

AYURVEDIC DIETARY PRINCIPLES FOR GUT HEALTH**Dr. Anjali Khadiya^{1*}, Dr. Rajesh Chandra Mishra², Dr. Komal Sharma³**

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurveda*, proper digestion is regarded as the foundation of overall health and well-being. To enhance digestion, it is important to understand the *Ayurvedic* concept of digestion, known as *Agni*. The Sanskrit term *Agni*, meaning “fire,” is considered the vital force of life. It is responsible not only for digesting food, but also for processing thoughts, emotions, and experiences. According to *Ayurveda*, weakened or disturbed *Agni* is the primary cause of disease and imbalance, and restoring digestive fire is the key step toward achieving balance and health.^[1]

INTRODUCTION

Ancient Indian texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana emphasize moderation, discipline, and purity in diet and

lifestyle as the foundation of health. The Bhagavad Gita highlights that balanced eating and living lead to harmony, while the Ramayana reflects the importance of simple, sattvic, and disciplined food habits.

Every food item has unique qualities (*guna, virya vipaka & rasa*). After entering the body, it first goes through digestion (*avasthapaka*), which results in the production of waste and essence (*sara* and *kitta*). The final digestive product undergoes *vipaka*, which is a transformation of the *sara* (essence). This specially altered essence is absorbed and assimilated. It circulates throughout the body and reaches various cells (*dhatu*) when

stimulated by *vyana vayu*. Karma of *guna* manifests in accordance with metabolic demands, depending on the destination it is destined to reach (*adhikarana*).

Depending on the nature of the properties, the corresponding *agantu dosa* is said to be increased if the *dravya* with particular properties are in excess. *Rasa*, *guna*, *virya*, and *vipaka* are not the effect (*phala*), but rather the functional elements (*karma*). The results of eating any *dravya* depend on a number of variables. Two different people may have different results after consuming a piece of halwa. The results are determined by the body's immuno-metabolic state, pre-existing pathology, digestive capacity, the amount of time food is consumed, habituation (*satmya*), etc. *ama* could be the outcome if the food is improperly transformed. *Ajirna* may occur if the food is not adequately digested during the *prapaka* phase. This is how the body starts an internal disease process. *Asatmya ahara* (incompatible diet) has characteristics that are antagonistic to the characteristics or makeup of that particular person's tissues, which leads to unfavorable outcomes.^[2] This is known as *viruddha*, or incompatibility. The final product will be stronger and more toxic. If left untreated, this could lead to a number of illnesses in the body.

Ayurveda further develops this concept by placing *Agni* (digestive fire) at the center of health. The classical principle

आहारशक्तितश्चेति... अभ्यवहरणशक्त्या जरणशक्त्या च परीक्ष्या बलायुषी' ह्याहारायत्ते
(च.वि.8/120)^[3]

states that the ability to consume and digest food determines strength (*bala*) and longevity (*ayu*).

Thus, gut health depends not only on diet but also on the efficiency of digestion, absorption, and assimilation.

Concept of Agni in Detail

In *Ayurveda*, *Agni* is classified into different types

यदन्नं देहधात्वोजोबलवर्णादिपोषकम् । तत्राग्निर्हेतुराहारान्न ह्यपक्वाद्रसादयः ॥ (च.चि.15/5)

भौमाप्याग्नेयवायव्याः पञ्चोष्माणः सनाभसाः । पञ्चाहारगुणान्स्वान्स्वान्पार्थिवादीन्पचन्ति हि
॥(च.चि.15/13)^[4]

Jatharagni – Primary digestive fire responsible for digestion in the gastrointestinal tract.

The digestive fire (*Agni*) is the main factor responsible for the nourishment of the body tissues (*Dhatus*), *Ojas*, strength, complexion, and other vital aspects through food; because from improperly digested food, *Rasa* and the other *Dhatus* cannot be formed.

Bhutagni – Digests the five elemental components of food.

The five Bhutagnis related to the elements earth, water, fire, air, and ether digest their respective similar qualities present in the food substances (*Parthiva*, etc.).

Dhatvagni – Governs tissue metabolism.

Among these, *Jatharagni* is the most crucial for gut health. Balanced *Agni* (*Samagni*) ensures proper digestion, while imbalanced states (*Mandagni*, *Tikshnagni*, *Vishamagni*) lead to disorders like indigestion, acidity, and irregular metabolism.

Pathyam

पथ्ये सति गदार्तस्य किमौषधनिषेवणैः।

पथ्येऽसति गदार्तस्य किमौषधनिषेवणैः॥ (वैद्यजीवन)

- If a patient follows a proper diet and lifestyle, what need is there for medicines?
- And if a patient does not follow a proper diet and lifestyle, what benefit can medicines provide?

