

ROLE OF AHAR & VIHAR IN THE LIFE LONGEVITY**Dr. Anil Khatana^{*1}, Dr. Samita Kalra² and Dr. Snehdeep Soni³**¹P.G. Scholar Dept. of Rasshastra and Bhaisajya Kalpana.²Lecturer M.D., PhD (Ayu) Dept. of Rasshastra and Bhaisajya Kalpana.³P.G. Scholar dept. of Rasshastra and Bhaisajya Kalpana.

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Ayurveda is a science of life in which emphasis is always given to maintenance of equilibrium of *dosha*, *dhatu* & *mala*. Life is sustained by tripod of life which is mental, physical and spiritual factors constituted by *sharir*, *indriya*, *satva*, *atma*. The same definition stated by *Aacharyasushruta* later on accepted by WHO in same manner. The first importance is always given to *Aahar* for the same purpose *aaharvidhivisheshayatan* is stated. Healthy living can be achieved through combination of *aahar*, *vihar* & *aushadhies* like *rasayana* & *vajikaran*. *Ayurveda* apart from providing maintenance, promotion of health and prevention of disease through diet, lifestyle, *dincharya*, *ritucharya*, *ratricharya* can also be practiced. The important

contribution of *Ayurveda* is introduction to a new concept of *Aacharrasayana* which has become the need of present era. The life style disorders ranging from diabetes mellitus, hypertension, obesity even upto cancer need correction of living patterns, sleeping patterns & food habits for the same purpose *Ayurveda* can be the best pathy to follow. Concept of healthy living in *Ayurveda* thus needs more elaboration which will be discussed through next headings.

KEYWORD: *Ayurveda*, tripod of life, *Aaharvidhivisheshayatan*, *Rasayana*, *vajeekaran* *Aacharrasayana*, life style disorders,

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a complete system of healthcare having a traditional system of medicine. It is actually derived from two Sanskrit words "ayus" and "ved" meaning life and knowledge

respectively It is a complete guide on food and nutrition giving you a glimpse of ancient traditions and practices on such related features like the right time to have food, food for different constitutions of person, effect of wrong type of diet on ones life, information on what to eat and the right way of eating.^[1]

A wholesome diet is essential not only for maintaining health but also for fighting diseases. All diseases are caused by aggravation of the three doshas i.e. vata, pitta and kapha which is mainly caused due to the aggravation caused by the intake of improper diet. Intake of proper quantity of food promotes longevity, does not aggravate the doshas, and maintains the digestive capacity.

Ayurveda has in detail provided the type of diet a person should intake depending upon his constitution. Apart from an intake of a wholesome diet one needs to observe some basic rules like food should be consumed only after the digestion of the previous meal, as then it promotes proper digestion, appetite and proper manifestation of the natural urges.

Information regarding food with contradictory potencies is also given that is best avoided. Then the importance of tastes and the power of liquids have also been provided in detail. According to Ayurveda, knowledge of the benefits of food is essential for good health. Apart from this one also needs to follow a disciplined life or atleast avoid habits that are bad for one's health.

The ayurvedic herbs help in promoting harmony of mind and prevent various disorders caused due to wrong dietary regime. Thus Ayurveda plays an important role in enhancing our lives.

ROLE / IMPORTANCE OF AHAR AND VIHAR IN LIFE LONGEVITY

The aim of Ayurveda is to promote and preserve the health, strength and longevity of the healthy person (swastha) and to cure the disease. In present era, diet and lifestyle are major factors thought to influence susceptibility to many diseases. Ayurveda places special emphasis on Ahara and believes that healthy nutrition nourishes the mind, body and soul. According to Ayurveda the living human body and diseases that afflict are both the product of Ahara. Ahara is considered as one of the key pillars (Upstambhas) of life in Ayurveda. In today's world, altered habits of food consumption may lead to various diseases. So many guidelines are explained in Ayurvedic texts, which are titled as Aharavidhi, where the laws of

do's and don'ts about diet and drinks are given. Ayurveda also recommends that you drink your water warm, as cold water can weaken your Agni (digestive fire). At the presents many newer food processing methods are in practices which are harmful to human being. That's why Ayurveda suggest that one should follow these guiding principles to prevent various diseases. On this background present study is taken to find out dietary directives in Ayurveda. Study also implies that there is extensive scope of scientific testing on this field in order to justify the textual references.

