

A REVIEW ON NITYA SEVANIYA AAHAR AS A BALANCED DIET IN AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Background: Ayurveda is science of life which describes three pillars of healthy and long life that need to be balanced viz Aahar, Nidra, Brahmacharya, which are also known as traya-upasthambha. The progressive sedentary lifestyle is leading to many non-communicable diseases (NCD) namely hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cancer, heart diseases and stroke. According to WHO, these diseases by far have the highest mortality, representing 71% of all deaths worldwide. These are also known as lifestyle disorders, which are caused due to faulty dietary habits, wrong behavioral patterns, disturbance in circadian rhythm and stress. Ayurveda has given the concept of santarpanjanya

vyadhis which can be related to the lifestyle disorders, the causes are consumption of guru, snigdha, madhur, piccihila aahar, excessive consumption of milk and its products, less physical activities and day sleeping patterns. The first upasthambha Aahar, plays an important role in preventing lifestyle disorders and maintaining good health. Hence, it's important to review the significance of food modalities described in ayurveda like nitya sevaniya aahar. Nitya sevaniya aahar is the complete, balanced foods described in ayurveda which can be consumed regularly by everyone as it completes the nutritional demands of body.

KEYWORDS: Nitya sevaniya Aahar, Diet, Non-communicable diseases, Lifestyle disorders.

INTRODUCTION

Aahar is first of the three traya-upstambha explained in Ayurveda. Traya upstambha are the three pillars important for leading a healthy life.^[1] The term Aahar is a broad term

encompassing variety of qualities in different foods, types of foods, quantity of food advised and use of food as medicine.

Nowadays, the progression of the sedentary lifestyle is leading to many non-communicable diseases (NCD) namely hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cancer, heart diseases and stroke. These diseases by far have the highest mortality, representing 71% of all deaths worldwide.^[2] Lifestyle disorders are caused by the errors made in the daily habits and are the result of any inappropriate association between people and their environment.

Some major causes of lifestyle disorders are faulty dietary habits, wrong behavioral patterns, disturbance in circadian rhythm and stress. Hence, the faulty dietary habits and unhealthy food plays an important role in the genesis of the lifestyle disorders. The faulty dietary habits include complex food regimens, overly processed food, wrong food combinations and overeating resulting in the pathogenesis of non-communicable diseases.

Ayurveda has explained the concept of santarpanjanya vyadhi which can be related to the lifestyle disorders, the causes are consumption of guru, snigdha, madhur, piccihila aahar, excessive consumption of milk and its products, decrease in physical activities and day sleeping.^[3]

Prevention of these non-communicable diseases can be done by correcting the errors in the dietary habits, practicing good behavioral practices and correction of the circadian rhythm. Thus, the healthy dietary habits can be encouraged by creating wide awareness about healthy, complete and simple foods.

Nitya sevaniya aahar is the complete, balanced food materials described in ayurveda which can be consumed regularly by everyone as it fulfills the nutritional demands of body. Nitya sevniya aahar are the local foods which are easily available and accessible to all in that geographical region. They are full of nutritional content and hence should be consumed regularly.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Thorough literary search has been done on various classical Ayurvedic texts regarding various diet and dietary preparations and online sites for their properties regarding their Ayurvedic and modern perspective and the balanced dietary supplements have been enlisted.

Review of nitya sevniya aahar

Nitya sevniya aahar

Aahar enlisted by Charaka^[4] and Ashtanghridaya^[5] under the title of nitya sevniya aahar and sevniya aahar respectively, have been tabulated as below.

