

APPLIED ASPECTS OF SEASONAL REGIMEN REGARDING PRESENT LIFE STYLE

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ABSTRACT

Seasonal regimen of diet and lifestyle for preservation of health. The year is divided into seasons based upon the changes in environmental conditions, temperature, day-night cycle and circadian rhythm. Being an integral unit of the nature, these seasonal changes in nature affect human physiology too. Therefore, one must follow the specific regimen for maintaining the equilibrium of body components in harmony with nature. The seasonal regimen is designed on the basis of changes in the *dosha*, *bala* (strength), and *agni* (digestive power). This chapter continues the study of dietary regimen from the preceding chapters by adding the dimension of time and seasonal variations to it.

KEYWORDS: Ahara, Vihara, Pathaya sevana, *Ritucharaya*.

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of *Ayurveda* is to maintain good health. Ahara (diet) is the main basis of life, which should be taken in proper quantity and quality to maintain equilibrium and to promote strength, lustre and healthy long life. It has been observed that a person taking food even in proper quantity may suffer from diseases in different seasons. This implies that apart

from the quantity of ahara (diet), the knowledge of regimen for different seasons also plays a significant role in the maintenance of health and prevention of diseases.

A person who has the knowledge of appropriate food articles and activities applicable to specific seasons and also the discipline and inclination to practice them (in accordance with those seasons) stays healthy. Whereas a person without knowledge (or with limited knowledge) of wholesome regimen for different seasons or without the discipline or temperament of following these seasonal practices is likely to suffer from various diseases. Seeking this objective, the chapter describes ahara (diet) and vihara (lifestyle) to be followed in different seasons. The way we eat, exercise, rest, sleep, think, plan, carry out our routine work, and behave with others - are collectively termed 'Lifestyle'. In Indian subcontinent, there are six seasons in the year on the basis of the position of the Sun with respect to the Earth. The qualities of different seasons need to be understood in three aspects viz. masa (month), rashi (stellar constellations) and characteristic features pertaining to the season. While prescribing regimen for different seasons, importance should be given first to the appearance of characteristic features in the prevailing season, then to the rashi and finally to the masa.

Health is a state of dynamic equilibrium between man and his environment (*Loka-Purusha Samya*). The moment this equilibrium gets disturbed, *dosha* get imbalanced to cause diseases. The basic concept of prevention and cure of diseases is based on the *tridosha* (collective term for *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha dosha*) theory. A particular rhythmic pattern of the three dosha i.e. accumulation (*sanchaya*), aggravation (*prakopa*) and alleviation (*prashama*) occur in relation to six seasons, when the Sun changes from one *rashi* to the other. Six different tastes present in our food have direct effect on three dosha. Seasonal adaptation (*Ritusatmya*) is described under seasonal regimen (*ritucharya*), which is the variation in diet (ahara) and lifestyle (vihara) to balance rhythmic seasonal variations of *dosha*, *bala*, *agni*, and *rasa* etc. through the concept of *samanya* and *vishesha*. Knowledge and regular observance of suitable *ritucharya* (ahara and vihara for different seasons) is mainly for the maintenance of health and prevention of diseases. For diseased persons *ritucharya* need to be modified accordingly.

Northward movement of the Sun (*Adana kala* or *uttarayana*) includes, late winter (*shishira*), spring (*vasanta*) and summer (*grishma*) seasons. Southward movement of the Sun (*visarga kala* or *dakshinayana*) includes rainy (*varsha*), autumn (*sharad*) and early winter (*hemanta*) seasons. In these seasons, there are specific changes in atmospheric conditions which

influence changes in *dosha*, *bala* (strength) and *agni* (digestive power). These atmospheric changes affect all living beings in the universe. Due to changes in the external environment, the *tridosha* pass through three different phases i.e. *sanchaya* (accumulation), *prakopa* (aggravation) and *prashama* (alleviation). The period of change in season is termed as *ritusandhi*. In this period, gradual decrease in diet and lifestyle of earlier season and gradual adaptation of the diet and lifestyle regimen of next season is advised to prevent the disorders due to change in season.

The concepts of *satmya* and *okasatmya* have been explained with respect to the adaptability. Any naturally suitable food or *behavior* beneficial to the self is considered as *satmya*. *Okasatmya* is anything unnatural, unacceptable and acquired habituation to food and lifestyle. Even though, it has become a habit, it should be stopped gradually.

