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AYURVEDA VIEW ON DIETICS AND IMPORTANCE OF DIETARY RULES TOWARDS THE HEALTH BENEFITS

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Abstract

The health of person depends on wholesome diet, environmental factor, congenial and social atmosphere. Diet (*Ahara*) is essential factor for the maintenance of health and long life. The nutritional diet that contains carbohydrates, proteins, fats and minerals, etc. with appropriate quantity of water offers optimum health benefits. Ayurveda put special emphasis on quality and quantity of dietary substances towards the management of good health status. The processing methods, combination of food articles, time of meal and way of eating, etc. also affects nutritional value of food materials. Health-promoting regime (*Pathya vyavastha*) involves disciplinary diet and lifestyle guidelines which help to establish homeostasis of bio-mechanism (*Dhatu-samyata*). The consumption of good quality food and dietary guideline prevent illness and promote general health.

Key-Words: *Ayurveda, Ahara, Diet, Nutrition, Dhatu*

Introduction

DR. VIKAS JAIN AND DR. PRAVEEN KUMAR MISHRA

AYURVEDA VIEW ON DIETICS

AND IMPORTANCE OF DIETARY RULES TOWARDS THE HEALTH BENEFITS

Food (*Ahara*) requires for energy of life, growth & development process, repair mechanism and maintenance of normal physiological functioning of body. Ayurveda considered diet as one of the *Upastambha* amongst the *Tri-Upastambha*. The *Ahara* associated with *Pancha Mahabhootas* i.e.; *Prithvi, Ap, Teja, Vayu* and *Akasha*. The consumption of appropriate food helps to balances *Tridoshas* i.e. *Vata, Pitta & Kapha* thus maintain good health status [1-4].

The improper diets may cause imbalances of *Doshas* leading to the adverse health effects and induces diseases. *Kala Yoga, Swabhava Samsiddhi, Ahara Sausthava* and absence of *Avighata*, etc. are the factors which affect growth of the body. Ingested food should be of good quality for promoting growth and development of body.

As per Ayurveda the nutritional value of food increases if consumed in proper quality, according to the constitution and digestive power of individual person. The seasonal variation and diseased state of person also affects requirement of dietary materials. The cooking procedures, timing of meal and combination of food ingredients affects quality of *Ahara* [5-7]. The awful dietary habit leads many pathological conditions and diseases associated with wrong dietary habits are depicted in **Figure 1**.



Figure 1: Common diseases associated with awful dietary habits

These disorders mainly arise due to the faulty diet habits and good dietary regimen (*Pathya*) can help to prevent consequences of such disorders. The balanced dietary habits help to maintain homeostasis of *Panchamahabhootas*; *Prithvi, Ap, Teja, Vayu* and *Akasha*. The food that affects *Vata* controls *Vayu* and *Akasha mahabhoota*, similarly diets which affect *Pitta* control *Agni mahabhoota* while *Kapha* balancing food maintains homeostasis of *Jala* and *Pruthvi mahabhoota*.

Food either aggravates *Doshas* or pacifies them, the *Rasa* and *Guna* of *Ahara* alter *Doshas* thus food containing appropriate combination of *Rasa* and *Guna* according to the season, age and *Prakriti* of individual maintains balance of *Doshas*. The food containing disproportionate amount of *Rasa* and *Guna* may aggravate specific *Doshas*, however other factors like environmental conditions, quantity of meal and timing of meal, etc. also play a vital role towards the physiological impacts of food materials [7-9].

