

**VIRUDDHA AHARA: A CRUCIAL ASPECT IN TODAY'S LIFESTYLE**

**Dr. Kiran<sup>\*1</sup>, Dr. Mahendra Prasad<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Bhanu Pratap Singh<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Chhote Khan<sup>4</sup> and  
Dr. Rubina Bano<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>MD Scholar Department of Kriya Sharir.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor, MD (AYU). Department of Kriya Sharir.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, MD, Ph.D. (AYU). Department of Kriya Sharir.

<sup>4</sup>MD Scholar Department of Kriya Sharir.

<sup>5</sup>MD Scholar Department of Kriya Sharir.

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**\*Corresponding Author**

**Dr. Kiran**

MD Scholar Department of  
Kriya Sharir.

**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda, an ancient science of life, encompasses various holistic concepts, including Viruddha ahar, which addresses food incompatibility. Ahar is one of the three pillars described in Ayurveda. Emphasizing the consumption of a healthy and nutritious diet, Ayurveda identifies combinations of foods that disrupt tissue metabolism and possess properties contrary to tissue health as Viruddha Ahar or incompatible diet. Consumption of such incompatible foods leads to various diseases, for which acharyas have prescribed treatments. In the present era, unhealthy dietary changes have become more prevalent, resulting in the consumption of incompatible foods and the onset of various diseases. Proper dietary practices promote physical and mental well-being, whereas improper

or unbalanced dietary habits contribute to disease development. Hence, Ayurveda places significant importance on the concept of ahara. Today, the intake of incompatible foods (Viruddha ahar) has significantly increased, posing hazardous effects on health. Therefore, this article sheds light on the concept of Viruddha ahar and its relevance in the present era.

**KEYWORDS:** Viruddha Ahara, Upsthambha, food incompatibility, metabolism.

**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda, one of India's traditional healthcare systems, has a vast scope and emphasizes preventive health measures, particularly through Ahara (diet). The Sushruta Samhita asserts that diet is the primary source of vitality, strength, complexion, and ojas (vital essence) for

living beings.<sup>[1]</sup> Ahara is one of the three pillars outlined in Ayurveda, alongside Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacharya (controlled sexual behavior)<sup>[2]</sup> A unique concept within Ayurveda concerning Ahara is Viruddha Ahara. This virudhaahara effect in agni.

### **Definition of Viruddha Ahara**

According to Acharya Charaka, any type of Ahara that increases the doshas (bodily humors) without expelling them from the body becomes detrimental to health and is termed as Viruddha.<sup>[3]</sup>

Acharya Sushruta further explains that Viruddha Aahara not only contaminates the doshas but also aggravates the Dhatus<sup>[4]</sup> (bodily tissues).

### **Types of incompatible diets<sup>[5]</sup>**

#### **Desh Viruddha (Geographical Incompatibility)**

With advancements in transportation, food items are now transported swiftly across different regions. However, consuming such items in unsuitable environments may inadvertently lead to various hazardous diseases. Examples include yogurt, cheese, excessive rice or seafood in marshy areas, and avoiding ghee and oil in arid regions.

#### **Kala Viruddha (Temporal Inconsistency)**

Rapid changes in lifestyle and increasing urbanization have led to a lack of time for planning meals according to appropriate timings. Moreover, modern preservation techniques allow for the availability of all foods throughout the year. Consuming such temporally incompatible foods disrupts the balance of the Tridoshas in the body, making individuals more susceptible to diseases. Examples include ice cream, milkshakes, cold beverages, and frozen foods in winter, and excessive tea, coffee, spices, and alcohol in summer.

#### **Agni Viruddha (Digestive Incompatibility)**

The availability of various food items and the proliferation of food outlets have led people to frequently dine out. Overeating and neglecting digestive capacity result in common issues such as acidity, indigestion, and flatulence.

Ex.- Consuming heavy food when digestive power is low, consuming light food when digestive power is sharp, and consuming food that conflicts with the unpredictable and typical digestive power.

**Matra Viruddha (Quantity Incompatibility)**

Certain food combinations can become harmful when taken together. It is important to be aware of such combinations. Ex - Equal portions of honey mixed with cow's ghee.

**Krama Viruddha (Sequence Incompatibility)**

Ayurveda emphasizes a specific sequence of activities to maintain health. However, due to our fast-paced lifestyles, it becomes challenging to adhere to such a schedule, leading to increased susceptibility to chronic health issues and a gradual decline in quality of life. Ex.- Consuming dessert at the end of a meal, drinking hot water after consuming honey.

