



AYURVEDIC NUTRITION

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ABSTRACT

Nutrition is very important in Ayurvedic living. Ayurveda emphasizes "Ahara" (diet) and "Drava" (liquid) as means to a healthy life, health, and wellness. Food that is nutritious and healthy nourishes the mind, body, and spirit. Ayurveda says that, while each person's digestive capacity varies, the quality and the right quantity of food are required for a healthy life. Food, when consumed in sufficient quantities, offers strength, vitality, a healthy complexion, and promotes tissue health. It is difficult to understand Ayurvedic nutrition from the western point of view where quantity is determined by serving size and portion size or caloric intake. In contrast to western nutritional theory and the US diet guide, Ayurveda teaches that a diet can be vegetarian (plant-based) or non-vegetarian (animal-based), and that portion size should be personalized for each individual according to their needs, body foundation (dosha), and agnibal (digestive power). Ayurveda emphasizes that a diet must be properly selected and wisely formulated, not only based on a person's physical conditions, but also taking into account the body type (pita, kapha, or vata) and should complement seasonal and daily changes, as well as other natural factors that surround an individual. According to Ayurveda, eating wholesome food promotes health, but consuming unwholesome food produces disease. Food is classified according to its action on the individual and is determined by its unique properties, which include ras (taste), virya (active component or potency), vipak (post-digestive effect), and prabhav (pharmacological effect).

KEYWORDS: ayurveda dietetics, balanced diet, nutrition, etc.

INTRODUCTION

The human body requires food to provide energy for all life process and for growth, repair and maintenance of cells and tissues. The dietetic needs vary according to age, sex and occupation. A balanced diet contains different types of foods in such quantities and proportions that the need of the body is adequately met. Eating a well-balanced diet on a regular basis and staying at an ideal weight are critical factors in maintaining the emotional and physical well-being. In Ayurveda Diet forms the important component of life as it is included in the three pillars of life (*Traya-pastambha*).

PANCHAMAHABHOOTA THEORY

Any material in the universe, according to Ayurveda is composed of five basic elements, the *Pancha Mahabhootas*, namely:

- Earth (*Prithvi*)
- Water (*Ap*)
- Fire (*Teja*)
- Air (*Vayu*)
- Ether (*Akasha*)

including the human body and the food. Planning and indulging in the diet balancing these elements maintain the homeostasis of the body.

आहारसम्भवं वस्तु रोगाश्चाहारसम्भवाः।

हिताहितविशेषाच्च विशेषः सुखदुःखयोः॥ (p0 lw0 27@45)

Ahara is not only needed for the continuity of life, but for Bala, Varna, Upachaya etc. also. The proper diet if taken in proper manner will lead to better health.

THEORY OF TRIDOSHAS

The human body is similarly constituted from *Panchamahabhootas*. The Biological Humors (*Tridoshas*) i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta* & *Kapha* which constitutes the body is also made up of *Panchamahabhootas*. As it is mentioned that; *Vata* is made up of *Vayu* and *Akasha mahabhoota*, *Pitta* is made up of *Agni mahabhoota* and *Kapha* is made up of *Jala* and *Pruthvi mahabhoota*. Each food article either has *Dosha* aggravating or pacifying or balancing action on human body. To keep the balance of *Doshas* (health) disturbed due to various factors like season, age etc. Ayurveda teaches that a diet can be

vegetarian (plant-based) or non-vegetarian (animal-based), and that portion size should be personalized for each individual according to their needs, body foundation (dosha), and agnibal (digestive power). Ayurveda emphasizes that a diet must be properly selected and wisely formulated, not only based on a person's physical conditions, but also taking into account the body type (pita, kapha, or vata) and should complement seasonal and daily changes, as well as other natural factors that surround an individual.

SIX BASIC TASTES (SHADRASA)

The food has six basic flavors, and each taste has a predominance of distinct Panchamahabhoota constituents, which have a special effect on the Tridoshas and Dhatus. It is stated that medications with a sweet, sour, and bitter taste alleviate Vata, astringent, sweet, and bitter tastes alleviate Pitta, and astringent, pungent, and bitter tastes alleviate Kapha dosha.