In this fast moving era of science and technology, lifestyle change in the form of non-observance of *ritucharya* (seasonal regimen) is a major risk factor for increasing prevalence of various diseases. The concept of *ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), in terms of self-management of lifestyle should be promoted universally for health and prevention of diseases in all individuals.

Hemanta ritucharya (Regimen for Early winter)



Food to be taken

- Heavy food-like black gram.
- Newly ripened rice and other grains like jawar.
- Heavy non-veg preparations- like meat soup mixed with fats.
- Snighdha like til taila.
- Madhur Ras like all sweet fruits.

- Amla.
- Lavana.
- Sura-supernatant part of wine & wine prepared with jaggery.
- Madhu(honey).
- Milk products like ghee cheese etc and ikshu(sugarcane) products.

Food not to be taken

- Vatavardhak aahar- like brinjal, karela, sprout pulse etc.
- Laghu(light- moonga).
- Ruksha(dry-without oil).
- Astringent- like cauliflower, potato etc.
- Spicy-like black papper, capsicum etc.
- Bitter-like bitter gourd, guduchi leaf, broccoli etc.

Activities

- Body massage with Vataghna tail- like bala tail.
- Applications of oil all over head.
- Sunbath.
- Utsadana- applying medicated powder of drugs to the body.
- Residing in warm underground chamber(जेन्ताकस्वेद).
- Wearing of heavy woollen clothes.
- Use of thick blankets.
- Unlimited indulgence into sexual activities.
- Do not sleep during day time.
- Ushna drav lep- aguru, Kasturi etc.

Shishira ritucharya (Regimen for Late winter)



Food to Be Taken or Not Taken- Same as that Hemant ritu.

Katu, tikta, kashay rasa aahar should not be taken.

Activities- same as that of Hemant ritu in addition remain in less ventilated and more warm place.

Hemanta and shishira are similar with the slight difference in that the latter has more roughness due to beginning of Adana and cold due to clouds, winds and rains. Hence the entire routine of living prescribed for Hemanta is to be followed in Shishira also. During Shishira, one should specially live in warmer settings and protect oneself from direct air. Avoid *katu*(pungent), *tikta* (bitter), *kashaya*(astringent), *laghu*(light to digest), *sheeta* (cold) and vata provoking food and drinks.

Vasanta Ritucharya (Regimen for Spring)



Food to be taken

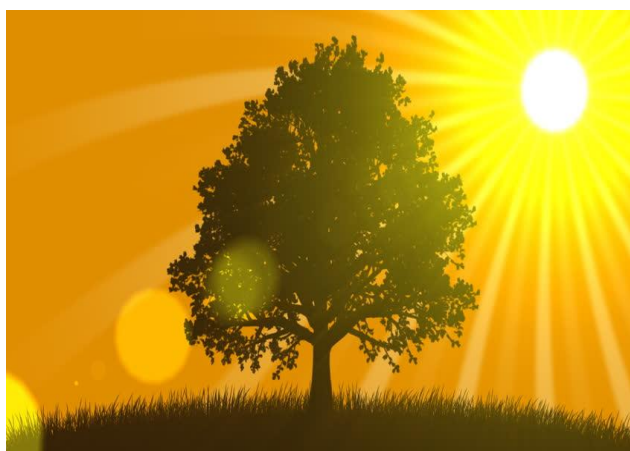
- Yava(barley)- have one year old barley.
- Puran godhuma(wheat).
- Puran shali rice.
- Light cooked meat-like harin, laavak, kapinjal mams.
- Boild water with Shunthi.
- Boiled water with Chandan.
- Boiled water mixed with honey.
- Boiled water with jalada (musta-nut grass).
- Asava and arista, sidhu (prepared from fermenting sugarcane juice) mardvika, sarambu etc.

Food Not To Be Taken

- Oily food which is heavy for digestion.
- Sour-like orange, grapes etc.
- Sweet-like mridwika, banana, seetafal etc.
- Unctuous food- like Naveen dhanya, mash etc.

Activities

- Vamana(emesis).
- Dry massage(udwartan).
- More physical activity.
- Kavala graha(gargling).
- Dhumapana.
- Anjana(collyrium).
- Shukhoshan jala snan.
- Chandan, aguru lepan.