Ahara supplies bio-energy to the body. This bio-energy is supplied by proper and adequate nutrition in the form of it's essential constituents (viz.- protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, vitamins and water). In Ayurveda, Ahara as well as the method of its intake both have equal importance. Food which are consumed according to the prescribed methods (in the scriptures) are the seat for the satisfaction for the life. Ojas, teja ,dhatus, senses, bala (strength), Tushti (satisfaction of mind), Arogya (Health), are all dependant on food. They are fuel for the Agni (fire inside the body) which is the main basis for sustaining the body. According to Charaksamhita, the life of all living things is food and the entire world seeks food. Complexion, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength and intelligence are all established in food. In the present modern life style, we do not take care of our health and the consequences of our eating habits and other styles of life, which are harmful for us.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

A. Importance of Ahar (diet) in Ayurveda

- **Ahar vidhi vidhan**^[2]

Aharvidhividhan described in our classics which are the foundation of dietetics. It is total 12 in number. Which indicates the method of ahara, these are Ushna, Snigdha, Matravat, is consumed after the digestion of previously ingested food, Viryaavirudhaahara, Is to be taken into IsteDeshe where it is provided with Istasarvopakarana, Not to be taken speedily, Not to be takentoo slowly, Taken without taking with others, taken without laughing, Taken with the concentration of the mind.

1) Ushanam

Ushanam ahar is benifiacial for our life and longevity. It makes many changes in our body like tivra jathragini, vataanulomana and shleshamanam pariahs.^[3]

2) Snigdham ashniyat

The meal made should be Snigdha (Unctuous), The SnigdhaAhara causes Agnidedpana, fascilitate early digestion.^[4]

3) Matravat ashniyat

It means eat in adequate amount. The Lakshana by which a person can decide that is Matravat are, freedom from distress is in stomach, Gratification of the senses, absence of any cardiac discomfort, sense of ease in the standing, sitting, lying down, walking, inhaling, exhaling, talking.^[5]

4) Jirneshniyat

It means eat after digestion of the previous meal. If one takes food before the digestion of the previous meal, the digestive product of the previous food i.e. undigestedahara rasa of food taken afterwards it provokes all the doshas.

5) Virya avirudha ashniyat

Virya is the power of substance by which action takes place. Eat those food which are not antagonist in virya (potency).

6) Ishta deshe / ishta sarvopkarnam ashniyat

Eat in congenial place provided with all the necessary appurtenances. One eating at congenial place does not get depressed in the mind by the depressing emotions produced in unpleasant environment. Therefore should eat in congenial place and circumstances.

7) Na atidrutam ashniyat

Do not eat hurriedly. If food is taken too hurriedly it enters into a wrong way and will not be properly placed. Food taken in hurry can obviously affect the power of digestion by increasing the vata.

8) Na ativilambit ashniyat

Do not eat too leisurely, that food would become cold and there will be irregularity in digestion.

9) Ajalpana, 10) Ahasan and 11) Tanmanabhunjitam

Don't talk or laugh while eating, one who talks and laughs while eating is liable to suffer the same disorders as the one who eats too hastily. In this most important one is that the food

should be eaten with concentration. Talking and laughing divert the attention from the meals and the food is eaten too slowly or too hastily.

12) Aatanam abhisamikshya bhunjitam

Eat rightly, considering your constitution. These were the dietic rules for both healthy and unhealthy persons but Sushruta has given DwadashaAshanaPravicharana especially for unhealthy people. These pravicharana facilitate the use of different type of ahara and aharavidhi according to the status of health of the person. According to CharakAcharya the food eaten by one with chinta (Anxiety), Shok(Grief), Bhay (Fear), Krodh (Anger), Dukha (Pain), sedentary habits or keeping awake at night, though it is prescribed diet and is eaten with strict regard to measure, will fail to be digested properly.

• **WRONG EATING HABITS IN PRESENT ERA-**

- 1) Eating when not hungry
- 2) Eating soon after meal
- 3) Eating at the wrong time of the day
- 4) Eating incomplete food combinations
- 5) Overeating
- 6) Eating too much heavy too little light food
- 7) Eating hurriedly
- 8) Emotional eating
- 9) Eating food one cannot digest
- 10) Eating when constipated
- 11) Drinking cold or chilled water, especially during meal
- 12) Too much water or no water at all during a meal
- 13) Preserved and stale food
- 14) Frozen food
- 15) Too spicy, sour, salty food

B. Importance of Vihar (lifestyle) in Ayurveda^[6]

Lifestyle (or *Vihar*) is a cumulative product of your natural physical capacity at co-ordination with its mental functioning; consisting of habits, behaviour, everyday diet and living pattern, family history and the environment in which you grow.