Food & Nutrition

आहारः प्रीणनः सद्यो बलकृद्देहधारकः, आयुस्तेजः समुत्साहस्मृत्योजोग्निविवर्धनः (सु.चि. 24/68)^[5]

Food nourishes the body, gives immediate strength, and sustains life. It enhances longevity, vitality, enthusiasm, memory, vigor, and digestive power.

Food is referred to as *Hitaahaara* if it is wholesome (*hita*), moderately consumed (*mita*), and consumed on time (*kaala-bhuk*).

The science explains the advantages and disadvantages of various foods (including how they are prepared and consumed) with scientific justification (*Aahaara-vidhi-vishesha-aayatana*), allowing them to be used in accordance with the particular circumstances of each individual.

The quantity consumed (*maatras*), the season (*kaala*), the activities (*kriyaa*), the habitation (*bhoomi*), the body's state and stage (*deha*), and any pathological factors (*dosha*) or diseases (*avasthaantara*) can all have the opposite effects of being wholesome or unwholesome.

Therefore, a food item based on *rasa-pancaka* cannot be classified as wholesome or unwholesome without evaluating all the variables that impact the food item's proper action, absorption, and digestion in the particular intrinsic circumstances of that individual. A person consumes wholesome food if it not only keeps them in a state of homeostasis but also balances any physiological imbalances in their internal environment.

METHODS

This article is based on a qualitative review of *Ayurvedic* dietary principles and classical guidelines such as *आहार-विधि-विधान*, along with lifestyle insights from traditional texts.

तत्रेदमाहारविधिविधानमरोगाणामातुराणां चापि केषांचित् काले प्रकृत्यैव हिततमं भुञ्जानानां भवति।
उष्णं, स्निग्धं, मात्रावत्, जीर्णं, वीर्याविरुद्धम्, इष्टे देशे, इष्टसर्वोपकरणं, नातिद्रुतं, नातिविलम्बितम्,
अजल्पन्, अहसन्, तन्मना भुञ्जीत, आत्मानमभिसमीक्ष्य सम्यक्॥(च.वि.1/24)^[6]

Dietary Principles Considered

Warm (उष्ण) and unctuous (स्निग्ध) food

Proper quantity (मात्रा)

Eating after digestion of previous meal (जीर्ण भोजन)

Avoidance of incompatible foods (विरुद्ध आहार)

Mindful eating and daily routine (दिनचर्या)

Assessment of Digestive Strength (*Agni Pariksha*)

Abhyavaharana Shakti – Capacity to eat

Jarana Shakti – Capacity to digest

These parameters determine overall health and digestive efficiency.

RESULTS

Application of *Ayurvedic* dietary principles shows

- Enhanced Digestive Strength (*Agni Deepana*)

- Reduction in Digestive Disorders such as bloating and indigestion
- Improved Nutrient Absorption
- Better Gut–Mind Connection
- Detoxification and Regular Bowel Movements
- Impact on Modern Gut Health
- Improved gut microbiome balance
- Reduced inflammation
- Better metabolism and weight control
- Strengthened immunity.

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda emphasizes maintaining balanced *Agni* as the key to health. Teachings from the Bhagavad Gita highlight moderation, while the Ramayana demonstrates the value of simplicity and discipline in diet.

Herbs and Spices for Gut Health

Turmeric: Anti-inflammatory; heals gut lining

Ginger: Improves digestion and reduces bloating

Fennel: Relieves gas and supports digestion

Cumin: Enhances nutrient absorption

Coriander: Balances *Agni*

Aloe Vera: Cooling and soothing effect

Triphala: Detoxifies and regulates bowel movements.

Role of *Ama* (Toxins)

Improper digestion leads to formation of *Ama*, which:

Accumulates in the gut

Blocks bodily channels (*Srotas*)

Causes diseases like IBS, fatigue, and heaviness.

Lifestyle Recommendations for Better Gut Health

Follow *Dinacharya* (daily routine).

Drink warm water in the morning.

Avoid overeating and late-night meals.

Practice *yoga* and *pranayama*.

Engage in regular physical activity.

Maintain proper sleep cycle.^[7]

CONCLUSION

Ayurvedic dietary principles provide a holistic and time-tested approach to gut health. By focusing on *Agni*, proper eating habits, and natural herbs, *Ayurveda* ensures efficient digestion and disease prevention.

The combined wisdom of *Ayurveda*, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Ramayana highlights that true health lies in balanced digestion, mindful eating, and disciplined living, leading to overall well-being.

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