



Review Article

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## A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF *VIRUDDHA AHARA* WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MODERN FOOD IN MANIFESTATION OF VARIOUS DISEASES

\*Dr. Mayank Kumar Dubey<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Preeti Sharma<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Meenakshi Chaudhary<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PG Scholar, Department of Samhita Siddhant Evam Sanskrit, Kunwar Shekhar Vijendra Ayurved Medical College & Research Centre, Gangoh, Saharanpur, U.P.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor & Guide, Department of Samhita Siddhant Evam Sanskrit, Kunwar Shekhar Vijendra Ayurved Medical College & Research Centre, Gangoh, Saharanpur, U.P.

<sup>3</sup>Professor & Co-Guide, Department of Roga Nidan Evam Vikriti Vigyan, Kunwar Shekhar Vijendra Ayurved Medical College & Research Centre, Gangoh, Saharanpur, U.P.

\*Corresponding Author's Email ID: dr.mayankdubey878787@gmail.com

### ABSTRACT

A key idea in Ayurveda, *Viruddha Ahara* (incompatible dietary combinations) describes food interactions that weaken *Agni* (digestive fire), upset the balance of *Doshas* (*Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*), and encourage the production of *Ama* (metabolic poisons). These disruptions are thought to play a major role in the development and course of a number of systemic illnesses. Inappropriate food pairings have a negative impact on digestion, metabolism, and tissue nourishing, according to traditional Ayurvedic scriptures. This perspective is supported by new findings from contemporary nutritional science and biochemistry, which show that some incompatible eating habits may reduce enzymatic activity, change gut microbiota, cause oxidative stress, and contribute to metabolic disorders like obesity, diabetes mellitus, and cardiovascular diseases. The Ayurvedic focus on *Agni* and toxin accumulation is similar to modern knowledge of microbial balance, inflammatory pathways, and digestive efficiency.

The danger of dietary incompatibility is further enhanced in the modern period due to an increased reliance on processed and quick foods brought on by changes in lifestyle and

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sensory preferences. Therefore, maintaining gut integrity, metabolic balance, and general health depends on identifying and avoiding *Viruddha Ahara*. Maintaining dietary compatibility is essential for maintaining physical stability and preventing sickness because nutrition is one of the *Trayopastambha* (three pillars of life). **Keywords:** Nutritional incompatibility, metabolic problems, *Agni*, *Ama*, *Viruddha Ahara*, *Dosha* imbalance.

## INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a holistic system of healthy living that covers social, mental, and physical well-being rather than just being a medicinal science. Its main goal goes beyond treating illness to include maintaining and advancing health. Ayurveda provides a methodical approach to attaining longevity and a disease-free existence by stressing preventive principles and balanced living. The three supporting pillars (*Trayopastambha*), *Ahara* (food), *Nidra* (sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (controlled lifestyle), are among the basic determinants of health that Ayurveda describes. *Ahara* is the most significant of them since it directly affects metabolism, digestion, tissue nourishing, and general health. Ayurveda views food as a multifaceted entity characterized by its attributes (*Guna*), potency (*Veerya*), post-digestive effect (*Vipaka*), and compatibility rather than only in terms of macronutrients like proteins, lipids, and carbs. Proper diet sustains *Agni* (digestive fire) and supports the formation of healthy *Dhatus* (body tissues)<sup>1</sup>.

*Viruddha Ahara*, or incompatible food combinations, is a unique dietary theory that the classical Acharyas explain. It describes eating habits that include poor timing, inappropriate amounts, bad processing techniques, improper combinations, and seasonal mismatch. Such incompatibility causes *Dosha* imbalance, disturbs *Agni*, and causes *Ama* (metabolic poisons) to build up. Acharya Charaka elaborates that regular consumption of incompatible foods predisposes individuals to various systemic disorders<sup>2</sup>.

*Viruddha Ahara* is thought to negatively impact several physiological systems and impede metabolic processes when used continuously. Its long-term effects are attributed in classical descriptions to disorders of the circulatory, neurological, immunological, endocrine, and digestive systems. Even though some incompatible combinations might not cause symptoms

right away, long-term usage of them can eventually lead to pathological alterations. Therefore, understanding food–food interactions and their systemic implications is essential for preventing disease and maintaining holistic health<sup>3</sup>.

