nutrition during pregnancy can stunt fetal growth and lead to poor brain development. Even after birth, the baby's growth depends on the mother's diet, later period on own diet. Therefore, an adequate wholesome diet and lifestyle from early period of child leave permanent impact on the child physical and mental well-being. In *Ayurveda*, children are classified into 3 groups as per their diet.^[9]

Which are as follows:

1. ***Ksheerad Awastha***- Up to 1 year of life-consuming only breast milk.^[10]
2. ***Ksheerannada Awastha***- Up to 2 years of life along with milk child is consuming solid Food^[11]
3. ***Annad Awastha***- After 2 years of life where child consumes all like adult.^[12]

Diet according to different age group (*Awastha*) of Child

Ahara in ksheerap Awastha:

For an infant, breast milk (*Stanya*) is considered *Amrita* and *Ayurveda* exalts breastfeeding, that is *Stanyapana*. Most *Acharyas* recommended exclusive breastfeeding until 6 months of age. Breast milk contains the exact proportions of fat, cholesterol, protein, and carbohydrates for your baby. Breast milk is not only a good nutritional choice; it also protects against various diseases. Therefore, it is only recommended at an early age. The mother should only start breastfeeding from the first day.^[13] In the first three days, the secretion of *Piyush*, necessary for the development of immunity in children. According to *Acharya Kashyapa*, breastfeeding leads to good growth, strength, longevity, and good health in the baby and does not cause any problems or diseases.^[14]

Ahara in ksheerannada Awastha:

Ksheerannada Awastha covers ages from 6 months to 2 years. Around the sixth month, your baby's teeth will begin to grow. When the teeth begin to grow, the baby receives a signal that it is ready to eat foods other than milk. Hence *Acharya Kashyapa* said *Phalaprashana Samskara* at the age of 6 months.

Phalaprashana samskara:

It is practiced at the age of 6 months.^[15] Breast milk lacks vitamins C, D and iron, which infants need to supplement. These nutrients are abundant in fruit juices. Fruit juices, in addition to *Agni Vridhi*, help replenish

extra nutrients, relieve constipation, and keep children hydrated.

Annasprashana samskara:

At 6 months, babies need concentrated, high-energy food to sustain their growth. Child teeth will begin to erupt, the biting movement will begin, the tendency to push solid food out of the mouth will decrease, and the digestive system will be mature enough to digest food. Since birth weight has doubled, breast milk alone is no longer sufficient to meet nutritional needs.^[16]

Ahara in annada Awastha:

In *Annada Awastha*, a child is considered to be only two years old.^[17] In this *Awastha*, the child should be shifted on the cereals. All kinds of food in all its forms e.g. *Lehya*, *Peya*, *Bhojya*, etc. *Avasta* can be used in the life of that children.

Classifications of basic foods in Ayurveda:

Ayurveda classifies food (*Ahara*) into 12 basic categories based on source, method of preparation and utility such as-

1. *Sukadhanya* (Corns/ Carbohydrate, Polysaccharide)
2. *Samidhanya* (Pulses/ Vegetable proteins)
3. *Mamsa* (meat/ First class proteins)
4. *Saka* (Vegetables/Minerals)
5. *Phala* (Fruits/ Vitamins)
6. *Harita* (Salads/ Food adjuvant)
7. *Madya* (Fermented drinks/ Alcohol, Carbohydrate, Monosaccharide)
8. *Ambu* (Water)
9. *Gorasa* (Milk and Milk products)
10. *Iksuvikara* (Products of sugarcane)
11. *Krtanna* (Food preparations)
12. *Aharayogi* (Accessory food articles).