S.No.	Tastes	Elemental composition
1.	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet)	<i>prithvi</i> (earth), <i>apya</i> (water)
2	<i>Amla</i> (Sour)	<i>prithvi</i> (earth), <i>teja</i> (fire)
3	<i>Lavana</i> (Salt)	<i>apya</i> (water), <i>teja</i> (fire)
4	<i>Katu</i> (Pungent)	<i>teja</i> (fire), <i>vayu</i> (air)
5	<i>Tikta</i> (Bitter)	<i>vayu</i> (air), <i>akash</i> (space)
6	<i>Kashaya</i> (Astringent)	<i>prithvi</i> (earth), <i>vayu</i> (air),

BASICS OF AYURVEDIC NUTRITION

Most health problems are attributed to wrong eating habits and faulty cooking methods. Ayurveda deals with the *pathyavyavastha* (planning of diet: dietetics) in a scientific and holistic way based on certain principles with an emphasis on certain important aspects. Apart from the elemental constitution of food.

Another categorization is based on the consistency of food products:

- Peeta (liquid in consistency, advisable for the new-borns, children, and diseased people and advocated in summer),
- Leeda (Paste form that can be licked, advisable for children, convalescing, and old people),
- Ashita (Semi solids, advised for aged people)
- Khadita (solid food, advisable for young people with good digestion).

SEASONAL DIETETICS

The Ayurveda prescribes a specific diet for different seasons.

Dosha	The season for accumulation (Sanchaya)	The season for provocation (Prokopa)	Season for soothing (Shaman)
<i>Vata</i>	<i>Grishma</i> (mid-May to mid-July)	<i>Varsha</i> (mid-July to mid-September)	<i>Sharath</i> (mid-September to mid-November)
<i>Pitta</i>	<i>Varsha</i> (mid-July to mid-September)	<i>Sharath</i> (mid-September to mid-November)	<i>Hemanta</i> (mid-November to mid-January)
<i>Kapha</i>	<i>Hemanta</i> (mid-November to mid-January)	<i>Vasanta</i> (mid-March to mid-May)	<i>Grishma</i> (mid-May to mid-July)

SPRING SEASON- Bitter, hot, and astringent foods are recommended during the spring season, whereas salty, sour, and sweet foods should be avoided. Wheat, barley, honey syrup, fruits like mango, jack fruit, and so on, as well as meat from forest animals, too are suggested.

SUMMER SEASON - Because of the warm climate, the pitta becomes aggravated. As a result, a pitta-calming cold, liquid, sweet, and oily diet is recommended. A diet that is very hot, spicy, sour, and salty should be avoided.

It is interesting to learn that Ayurveda lays a great emphasis on the quality of nutritious food for:

- averting the degenerative changes caused by aging (Rasayana),
- convalescence after an illness (Balya),
- enhancing the defense system (Roga Pratibandhaka Rasayana),
- maintaining the vigor and vitality (Vajikarana),

Ayurvedic food and nutrition science have advanced to the point where Acharya Charaka has classified all food items into twelve categories: corns with bristles, pulses or legumes, meat, leafy vegetables, fruit, vegetables consumed raw, wines, water from various sources, milk and milk products, sugarcane products, food preparations, and accessory food items such as oils and salts, and has further subcategorized these food groups.

Rice, milk, ghee, sugar, grapes, coconut water, and forest animal flesh are recommended.

RAINY SEASON – Because of the cold climate, vata is aggravated during this season, so sweet, sour, and salty foods and drinks are preferred. Food should be hot, dry, fatty, and easy to digest. Soups made with preserved rice, wheat, barley, and mutton are recommended.

WINTER SEASON - An increase in Vata dosha develops owing to the cold, dry, chilly climate, hence a vataghna, pittavardhaka diet is advised. Hot, sweet, sour, and salty foods, as well as milk, sugarcane, rice, oils, and fats, are recommended.