**Satmya Viruddha (Habit Incompatibility)**

In the modern era, people are eager to try various foods, often disregarding whether these foods align with their habitual preferences. Prolonged consumption of such foods, if contrary to one's habits, can lead to serious diseases. Ex.- Consuming sweet and cold substances by someone accustomed to salty and hot foods.

**Dosh Viruddha**

Consistent consumption of substances that have qualities similar to the predominant dosha in the body can lead to diseases associated with that specific dosha. Ex.- Vata Prakruti individual consuming dry, roasted foods; Pitta Prakruti individual consuming tea, coffee, oily, and spicy foods; Kapha Prakruti individual consuming yogurt and black gram.

**Sanskar Viruddha (Preparation Method Incompatibility)**

Traditional preparation methods have fallen out of favor, with people favoring newer methods for different tastes. However, certain methods of preparation for both medication and diet may produce harmful outcomes. Ex.- Heating honey (commercial honey is often strongly heated before packaging).

**Veerya Viruddha (Potency Incompatibility)**

Mixing substances with cold potency with those of hot potency can lead to adverse effects. Ex.- Consuming fish with milk.

**Kostha Viruddha**

Providing low strength and low stool-forming food to someone with a strong digestive system (krur kostha), or giving excessive, heavy, and stool-forming food to someone with a

weak digestive system (mrudu kosta). Ex.- Consumption of bread or biscuits by someone with krur kosta.

### **Awastha Viruddha**

Consuming food that aggravates vata after physical exertion, sexual activity, or strenuous exercise, or consuming food that aggravates kapha after rest or drowsiness. Ex.- Consuming chickpeas or flattened rice after brisk walking or exercising.

### **Parihar Viruddha (Contradictory Treatment)**

When treating a patient with ghee-based medication, it's important to advise the patient against consuming cold items afterward, as it could counteract the benefits.

In such instances, symptoms such as heaviness or digestive issues may arise in the patient. Ex.- Consuming cold water after ingesting ghee.

### **Pak Viruddha (Cooking Contradiction)**

Food prepared with inferior or spoiled fuel, undercooked dishes, or the reuse of cooking oil for multiple preparations is common in many eateries, particularly for breakfast. Continued consumption of such food lowers immunity, making individuals more susceptible to illnesses. Such food should be strictly avoided.

### **Hriday Viruddha (Contrary to Well-being)**

Consumption of poor-quality food negatively affects an individual's mental state, leading to weakened digestive power. It should be avoided.

### **Vidhi Viruddha (Contrary to Eating Guidelines)**

Eating meals in public places or walking while eating is detrimental to health and should be avoided. Ex.- Buffet-style dining.

### **Sampad Viruddha (Extravagance of Inferior Quality)**

The excessive use of chemical fertilizers results in the consumption of low-quality food, which significantly impacts the body. Instead, organic vegetables and fruits should be prioritized, and overripe produce should be avoided.

**Samyoga Viruddha (Mixing Inconsistency)**

Embracing Western culture and cuisine has led to the consumption of food combinations that are not beneficial for health. Ex.- Fruit salad or milk with banana.

**Diseases Due to Viruddha Ahara**

From the explanations above, it is evident that deviations from normal dietary practices, including processes, combinations, portions, and properties of food, can lead to various disorders. Failure to adhere to the dietary guidelines mentioned above can result in diseases caused by Viruddha Ahara.

**Infections Because of Viruddha ahara****According to Acharya Charaka**

Viruddha Ahara is responsible for the occurrence of numerous diseases. Acharya Charaka suggests that a host of diseases arise due to Viruddha Ahara, including infertility, fistula, fainting, anemia, toxic effects, malabsorption disorders, fever, genetic disorders, and even death.<sup>[6]</sup>

**As indicated by Acharya Vagbhata**

Acharya Vagbhata in Ashtanga Samgraha has referenced that ingestion of Viruddha Ahara brings the disorders like Visphotha (blisters), Shofa (swelling), Yakshma (Tuberculosis) and loss of body heat, memory and consciousness, Jwara (fever), Raktpitta (Bleeding disorders) Astha Mahagada (eight Maharogas) and Mrityu (death).<sup>[7]</sup>

**Today's perspective**

Contemporary comprehension of Viruddha Ahara, known as incompatible food combinations, suggests their potential to incite cellular irritation. Ancient Ayurvedic texts like Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas outline various conflicting qualities of foods. However, such specific combinations are rare in modern dietary practices. Rather, there's a necessity to identify new food incompatibilities relevant to present-day lifestyles through an Ayurvedic lens. These contradictions can be categorized into Karma Viruddha, Veerya Viruddha, and others. Such food combinations may exert harmful effects on aspects like immune function, cellular metabolism, and regulation of growth hormones.

