

THE SCIENCE OF AYURVEDIC DIET: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

Ahara is responsible for both healthy bodies and disorders. Out of all the factors for maintaining good health, proper food consumption is the most crucial as nutrition, or Ahara, is the most important medication other than any substance. Though it is impossible to live without Ahara. Many food and routine norms have been compromised in today's fast-paced society, indicating the overall deterioration of health in society. Ahara and its associated legislation and conducts have long been forgotten by humans; thus, this study was done to examine this ancient discipline of dietetics. Ayurveda contains three sub-pillars for comprehensive positive health - Ahara, Nidra, and Brahmacharya, which belong under social medicine. These are the rules and procedures for following any dietetic science that takes physiological and functional considerations into account.

KEYWORDS: Ahara, Health, Diseases, Dietary Guidelines.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda has three sub-pillars that sustain the body itself: Ahara, Nidra, and Brahmacharya. Ahara was listed first, indicating its significance. Ahara is responsible for both healthy bodies and disorders. Food's virtues include physical growth and development, looks intellect, voice,

physical and mental strength and stamina, and, lastly, survival. According to Ayurveda, diet is also responsible for intellect and creativity.

THE THEORY OF AHARA

Ahara has been existed from the beginning of time. Ahara is described in several classics in their own distinct manner. According to Shabdakalpadrum, Ahara is swallowed through the throat after eating. According to Vachaspathyam, Ahara is food. According to Acharya Dalhana, Ahara is the substance that is swallowed through anna-nasika. According to Acharya Chakrapani, Ahara is anything that is ingested and so encompasses both diet and drugs. According to Acharya Gangadhara, Ahara is anything that passes via the tongue down to the throat. According to Naturopathy, food is medicine. As a result, medicines are also covered in Ahara. As a result, the term Ahara refers to any substance that is taken in via the mouth and swallowed through the throat. Food attributes have a direct effect on how the body accepts and digests a particular type of food, and our perspective might be affected, such as the mind feeling sharp and angry after eating hot chili peppers. Along with rasa characteristics, virya, vipaka, and prabhava are also used to explain the attributes and effects of various foods, plants, and medicines on the body.

AHARAPARINAMKAR BHAVA / TRANSFORMATION OF FOOD

1. Ushma
2. Vayu
3. Kleda
4. Sneha
5. Kaal
6. Samyog

USHMA / JATHARAGNI / PACHAKAGNI

Our body is made up of seven primary dhatu and three dosha, according to Ayurvedic science. Ahara rasa is essential for nourishing those dhatu. Ahara rasa is created by the ahara with the support of Jatharagni.

As in nature, fire is needed to cook raw food to make it edible; similarly, the Jatharagni contained in the Koshtha (mahastrotasa) is beneficial in converting the food into the dhatu pushtikar bhava. This increases the Oja, bala, Varna, and so forth.

Jaatharagni is essential for maintaining the balance of the tridoshas. The Jatharagni must be maintained in order for the body to function properly.

According to Charakacharya, Agni is a vital component of the human body. Which is beneficial in maintaining the Prana, Oja, Aayu, Bala, Varna, Utsaha, Upachaya, Prabha, and overall health. Agni, also known as Sarvapaka in the Srimadbhagvadgita, aids in the digestion of all forms of Dravyas like sthul and Sukshma Dravya.

VAYU/ VATADOSHA

Vata dosha is the primary controller of the body's kinetic functions. Vata dosha is in responsible for both food intake and the elimination of waste materials produced during the digestive process. The digestive system is influenced by the primary three forms of vata dosha (Prana vayu, Saman vayu, and Apan vayu).

Prana Vayu

Prana vayu is present in the mouth cavity and throat. Food enters the mouth cavity, is masticated, and then passes into the esophagus. The process of swallowing/deglutition is influenced by Prana vayu. Udgar: The air entered with the food is excreted as the udgara after full digestion.

Saman Vayu

The digestive power of the Jatharagni is enhanced by Samaan vayu. In other words, saman vayu indirectly facilitates digestion. Saman Vayu breaks down food in the gut into Parthiv, Aapya, Aagneya, Vayavya, and Nabhas, separating useful and waste components.

The digestive process produces both helpful and waste materials. This procedure is carried out by Saman Vayu. The valuable part, annarasa, is transported to hridaya by Saman vayu, while the remaining waste products (Mutra, Purish) are sent to the lower area of the koshtha. Saman vayu also boosts the jatharagni's pachana Shakti or digestive strength. The fine blow of air increases the force of fire, just as in the nature, samana vayu increases the power of the jatharagni. This samana vayu function is known as Agnisandhukshana i.e. activation of digestive fluids.

After the food has been completely digested, it is separated into saara bhag and kitta bhag. Annarasa refers to the digested usable component. Purish and mutra are the two types of kitta bhaga. This distinction is determined by the functioning of the Vata dosha.