AUTUMN SEASON - During this season, Pitta dosha becomes more aggravated. As a result, it is best to consume ghee that has been treated with bitter medications; purgation, bloodletting, cooling, and a light diet are also recommended. Bitter, sweet, and pungent diets are recommended.

CLINICAL NUTRITION

Pathya Kalpana

S NO.	Recipes for Clinical Nutrition	USES
1	Manda (Liquid form) The filtered liquid portion was obtained after boiling 1 part of Rice and 14 parts of water	<input type="checkbox"/> Carminative <input type="checkbox"/> Digestive
2	Peya (Semisolid) One part of rice and 14 parts of water boil into a watery consistency	<input type="checkbox"/> Quickly digestible <input type="checkbox"/> Stops loose motions, <input type="checkbox"/> Nourishes the tissues
3	Vilepi (Solid form) One part of rice and four parts of water cooked into a thick paste	<input type="checkbox"/> Nourishing <input type="checkbox"/> Conducive for Heart <input type="checkbox"/> Delicious <input type="checkbox"/> Diuretic
4	Yavagu (Solid form) One part of grain – rice etc. and six parts of water cooked into a thick paste	<input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening <input type="checkbox"/> Nourishing
5	Krishara (Solid form) Prepared by adding rice and green gram	<input type="checkbox"/> Quickly digestible <input type="checkbox"/> Supplements <input type="checkbox"/> Carbohydrate <input type="checkbox"/> Protein

CONTINUOUS LOSS OF SOME BIOLOGICAL QUALITIES IN AGING: SUGGESTED AYURVEDIC NUTRITIONAL APPROACH

Decades	Age	Desired effect	Suggested interventions for prevention of Sequential loss of some biological qualities
First	0-10	Balya (childhood)	Vaca (<i>Acorus calamus</i>) Kasmari (<i>Gmelina arborea</i>)
Second	11-20	Vridhhi (Growth)	Asvagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>) Bala (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>)
Third	21-30	Chhavi (Beauty)	Amalaki (<i>Embllica officinalis</i>)
Fourth	31-40	Medha (Intellect)	Sankhapushpi (<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i>) Jyotismati (<i>Celastrus panniculatus</i>)
Fifth	41-50	Twacha (Skin health)	Bhringaraja (<i>Eclipta alba</i> Hassk)
Sixth	51-60	Dristi (Visual acuity)	Caksusya (<i>Cassia absus</i>) Triphala, Ghee
Seven	61-70	Shukra (Sexual Ability)	Atmagupta (<i>Mucuna prurita</i>) Asvagandha (<i>Withania somnifera</i>)
Eighth	71-80	Vikram (Physical endurance)	Comprehensive rasayana interventions to improve physical and psychological quality of life (QOL)
Ninth	81-90	Buddhi (Mental health and wisdom)	
Tenth	91-100	Karmendriya (Motor Activity)	

SUPERFOODS MENTIONED IN AYURVEDA

Plants/Interventions	Activity
Brahmi (<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>)	Anti-stress activity Improves cognitive functions and memory
Mandukparni (<i>Centellaasiatica</i>)	Alterative, common nervine tonic, cooling, cardio tonic
Amalaki <i>Embllica officinalis</i>	Immunomodulatory Adaptogenic Antioxidant Cardioprotective Neuroprotective\ Anti-cytotoxic
<i>Tinospora cordifolia</i> (Guduchi)	Hepatoprotective, Anti-inflammatory, Nutrient, Immunomodulator activity Immunostimulant activity (Activate Mononuclear cells to release cytokines)
Aswagandha (<i>Withania sominifera</i>)	Immunomodulatory Adaptogenic Immunomodulator, enhances the life span