Charaka	Ashtanghridaya
Shastika shali (Oryza sativa)	Shalidhanya (Oryza sativa)
Godhuma (Wheat, Triticum aestivum)	Godhuma (Wheat, Triticum aestivum)
Yava (Barley, Hordeum vulgare)	Yava (Barley, Hordeum Vulgare)
Mudga (Green gram, Vigna radiata)	Shashtika (Variety of rice)
Jangala mamsa (Meat of animals found in arid regions)	Jangala maas (Meat of animals found in arid regions)
Godugdha (Cow's milk)	Jivanti (Leptadenia Reticulata)
Ghrita (ghee)	Bala mulak (New Radish)
Antariksha jala (rain water)	Vasthukam (Indian goosefoot, Bathua)
Saindhava (rock salt from the Sindh)	Haritaki (Terminalia chebula)
Madhu (honey)	Amalaki (Indian gooseberry)
Amla (Indian gooseberry)	Mrudvika (Draksha)(Vitis Vinifera)
	Patol (Pointed gourd) (Trichosanthes dioica)
	Moong (Green gram) (Vigna radiata)
	Sharkara (Sugar) (Sucrose) (Saccharum officinarum)
	Ghrita (Ghee)
	Divyodhak
	Godugdha (Cow's Milk)
	Madhu (Honey) (Apis mellifera)
	Dadima (Pomegranate) (Punica granatum)
	Saindhav (Rock salt)

Modern concept of Superfoods/Whole foods

Nutrition and diet are immensely important for maintaining good health. Today for maintaining health, many fancy diet regimen are followed by people, but the different dietary

fads cannot undermine the value of the whole, natural, less processed food, as they are good in nutritional value and fulfill the essential nutritional requirement of the body.

Whole foods offer three main benefits over dietary supplements

- Greater nutrition- Whole foods are complex, containing a variety of the micronutrients a human body needs.
- Essential fiber- Whole foods, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes, provide dietary fiber. Dietary fiber can help reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, colorectal cancer, stroke and heart disease.
- Protective substances- Many whole foods contain chemicals that promote health, such as antioxidants — substances that slow down a natural process leading to cell and tissue damage.

The main aspects of dietary guidelines are listed below^[6]

- A diet consisting of foods from several food groups provides all the required nutrients in proper amounts.
- Cereals, Millets and Pulses are major sources of most nutrients.
- Milk which provides good quality proteins and calcium must be an essential item of the diet, particularly for infants, children and women.
- Oils and nuts are calorie-rich foods, and are useful for increasing the energy density and quality of food.
- Inclusion of eggs, flesh foods and fish enhance the quality of diet. However, vegetarians can derive almost all the nutrients from diets consisting of cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits and milk-based diets.
- Vegetables and Fruits provide protective substances such as vitamins/ minerals/ phytonutrients.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda majorly stands on two principles which are, prevention or maintaining the health and second the intervention for diseases in different forms like Shodhana, Nidan Parivarjan, Shamana, Rasayana, Pathya vyavastha, and Satvajaya. The basic principle regarding health is to maintain a proper, nutritious and complete aahar, as it is the first upstambh mentioned. Consumption of nutritious aahar ensures good health. The dietary guidelines of nutrition also suggest to take a complete balanced diet on a regular basis to

ensure good health. The nitya sevniya aahar comprises of all the factors suggested by the dietary guidelines which are in the form of essential and non-essential nutrients.

The complete and balanced diet comprises of macro and micro-nutrients. The macronutrients are carbohydrates, proteins, fats, whereas vitamins and minerals are called as micronutrients.

The nitya sevniya aahar described, comprises of all the components required to maintain a balanced and complete diet.

Components of balanced diet	Nitya sevniya aahar
Carbohydrates	Shastik shali, Yava, Godhum, Shalidhanya
Proteins	Green gram, jangala mamsa
Fats	Ghrita
Vitamins	Amalaki, draksha
Minerals	Saindhav, Madhu
Water	Antariksha jala

CONCLUSION

The aahar that possesses apt quality and quantity are the source of life and vitality for the all living beings. Complete and balanced diet is the fuel that maintains the agni, invigorates the mind, promotes proper distribution of body elements, vitality, complexion, and the acuity of sense organs. Conversely, unhealthy diet and lifestyle causes vitiation of dosha, dhatu and rasas, thus causing diseases.^[7]

The source of life for all living beings is food which is the primary need for all. Complexion, clarity, good voice, long life, strength and intelligence are all based on food.^[8] The Nitya Sevaniya Aahar is in itself a complete and a balanced diet that should be consumed by everyone. It fulfills the requirement of all the macro and micronutrients of our body. Hence, no other fancy supplements or fancy diets need to be consumed to sustain a good and healthy life.

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