Apana Vayu

Ahara mala comes in several forms, including purisha, mutra, and dushit vayu. Apan vayu is mostly found in the Pakvashaya, where the purisha and other malas are held before vegakala i.e. excretion. The malas are expelled through their excretion channels following the sense of excretion. This entire procedure is controlled by the Apana vayu.

Kleda & / Shaithilyakara Bhava

Kleda represents dampness. It facilitates digestion and protects the digestive tract. In this sense, they are an important ingredient for better digestion. These factors are represented by bodhak and kledaka kapha. Bodhak kapha moistens the food and divides the bolus of food into smaller segments, making the meal easier to digest. Bodhak kapha also moistens the food and lubricates the food mass, enabling deglutition.

Sneha/ Mardavakara Bhava

The movements of the small intestine and stomach require softness.

Mucin is also found in saliva and stomach secretions. Saliva and stomach juices contain mucin, which converts food into liquid, smooth, and soft, helping the jatharagni's function.

Kaala Yoga / Paryapta

Time also plays a role in the appropriate digestion of ingested food. It takes 1-2 hours for the stomach to chime after consuming thoroughly chewed meals. Food digestion in the small intestine takes about 4-5 hours. The majority of the water is then absorbed in the large intestine, which converts the remaining indigested food into pakwa mala. This avasthapak is known as katu avsthapaka. All of these processes take 12-14 hours. It signifies that no food should be consumed until the previously consumed food has been thoroughly digested. As a result, one should not eat for 3 hours after eating. Food requires a specific amount of time to digest.

Samayoga

Samayoga refers to Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana's Samyakyoga. As a result, it emphasizes the significance of Visheshayatana in addition to Agni. Agni is correct, but if Visheshayatana is not maintained, it will undoubtedly lead to Agni-related ailments since Agni is disturbed. Only the benefits of Ahara can be obtained when food is consumed appropriately and in accordance with food-taking legislation. Any flaw in the diet, or even in its preparation, contributes to sickness. Dieting mistakes are an etiological factor for dosha.

AHARA VIDHI VISHESA AYATANANI / EIGHT BASIC FACTORS IN REGARD TO DIET

The eight Aharavidhi principles are described in the Charaksamhita. These are the rules and procedures for following any dietetic science that takes physiological and functional considerations into account. Only beneficial foods should be ingested because they are responsible for sustaining a decent state of health. Food must be consumed with consideration for Prakriti, Karana, Samyoga, Rashi, Desha, Kala, Upayogasanstha, and Upayokta.

Ayatanani	Description	Example
Prakruti	Prakruti denotes the nature of the substance, i.e. the intrinsic properties of diets and medications.	Masha is hefty, but Mudga is light.
Karana	Food substance processing. The inherent properties of substances are transformed as a result of processing.	Dilution, heat application, cleaning, churning, and other methods are used to transform food quality.
Samyoga	A combination of two or more dietary components.	Honey and ghee or honey, fish, and milk.
Rashi	The quantity of drugs to be consumed	Sarvagraha refers to the totality of all things involved, whereas Parigraha refers to each and every one of them separately.
Desha	Desha refers to the habitat of dietary items.	It determines how the properties of substances vary according on their geographic region, soil type, and so on.
Kala	Time as age, seasons, and environmental conditions	The time factor is described in two contexts: one for daily and seasonal fluctuations, and the other for individual age and disease situations.
Upayogasanstha	It comprises of dietary guidelines.	Dietary guidelines.
Upayokta	Individual habits and states It refers to the individual who consumes food.	It refers to the one who consumes food.

Upayogasanstha (dietary guidelines)

- 🌈 Agni stimulation- consume warm and fresh food
- 🌈 Oiliness- for visceral organ lubrication
- 🌈 Quantum- This type of food maintains Dosha's physiological level.
- 🌈 Only eat when the preceding meal has been digested. Signs include hunger, lightness, and normal faces.

- ✚ Two opposing strong traits should not be eaten together.
- ✚ Clean, hygienic, and pleasant place and utensils
- ✚ Eat slowly- eating quickly causes nausea, chokes, insults food, and a dislike for food.
- ✚ Not eating very slowly
- ✚ Ajalpan, without further ado.
- ✚ Consume in a proper manner.

The Significance of Eating in Appropriate Quantities

Food, when consumed in sufficient quantities, can assist an individual achieve strength, beauty, happiness, and longevity without disrupting the body's dhatu and dosha balance.

CONCLUSION

Ahara is responsible for both healthy bodies and disorders. Out of all the factors for maintaining good health, proper food consumption is the most crucial since nutrition, or Ahara, is the most important medication other than substances. Though it is impossible to live without Ahara.

Many conventions of diet and regimen have been compromised in today's fast-paced living, indicating the overall worsening state of health in the population. Ahara and its connected laws and conducts have long been forgotten by humans; thus, this study was done to examine this ancient discipline of dietetics. In summary, everything depends on nutrition, according to the statements above.

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