“प्रयोजन चास्य स्वस्थस्य स्वास्तरक्षणम् आतुरस्य विकारप्रशमनं च॥” (च.सू. 30/26)

“आयुः कामयमानेन धर्मार्थं सुखसाधनम्। आयुर्वेदोपदेशेषु विधेयः परमादरः॥” (अ.ह.सू. 1/2)

The two main goals of Ayurveda are to protect a healthy person's health and to help those who are ill. In this context, diet plays a central role in both prevention and therapy. *Desha* (habitat), *Kala* (time/season), *Agni* (digestive capacity), *Matra* (quantity), *Satmya* (adaptation), *Dosha*, *Sanskara* (processing), *Veerya* (potency), *Koshta* (bowel nature), *Avastha* (personal condition), *Krama* (sequence), *Parihara* (restrictions), *Upachara* (management), *Paaka* (cooking method), *Sampad* (quality), and *Vidhi* (rules of intake) are some of the eighteen types of *Viruddha Ahara* (incompatible diet). These classifications highlight the multifactorial nature of dietary incompatibility<sup>4</sup>.

According to Acharya Charaka, *Viruddha Ahara* refers to eating habits that should be avoided since they disrupt the *Dosha* equilibrium and hinder digestion. The detrimental effects of unsuitable foods may be exacerbated in people who are suffering psychological stress or emotional disorders because they may be more susceptible to compromised digestive function. Acharya Sushruta's definition of health encompasses physical, mental, and functional well-being, thereby reinforcing the importance of proper dietary conduct in maintaining systemic balance<sup>5</sup>.

The main metrics used by modern nutritional science, especially dietetics, to assess food include calories, macronutrients, vitamins, and minerals. Although these factors are significant, a diet's wholesomeness cannot be fully determined by them. Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on time, individual suitability, dietary compatibility, processing techniques, and nutritional makeup. Concerns about dietary incompatibility and metabolic imbalance are raised by the modern lifestyle's increased use of processed and fast foods, such as pizza, burgers, fried snacks, and refined flour products. People who eat freshly made meals at home on a regular basis typically have better digestive health than people who eat a lot of packaged or restaurant food. Improper dietary habits such as *Samashana* (incompatible combinations),

*Adhyashana* (overeating before digestion of previous meal), and *Vishamashana* (irregular eating patterns), along with *Viruddha Ahara*, can disturb normal physiological processes. For example, certain food combinations may alter nutrient bioavailability or produce harmful metabolites during processing. Excessive deep-frying may generate toxic compounds such as acrylamide, which are associated with long-term health risks. Thus, both classical principles and contemporary evidence highlight the importance of mindful dietary practices<sup>6</sup>.

Food is often divided into two categories by Ayurveda: *Hita Ahara* (wholesome) and *Ahita Ahara* (unwholesome). Food promotes development, tissue repair, reproduction, and vitality when it is consumed in accordance with recommended dietary requirements. On the other hand, problems caused by incompatibilities, contamination-related illnesses, food intolerance, nutritional deficiencies, and metabolic changes might result from breaking dietetic principles. In order to avoid illness and maintain good health, it is crucial to comprehend the idea of *Viruddha Ahara*.

### According to Acharya Charaka

यत्किञ्चिद्दोषमुत्क्लेश्य न निर्हरति कायतः । आहारजातं तत् सर्वमहितायोपपद्यते ॥ (च.सू. 26/85)

*Viruddha* (incompatible) refers to foods or medicines that disrupt the *Doshas* from their native locations without aiding in their appropriate removal from the body. Because these agents mobilize the *Doshas* but are unable to adequately discharge them, they aggravate them, leading to imbalance and pathological alterations.

### AIM & OBJECTIVE

1. To thoroughly describe how *Viruddha Ahara* causes the illness.
2. To highlight how important it is to avoid consuming *Viruddha ahara* in the modern era.
3. To raise public knowledge of *viruddha ahara* and the illnesses it causes.
4. To assess the Ayurvedic notion of *Viruddha Ahara*

### DISCUSSION

One of the most unique and preventive dietary concepts in Ayurveda is the idea of *Viruddha Ahara*. This idea stresses compatibility, digestive capacity, processing techniques, timing, and individual constitution in contrast to a solely nutritional assessment of food. Its mode of

action, preventive significance, current relevance, and theoretical evaluation are all examined in this discussion.