	of patients having lower immunity
Tulasi (<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>)	Strong antioxidant activity in vitro and anti-lipid peroxidative effect in vivo which strongly suggest free radical scavenging as a major mechanism by which Ocimum products protect against cellular damage and tumor induction, Anti-stress
Haridra (<i>Curcuma longa</i>)	Anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, stimulant, tonic
Lasuna (<i>Allium sativum</i>)	anti-inflammatory, anti-oxidant, free radical scavenger, has hypoglycemic and hypocholesterolemic effect
Punarnava (<i>Boerhaavia diffusa</i>)	anti-inflammatory, antioxidant
Katuki (<i>Picrorhiza kurroa</i>)	Hepatoprotective, antioxidant, adaptogenic
Bhallataka (<i>Semicarpus anacardium</i>)	It showed anti-inflammatory properties against carrageenin, 5-HT and formaldehyde induced rat paw edema (acute anti-inflammatory studies
Chitraka (<i>Plumbago zeylanica</i>)	regression of tumor respectively.
Pippali (<i>Piper longum</i>)	Antioxidant activity
Shunthi (<i>Zinziber officinalis</i>)	Aromatic, carminative, digestive, stimulant Hypolipidaemic, hypoglycemic
Draksha (<i>Vitis vinifera</i>)	Nutritious, demulcent, antioxidant,

NUTRACEUTICALS/ RASAYANA

When food is being cooked or prepared using “scientific intelligence” with or without knowledge of how or why it is being used, the food is called “functional food”. Thus functional food provides the body with the required amount of vitamins, fats, carbohydrates, etc. for healthy survival. When functional food aid in the prevention and/or treatment of disease(s) and/or disorder(s) other than anemia, it is called a nutraceutical. E.g. fortified

dairy products (e.g., Milk), and citrus fruits (e.g., Orange juice)

These foods are reported to increase one's quality of life by protecting against internal and external influences. The use of nutraceuticals as recommended by Ayurveda can also be classified based on the individual's age, the season of intake, the time of consumption, physiological circumstances, and the target organ.

PATHYA'S

No	Hitakara diet as per Charaka	Botanical name etc	Main nutrient
1	Shastika & Sali (rice)	<i>Oryza sativa</i>	Carbohydrates
2	Mudga	<i>Phaseolus aureus</i>	Protein
3	Saindhava (Salt)	Rock salt	Salt (mainly sodium & chloride)
4	Amalaka (Amla)	<i>Embllica officinalis</i>	Vitamin (mainly C)
5	Yava (barley)	<i>Hordeum vulgare</i>	Calcium
6	Antariksha udaka	Rain water	water
7	Kshira (milk)	Milk	Protein
8	Ghrita (ghee)	Cow ghee	Fat
9	Jangala mamsa	meat of animals dwelling in arid climate	Protein
10	Madhu (honey)	Honey	natural sugars, minerals and vitamins, and even antioxidant properties

APATHYA'S (VIRUDDH AHAR)

Food with incompatible or opposite properties has a harmful effect on the body that aggravates Tridoshas, leading to various disorders viz: Gulma (Lump), Fever, Allergic Dermatitis, Eczema, Abscess, and other Skin diseases. It also destroys strength, vigor, memory, immunity etc.

Few contradictory combinations are:

1. Fish or its soup along with milk
2. Milk or milk products with alcoholic beverages
3. Radish consumed with milk
4. Lotus stem with honey etc.
5. Equal quantity of honey with ghee.

CONCLUSION

The major Ayurvedic texts go into insight about the food system, encompassing physiological, qualitative, quantitative, social, spiritual, emotional and psychological, and environmental factors. One of these guidelines is to eat with full eating awareness, which is referred to as "Tanmanabhunjita" (Charaka Vimana sthana 1/24). Each country has distinct eating customs that vary according to the area. As a result, in order to maintain excellent health, one should examine the type of food and the quantity appropriate to the environment (desha satmya). To maintain the equilibrium of the three biological humours, one must consume nutritious food in the appropriate quantity and at the appropriate time

(doshas). According to Ayurveda, eating before or after the customary meal times is unhealthy or "swasthyavighataka," which promotes bodily and mental sickness.

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