Grishma Ritucharya (Regimen for Summer)**Food to be taken**

- Food which are sweet, light to digest, fatty, cold and liquid should be taken.
- Drink plenty of water during the day, thus keeps your body hydrated.
- Cut down the drinks like coffee, tea or carbonated drinks that might cause dehydration, cut down on alcohol consumption during summers.
- Avoid spicy, oily and fried food.
- Replace harmful drinks with tender coconut water, butter milk and fresh juice.
- Sweet, light, liquid diet, ghee to be included.

- Panak- mix 30 gms of jaggery in 1 liter of water, pinch of dry ginger powder, cinnamon and cardamom and mix it well.
- Mantha- take equal quantities of dried grapes, dates and figs, soak it in water for an hour, churn it well.
- Saktu- make a fine powder of dry roasted barley, channa dal mix it with water and Then add jiggery, cardamon and milk. Serve it after cooling.

Food not to be taken

- Avoid katu, tikta, Kashaya rasa.
- Madya(wine) should not be taken, if very necessary, taken in very little quantity or diluted with more quantity of water.
- Avoid foods that produce heat within the body like spicy, oily, fast and fried foods.
- Solid foods which are heavy to digest should be avoided.

Activities

- Davaswap(nap during day time).
- Stay in cooled place.
- Indulge in forest, cold water and flowers.
- Should not indulge in sexual activity and excessive physical exertion.
- Chandan lepan.
- Sheetal pushpa, mukta dharan.

Varsha ritucharya (Regimen for Rainy season)



Food to be taken

- Consume light and fresh foods prepared from barley, rice and wheat.
- Include cow's ghee, lean meat, lentils, green gram, rice and wheat in daily diet.

- Consume small piece of ginger with rock salt before every meal.
- Take Sour and salted soups of vegetables. Onion, lean meat and vegetables may also be used in soups.
- If the days are cooler due to heavy rains, take a diet that is sour, salty and oily.
- Drink boiled and cooled water mixed with little honey.
- Add ginger and green gram in your daily diet
- Eat warm food and avoid eating uncooked foods and salads.
- Bhavaprakash states that consuming 'haritaki (*terminalia chebula*) with rock salt in monsoon season is beneficial to health.
- Drink ana diet mixed with honey.
- Lavana & Sneha- on the day of excessive raining to counteract the aggravation of vata.
- Grapes wine and arishta(with honey).

Food not to be taken

- Avoid drinking excess of fluids at this further slows down the metabolism.
- Avoid consuming stale food.
- Avoid leafy vegetables during monsoon.
- Avoid curds, red meat and any foodstuff, which takes longer time to digest.
- watery demulcent drinks.
- impure/ contaminated water.

Activities

- Dry massage(udvartan)
- Stay in less humid place
- Wearing garlands
- Perfumes
- Avoid deep sleeping and excessive physical exercise, sexual intercourse & exposure to sun.
- All purifying process can be done in Varsha ritu.

Sharada ritucharya (Regimen for Autumn)**Food to be taken**

- Madhura(sweet)
- Sheet(cold)
- Laghu
- Tikta(bitter)
- Shali rice
- Godhuma(wheat)
- Moonga
- Yava
- Madhu
- Ghrita with tikta medicaments
- Hashodaka- Water which is purified by sun rays during morning and cooled by the moon during night after the raising of star Agastya. Its properties are like nectar and indicated during Shishir ritu.
- Food which subsides pitta.

Food not to be taken

- Vasa (fatty tissue)
- Oil
- Meat of aquatic animals
- Dahi
- Kshara(alkaline preparations)

Activities

- Wearing garlands.

- Exposure to moonlight in the night.
- Do not sleep day time.
- Use of sheetali sheetkari pranayama is beneficial.
- Panchakarma is highly recommended in order to detoxify body and alleviate pitta dosha.
- विरेचन (virecana, therapeutic purgation), रक्तमोक्षण (raktamokṣaṇa, bloodletting procedure) and consuming तिक्त सर्पि (tikta sarpi, bitter medicated ghee) are to be consumed.

*Note= Madhur- sweet

Lavana- salty

Amla- sour

**Above mentioned material is compiled from our ancient ayurvedic text with references like charak, shusrut, vagbhat Samhita..

❖ CONCLUSION

As adaptations according to the changes, is the key for survival, the knowledge of *Ritucharya* (regimen for various seasons) is thus important. Every person should take diet including all the six rasa (tastes), in each and every season; however, the indicated rasa should be taken in predominant quantity in particular season. Regular intake of all rasa is best strength promoter and regular use of any one rasa debilitates strength.

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