1. To thoroughly describe how *Viruddha Ahara* causes the illness

Ayurvedic principles state that when Agni operates at its best and *Doshas* stay balanced, health is preserved. This equilibrium is upset on several levels by *Viruddha Ahara*. Incomplete digestion occurs when unsuitable meals are taken because they weaken the digestive fire (*Agnimandya*). *Ama*, a hazardous metabolic byproduct marked by heaviness, blockage, and altered tissue metabolism, is created as a result.

Moreover, some incompatible combinations cause *Doshas* to be displaced from their physiological locations without aiding in their removal. According to Acharya Charaka, unhealthy buildup is caused by substances that arouse *Doshas* but are unable to drive them out. *Srotorodha* (microchannel obstruction), poor tissue feeding (*Dhatu Kshaya* or *Vridhdhi*), and gradual systemic disease are the outcomes of this stasis.

From a contemporary standpoint, this process might be linked to metabolic dysregulation, oxidative stress, inflammatory reactions, altered enzymatic reactions, and compromised gut microbial balance. Long-term exposure to incompatible eating habits can progressively affect the immunological, cardiovascular, endocrine, and digestive systems, making people more vulnerable to lifestyle problems.

2. To highlight how important it is to avoid consuming *Viruddha ahara* in the modern era

The possibility of dietary incompatibility has greatly increased in modern culture due to growing urbanization, changed eating habits, erratic meal schedules, and a large reliance on manufactured and quick foods. Frequent consumption of reheated, deep-fried, preserved, or improperly combined foods weakens digestive efficiency and promotes metabolic imbalance<sup>7</sup>.

Avoiding *Viruddha Ahara* is in line with the Ayurvedic idea of preventive healthcare. Correcting dietary incompatibilities early on can retain *Agni*, maintain tissue integrity, and prevent chronic diseases instead of waiting for the disease to appear. Thus, the principle serves as a practical guideline for public health promotion in modern times<sup>8</sup>.

### 3. To raise public knowledge of *viruddha ahara* and the illnesses it causes

The average public still knows very little about food compatibility, despite growing awareness of calories and nutrients. Taste, convenience, and aesthetic appeal are more important to many people than digestibility and long-term effects. Educating people about inappropriate food combinations, improper cooking methods, and irregular eating patterns can significantly reduce preventable metabolic disorders<sup>9</sup>.

People might be empowered to make educated food decisions through awareness campaigns that combine traditional Ayurvedic principles with contemporary nutritional knowledge. It may be able to reconcile traditional wisdom with modern living patterns by highlighting straightforward instances of incompatible pairings and their potential long-term effects.

### 4. To assess the Ayurvedic notion of *Viruddha Ahara*

The idea of *Viruddha Ahara* exemplifies Ayurveda's customized and comprehensive approach to dietetics. The categorization into eighteen groups shows that incompatibility encompasses more than just dietary combinations; it also takes into account season, digestive ability, processing, and amount. This multifactorial assessment reflects a highly advanced understanding of metabolic individuality<sup>10</sup>.

When analyzed critically, *Viruddha Ahara* seems to cover concepts that are already acknowledged in contemporary science, such as interactions between foods, nutrient antagonism, the creation of hazardous byproducts during processing, and the influence of circadian rhythm on metabolism. Therefore, it is a preventive and logical dietary framework rather than a restrictive ideology.

## CONCLUSION

In Ayurveda, the idea of *Viruddha Ahara* offers a thorough explanation of diet-induced pathogenesis. Incompatible foods cause a series of metabolic problems that can lead to systemic illness by lowering *Agni*, producing *Ama*, and upsetting *Dosha* balance. Understanding and avoiding such dietary incompatibilities is crucial in the current era of processed meals and erratic lives. Sustaining holistic health and lowering the burden of lifestyle illnesses can be greatly aided by raising awareness and incorporating this idea into preventative healthcare practices.

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