**Green tea or dark tea and milk**

Green tea or black tea with milk should be avoided<sup>[8]</sup> as the addition of milk reduces the concentration of heart-healthy flavonoids known as catechins. When milk is mixed with tea, proteins called caseins in the milk interact with the tea, diminishing the benefits of catechins.

**Tea and garlic**

Combining tea, which contains anticoagulant compounds called coumarins, with garlic, which also possesses anticlotting properties, may increase the risk of bleeding. Therefore, it's best to avoid consuming tea and garlic together.<sup>[9]</sup>

**Pomegranate juice and grapefruit juice**

Both pomegranate juice and grapefruit juice interfere with the cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme systems in the intestines, leading to elevated blood levels of many medications. Combining these juices may amplify this effect, potentially affecting the efficacy of medications you are taking.<sup>[10]</sup>

**Unripe (green) tomatoes or potatoes and alcohol**

Unripe green tomatoes contain high levels of solanine (Disrupt cell membrane and cause birth defects), which may interact with alcohol, potentially increasing sedation effects if consumed together.<sup>[11]</sup>

**Sanskara Viruddha**

Deep frying potatoes can generate toxic substances like acrylamide, which is carcinogenic.<sup>[12]</sup> Regular consumption of potato chips is considered Sanskara Viruddha. Additionally, according to Ayurvedic texts, heating honey is also categorized as Sanskara Viruddha. Market-available honey, labeled as Agmark honey, is typically heated before packaging. Understanding the reasons behind the recommendation to avoid heating honey is important.

**Pathogenesis**

Charakacharya has noted that regular consumption of certain food items and medications aggravates Sharirastha Prakruta Doshas without eliminating them from the body. According to Chakrapani, this is a characteristic feature of Viruddha Anna. As these vitiated Doshas persist in the body, they interact with Sharirastha Viguna Dhatus, leading to various diseases.<sup>[13]</sup>

### Modern Aspect

Viruddha Aahara, or food incompatibility, can disrupt molecular balance within the body. Ayurvedic texts like Charaka Samhita outline various food combinations considered incompatible, though the traditional illustrations are less common today. To bridge this ancient wisdom with modern dietary habits, it's helpful to provide updated examples that integrate Ayurvedic principles with contemporary nutrition understanding.

For instance, Ayurveda warns against combining certain foods like proteins and carbohydrates due to their differing digestive requirements. Starch digestion, for instance, requires an alkaline environment facilitated by saliva's amylase (ptyalin), which breaks down starch into simpler sugars like maltose. When proteins and starches are consumed together, their digestion processes can interfere with each other, potentially impacting digestive efficiency, immune function, cellular metabolism, and overall bodily growth.

Similarly, another Ayurvedic example involves the combination of milk with tea brew. The tannins in tea can precipitate milk proteins, making them more difficult to digest. This interference can hinder the absorption of nutrients, complicating the digestive process.

By understanding these principles in the context of modern dietetics, we can appreciate how Ayurveda's insights into food compatibility remain relevant today, offering valuable perspectives on optimizing nutrition and digestive health.

### Treatment

Nidana Parivarjna (prophylactic measures) is the fundamental line of treatment. Infections brought about by Viruddha Ahara (inconsistent eating regimen) can be treated by Vamana (Emesis), Virechana (purgation) and Shamana Chikitsa (Palliative treatment) and by the earlier utilization of antidote.<sup>[14]</sup>

### Exceptional cases for consuming Viruddha Ahara

Food however contrary don't create illness assuming an individual is adjusted to the admission of unwholesome medications or diet or on the other hand in the event that they are taken in little amount or taken by an individual having strong digestive power or by a youngster or by the person who has gone through Oletion treatment or who has proper build because of exercise. The unwholesomeness of different eating regimens doesn't have any effect.<sup>[15]</sup>

## DISCUSSION

Successive intake of incompatible food prompts exacerbation of all Doshas coming about in hazardous sicknesses and diminishing personal satisfaction. The suggested treatment for illnesses brought about by incompatible food is Shodhana Chikitsa (Eliminative treatment), Shamana Chikitsa (Palliative treatment) and aversion of incompatible food. Charaka, who referenced that incompatible eating routine, is one of the foundations for spreading the grim humors from the alimentary tract to the peripheral systems and causes illnesses. Avoidance of ingestion of incompatible eating regimen assumes key part in the prevention of illness.

## CONCLUSION

From the above conversation, obviously Viruddha Ahara is an significant part of the present inappropriate dietary habits. This can lead to hazardous infections unconsciously to the patients. Hence, it is vital to enroll the causative incompatible dietary factors and train the patients to stay away from such etiologic factors. The article likewise opens another research window in the field of Ayurvedic dietetics to explore upon incompatible variables to notice the impact.

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