The modern world is currently facing an epidemic of lifestyle related diseases like diabetes, obesity, heart diseases, etc., which primarily result from stress, improper diet and irregular or sedentary lifestyle (lack of discipline and physical activity). Ayurveda believes that in order to achieve and maintain healthy living (*Arogya*), it is essential to practice a healthy *Vihar*. Due to this, certain healthy practices to gain a *Swasthvritti* or a healthy lifestyle are recommended by Ayurveda. Some of these prominent practices are discussed below.

i) *Dinacharya* (Daily regimen)

Dinacharya means healthy and sustainable pattern of lifestyle obeying the biological cycles of nature. To achieve this, Ayurveda prescribes a specific routine in general, also taking into consideration the *Prakriti* or constitution of every individual. *Dinacharya* practises include waking up early in the morning, elimination of our natural wastes, maintaining oral hygiene (cleaning teeth and tongue, gargling etc.), exercising regularly, body massage, bathing, clothing, eye care, nasal care, etc.

ii) *Rutucharya* (Seasonal regimen)

According to Ayurveda, the *three doshas* and the *ritu* (seasons) are interlinked. Health is affected by the nature and climate of outer environment which influences our body. For example, when the air is damp, cold and wet, it increases these qualities in the body leading to aggravation of *kapha*. This gives rise to cold and cough during winter. Thus, you need to change their diet and lifestyle practices in response to climatic or seasonal changes in heat, cold or rain.

iii) *Nidra* (sleep)

Lack of a deep, restful sleep is an indication of stress and unhealthy living. Ayurveda believes that getting an 8-hour sleep should be less important than getting quality sleep, which is possible only when the mind completely dissociates itself from the senses. Quality sleep recharges and nourishes the mind and improves both short and long term mental powers. Therefore, a regular pattern of quality sleep should be maintained.

iv) *Sadvritta* (Code of Conduct)

Good behaviour is considered as *Sadvritta*. For maintaining healthy sense organs and the mind, you should follow certain codes of conduct such as being honest & truthful, having morals, avoiding being greedy, and avoiding hatred and jealousy. Also maintaining general hygiene, diet, sexual life and exercise can prevent lifestyle disorders.

v) Yoga & Dhyana (Meditation)

‘Yoga’ in Sanskrit means ‘union’. It means the act of combining the physical self with the mind through exercise. Yoga stimulates your concentration & can help eliminate toxins from your body. It is also known to produce harmony between the body and nature through the three basic aspects of human elements; the mind, mental, spiritual. This helps to improve immunity and builds resistance against diseases.

Yoga contains several forms of exercises such as the Yama, *Niyama*, *Padmasana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. While *pranayama* controls the breathing process & maintains a balance of the body with nature, *Dhyana* is pure meditation to keep the mind at peace. Yoga has been found to enhance the efficiency of the heart, curing the body from stress, strains, blood pressure, digestive problems, anemia and even cancer.

DISCUSSION

Ayurvedic *ahar* and *vihar*, if practised daily, can produce excellent results in the prevention or cure of diseases. It can help manage stress in daily life and reduce the use of modern medicine and their side effects that give rise to untoward complications.

Discussion Ayurveda has scientific approach in health management. The main aim of Ayurveda is to preserve the health of a healthy person and to treat the disease. The diet and regimen which is beneficial to the body and gives happiness to the mind. lots of importance is given to the diet with regard to its processing, quality, quantity and so on. *Àhàra*, *Swapna* (Nidra) and *Brahmacarya* play an important role in the maintenance of “Swasthya” of an individual. *Àhàra* plays an important role in healthy, diseased and convalescent states. It is more important than the medicine itself. The body can be nourished and maintained in good health status, by adopting suitable diet and full benefits of life can also be reaped by adherence to proper mental hygiene. In this era of modernization and civilization the society is conscious enough about what to eat? The awareness about the diet and their nutritional values etc. is increasing gradually, still the popularity of fast food / junk food is greater due to the fast life. According to Ayurveda this can be classified as "Pradnyaparadha". The proper use of diet not only prevents the disease but play major role in the management of the disease. It is possible if one uses diet considering the prakriti, tridosha, satmya asatmya of person as well as panchabhautik composition of dietary substance. The dietetic field is one such most important field of life. These are the dietetic regulations and procedure for those, who are healthy as well as for certain types of patients. Wholesome diet is prime cause for the

growth and development of the body, on the contrary, unwholesome diet causes several diseases. Acharya charaka stated that the ideal diet is that, which rebuilds the worn-out systems, nourishes dhàtus and maintains equilibrium of the body constituents. Irrational diet acts otherwise, producing disease. One should eat food, which is hot, unctuous, in due measure, after the digestion of previous food, and nonantagonistic in potency. It should be eaten in a hygienic place, provided with all accessories, neither too hurriedly, nor too leisurely, without talking or laughing with full concentration and having proper regard to oneself. Also Fuel like coal is required to keep the fire continuously or enlighten. Similarly, the Àhàra acts as the Indhana (fuel) for the Jatharagni and other Agnis in the body. Àhàra alone sustains the properties of Agni in the body. This shows the mutual relationship of Àhàra and Agni. If the food is not taken at all or in less quantity, due to the lack of Indhana, the Agni starts digesting the Dhàtus of the body and these Dhàtus get depleted and the Doṣas become aggravated, resulting in the diseases.

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