

IMPORTANCE OF AYURVEDIC DIETARY GUIDELINES W.S.R. To AAHAARA VIDHI VIDHANA***¹Dr. N. R. Navoday Raju and ²Joshi B. Ravi and ³Vaishnav Mauli**¹Assistant Professor, Department of Kriya Sharir, Parul Institute of Ayurveda & Research, Parul University, Ishwarpura, Waghodia, Vadodara-391760, Gujarat.²Assistant Professor, Department of Rachana Sharir, Parul Institute of Ayurved & Research, Parul University, Ishwarpura, Waghodia, Vadodara-391760, Gujarat.³Assistant Professor, Department of Prasuti Tantra and Stree Roga, Parul Institute of Ayurved & Research, Parul University, Ishwarpura, Waghodia, Vadodara-391760, Gujarat.***Corresponding Author: Dr. N. R. Navoday Raju**

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Article Received on 21/11/2019

Article Revised on 11/12/2019

Article Accepted on 01/01/2020

ABSTRACT

Aahaara (food) is an essential element for creation and continuation of life. There are many principles prescribed in the form of dietary guidelines but Ayurvedic dietary guidelines are unique in their own way. Aahaara Vidhi Vidhana focuses on multi-dimensional health benefits of Aahaara. This article aims at understanding the importance of Ayurvedic dietary guidelines with respect to vast health benefits.

KEYWORDS: *Aahaara, Diet, Vidhi, Vidhana, Food.***INTRODUCTION**

Aahaara, Vihaara and Brahmacharya are considered as Trayopasthambha (key pillars/ sub-pillars) for life. Aahaara which is the basic need nourishes the body, psyche and soul. It is considered as Prana (life) as the whole survival is depends on it.^[1] The relation between appropriate dietary habits and health is coherent.^[2,3] Aahaara is considered as Mahabhaishajya as it decides the illness and wellness.^[4] Changed food habits or lifestyle is the important factor in the morbid manifestations.

Ayurveda and contemporary science gives many guidelines or do's and don'ts for food consumption but Ayurvedic "Aahaara Vidhi Vidhana (guidelines of food consumption).^[5] of Acharya Charaka (dietetic guidelines) are unique.

Aahaara Vidhi Vidhana (Dietary Guidelines)^[6]***Ushnam Ashneeya* (Consumption of Hot/ Warm Food)**

- Ushna Aahaara stimulates the Jatharaagni (digestive fire)
- Food is better digested if it is consumed at body temperature
- Ushna Aahaara pacifies Vata and Kapha
- It gives rise to Vatanulomana by clearing Srotorodha (obstruction in channels)
- Heating Aahaara kills microbes

- Digestion of cold food consumes more heat of the body thereby takes more time for digestion and leads to loss of energy
- Drinking Ushnodaka (hot/ warm water) is recommended as it has Svaadu Vipaka (sweetness at the end of digestion) and Sheeta Veeryatmaka (cold in potency) even though used hot. Injudicious use of Ushnodaka does not cause much disturbances in digestion.^[7]

***Snigdham Ashneeya* (Consumption of unctuous food)**

- Ksheera-Ghrita consumption is a part of Rasayana Therapy.^[8]
- Snigdha Guna in Aahaara is because of fats/ lipids
- Fats are mainly consumed in the form of oil (Taila)/ ghee (Ghrita).
- Sneha Guna of Taila pacifies Vata, Snigdha Guna of Ghrita empowers Jatharaagni (digestive fire) and alleviates Vata and Pitta.^[9]
- Ghrita enhance the growth, provides strength to the senses, improves complexion and lustre of body.
- Essential fatty acids are needed for growth, development, building of neurons and brain.
- HDL (High Density Lipoproteins) prevents the risk of heart diseases.^[10] Metabolic activities get boosting from fatty acids.
- Dietary fat helps in the breakdown of existing fat by the activation of PRAR- α and fat burning pathways through liver.^[11]

- Vitamin A, D, E, K are fat soluble which are immunity boosters
- Vitamin E is an excellent antioxidant.^[12]
- Vitamin D is essential for calcium absorption (provides strength to the bones)
- Monounsaturated fatty acids help in stabilizing blood sugar levels.^[13]
- Omega-3 fatty acids satisfy hunger and gives satiety, thereby obesity can be better managed.^[14]
- It boosts serotonin levels, enhancing calmness and elevation of mood.^[15]
- Ruksha Aahaara is not health promoting in nature.

Maatraavat Ashneeya (Balanced Diet)

- Lakshana (characteristics) Matraavat Aahaara Sevana (consumption of food) are as follows: freedom from distress in stomach, gratification of the senses, absence of any cardiac discomfort, sense of ease in standing, sitting, lying down, walking, inhaling, exhaling and talking.^[16]
- Sarvagraha (whole amount) Maatra i.e. appropriate food consisting of variety of ingredients consisting of all micro and macro elements for proper nourishment of the body.
- If food article is heavy, Matra (quantity) should be three fourth or half of the stomach capacity.^[17]
- Balanced food doesn't vitiate Dosha, Dhatu and Mala.

Jeernam Ashneeya (Consumption of food after digestion of previous meal)

- Intake of food before the digestion of previous meal leads to manifestation of Aama, which is the main cause for many diseases
- Timely meal is health promoting.^[18]

Veerya Aviruddham Ashneeya (Intake of food as per Compatibility with respect to Potency)

- Veerya (potency) is the power of the substance by which action takes place.
- Consumption of food which is compatible for the body gives health and incompatible food produces different ailments.^[19]

Ishtadeshe Ishtasarvopakaranam Cha Ashneeya (Eating in a Comfortable place with proper accessories for food intake)

- One should consume food under stress-free environment which improves the consciousness about quantity of consumption thereby limits the quantity.
- Over consumption of food is the root cause for many diseases.^[20]

Na Atidhutam Na Ati Vilambitam Ashneeya (Not consuming too fast or too slow)

- It will direct the food to pass through the proper tract (avoiding choking, infection of respiratory tract etc.) thereby homogeneously mix with different

enzymes of digestion which is the prerequisite for easy digestion.

- Eating food with optimum time limits the over eating, boosts better absorption and gives satiety.^[21,22]
- If one consumes food too slowly, food will get cold and digestion gets delayed, Satiety gets disturbed, food may not get mixed with enzymes properly.

Ajalpan Ahasan Tanmanaabhunjeeta (Eating without talking or laughing, with complete focus on food)

- One should consume food without conversing with anyone or without getting distracted from food by laughing, with complete focus on food to be eaten as it will allow Indriya to sense or feel the Roopa, Rasa and Gandha of Aahaara which is very essential for proper digestion.^[23]
- One may get afflicted with Chinta (worry), Shoka (sorrow), Bhaya (fear), Krodha (anger), Dukha (sadness) etc by conversing, laughing or being unfocussed while consuming the food, which leads to disturbances in the process of digestion.^[24] so, better avoid them.

Aatmaanaamabhisameekshya Bhunjeeta Samyak (Eating after analyzing one's own needs)

- One should consume Aahaara only when he or she is hungry.^[25]
- One should consider Satmyata, Prakruti, Agni, Bala, Shareera Avastha, Vyadhyavastha, Vaya etc., before consuming the food
- One should not consume food beyond his or her need or requirement.

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic dietary guidelines for enhanced, easy, timely digestion, absorption and assimilation the consequences of improper eating and drinking habits can be avoided through. One can get benefitted in many other ways as these dietary guidelines are having multi-dimensional benefits. This avenue demands vigorous research works to understand vast dimensions of applicability in clinical/preclinical areas.

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