Convenience of consumption also shows how food is classified into different forms as mentioned by *Charaka Samhita*.^[18] *Ayurveda* texts attach great importance to the compatibility and intolerance of certain foods. *Charaka* describes in detail the 18 denominators of *Viruddhahara*, i.e., food non-compliance.^[19] *Ahara Dravya* become irreconcilable due to their contradictory properties, combinations (*Samyoga*), method of preparation (*Samskara*), place (*Desha*), time (*Kala*), dose (*Matra*) and some others due to their inherent nature (*Swabhava*).^[20] *Charaka* states that the adoption of an incompatible diet is responsible for infertility, blindness, *Visarpa* (herpes), *Udara* (ascites), insanity, anal fistula or fainting, poisoning, flatulence, neck stiffness, various anaemias, digestive disorders, and various skin diseases, diseases of intestines, swelling, gastritis, fever, rhinitis, and infertility.^[21] *Ayurveda* attaches importance to the material quality of food, but above all to the selection of food, its processing and preparation, and the principles of healthy eating. Therefore, the *Ayurvedic* approach to food and nutrition differs greatly from the traditional Western approach. The *Charaka Samhita* describes the eight principles of *Ahara Vidhi* viz.^[22]

- (1) *Prakriti* (Nature of food articles)
- (2) *Karana* (Preparation)
- (3) *Samyoga* (Combinations)
- (4) *Rashi* (Quantity)
- (5) *Desha* (Habitat and Climate)
- (6) *Kala* (Time factor)
- (7) *Upayogasamstha* (Rules of use)
- (8) *Upayokta* (The user)

Regarding the *Ahara-Matra*, *Acharya Charaka* states that food should be taken according to the digestive and metabolic capacities (*Agnibala* and *Srotobala*), which vary according to the season and the age of the individual. The amount of food consumed depends directly on the human digestive power (*Agnibala*). The gastric capacity is divided into three parts, two of which should be filled with solid and liquid food, and one part should be left for the free circulation of the stomach and air to facilitate the digestive process.^[23] When consumed, consumption of water in small amounts stimulates digestion and ingestion after a meal leads to *Sthaulya* (obesity).^[24] Processing of food involves transmuting the properties of *Dravya*. Methods for preparing various types of food such as *Manda* (rice water, which is the clear supernatant of the watery part (excluding rice) in which the rice is cooked), *Peya* (rice soup), *Yavaagu* (porridge flour, which is thicker than *peya*), *Vilepi* (thicker soup than *Yavaagu*) *Yusha* (lentil soup), mentioned in the *Samhitas*. Different *Ahara kalpans* of the same *Dravya* differ in their properties and digestibility. The human body is the result of consumption in four forms, namely: *Ashita* (Cibo/eatables), *Peeta* (Liquid), *Ledha* (Mastication) and *Khadita* (Linctus) and *Ledha* (Mastication).^[25]

DISCUSSION

Health life depends only on what we eat. Strength, health, and our life depend on *Agni*. But *Agni* is also constantly replenished through the food we eat. Therefore, in order to maintain *Sama Agni*, it is important to eat balanced foods. A balanced diet is important and this is my medicine. Wholesome diet is a fundamental pillar for healthy human life and human development. Most incurable diseases are caused by improper nutrition. An intelligent and autonomous person should consume conductive foods in sufficient quantities and at the right time. How much food you eat again depends on your digestive pattern. Digestive and metabolic performance still varies according to the season and the age of the individual. Threating habits established today influence eating habits and health later in life. The standard amount of food for a human should be determined based on their digestive capacity. The long-term effects of malnutrition (cognitive impairment) can be prevented or reduced with appropriate nutrition and environmental support.

CONCLUSIONS

Ayurveda places great importance on good nutrition to maintain and promote health and to prevent and cure

disease. Healthy and unhealthy food ingredients (*Pathya* and *Apathya*) were defined for all diseases. When a person suffers from any disease, he strictly adheres to the diet rules. Sufficient food intake ensures strength, vitality, a good complexion, and healthy tissue. In order to live a healthy life, you must live in harmony with his environment and adapt to one's bodily type. Up to 6 months, the baby should be exclusively on mother's breast milk, while up to 2 years old, they are fed *Peya* and *Lehya Ahara* along with milk, and after 2 years old, children can eat all forms of *Ahara*, which is beneficial for the children growth and development.

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