The *Shadrasa* (six basic tastes) has predominance of particular elements thus food containing specific *Rasa* affects *Panchamahabhootas*, *Tridoshas* & *Dhatus*. The *Rasa* of foods related with *Panchamahabhootas* as follows:

- ✓ *Madhura Rasa* predominant with *Prithvi & Aap Mahabhootas*
- ✓ *Amla Rasa* predominant with *Prithvi & Agni Mahabhootas*
- ✓ *Lavana Rasa* predominant with *Aap & Agni Mahabhootas*
- ✓ *Katu Rasa* predominant with *Agni & Vayu Mahabhootas*
- ✓ *Tikta Rasa* predominant with *Vayu & Akash Mahabhootas*
- ✓ *Kashaya Rasa* predominant with *Prithvi & Vayu Mahabhootas*

As mentioned above that taste of food is related with *Mahabhootas*, similarly these *Rasa* also affect *Doshas*. The food possessing sweet, sour and salty taste may alleviate *Vata*, while foods having astringent, sweet and bitter tastes may alleviate *Pitta* and food articles having astringent and pungent tastes alleviate *Kapha dosha*. Therefore one should consume food according to his/her *Doshic* predominance [8-12].

Ayurveda described different attributes related to the foods which may affects quality and health impacts of food articles:

- ✚ Qualitative characteristics of the food
- ✚ Processing of food
- ✚ *Samyoga* (mixing of food articles)
- ✚ *Rashi* (quantity of food)
- ✚ *Desha* (natural habitat of person)
- ✚ *Kala* (timing of meal & seasonal variation)
- ✚ *Upayoga Samstha* (variable digestibility of different food articles)
- ✚ *Upayokta*

Ahara and impact on mind:

1. *Satvik diet*

Diet recommended for keeping healthy mind containing vegetarian, fresh and healthy food articles.

2. *Rajasik diet*

Diet refers for *Raja* (emperor) containing spicy, sour, hot and salty food articles which excites mind and causes hyperactivity.

3. *Tamasik diet*

Diets which causes lethargic mind containing oily, heavy and spicy foods that deteriorate mind activity.

Forms of food as per Ayurveda:

- ❖ *Ashitam* means eatables foods
- ❖ *Khaditam* means mistakable foods
- ❖ *Peetam* means drinkable foods and beverages
- ❖ *Leedham* means licking form principles of diet

Dietary Rules:

- ✓ One should take hot, unctuous and fresh food in proper quantity.

- ✓ Food should not be contradictory in potency.
- ✓ One should take food according to his/her *Prakriti*.
- ✓ One should consume food only when previously ingested food gets digested.
- ✓ Food should be consumed at proper place without talking and laughing while eating meal.
- ✓ One should pay attention to the meal while eating.
- ✓ The quantity and quality of food should be optimum enough so to get notorious value of consumed diet.
- ✓ Easily digestible, energetic and compatible diet advises by Ayurveda philosopher.
- ✓ One should avoid *Viruddha Ahara* which contradictory and may cause harmful effects.

Seasonal-dietetics:

- Hot, astringent and bitter diet advises in spring season.
- Wheat, barley, fruits and liquid diet advises in summer season.
- *Vatashamaka* sweet, salty and sour foods along with drinks are preferred in rainy season.
- *Vataghna* and *Pittavardhaka Ahara* is preferred in winter season.
- Light, bitter, pungent and sweet diets are advises in autumn season.

Categories of food:

1. *Shuka dhanya*
2. *Shami dhanya*
3. *Mamsa varga*
4. *Shaka varga*
5. *Phala varga*
6. *Harit varga*
7. *Madya varga*
8. *Ambu varga*
9. *Goras varga*

10. *Ikshu varga*

11. *Krittana varga*

12. *Ahara yogi varga*

Conclusion

Ayurveda suggested that one should consume balanced diet which comprises of rice, green gram, fruit, milk, rock salt, ghee, meat, milk products and fluid diets, etc. The balance diet is essential for vital functioning of body. The *Hita Ahara* (wholesome diet) gives energy, protects against common disease and provides nourishment to the *Dhatus*. Correct cooking and preparation methods along with appropriate quantity of food offer several health benefits. As per Ayurveda one should consume food in proper manner according to the dietary guideline of Ayurveda.

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