

**AYURVEDA SIGNIFICANCE OF AHARA AND CONCEPT OF AHARA
VIDHIVISHESHA AYATAN: A REVIEW****Dr. Ankur Dua^{*1}, Dr. Sunayana Sharma² and Dr. Karan Chugh³**

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda the ancient Indian science elaborated various aspects for maintaining normal health including balancing state of Doshas, Agni, mala and Dhatus. Similarly synchronization between Indriyas and Manas provides good health status and social wellbeing. As Acharyas had described that Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya are Triupstambha, which support the body itself. Here Ahara has been placed first, which shows that it's most vital to take care of and sustain life. In this regards furthermore ayurveda mentioned that proper nutrition value of consumed foods helps to achieve such types of balances and synchronization. According to Ayurveda ahara is the most important thing for healthy life and type of ahara we eat affect our body as well as mind. Ayurveda has mentioned about Astavidh ahar vidhi vishesh

ayatan in which Acharyas has explained in detail about properties of food, effect of combination of different food articles, quantity of food to be consumed, properties of food substances according to their cultivation area, cooking procedure etc. Present article emphasized importance of Ahara and concept of Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatan. A thorough understanding of ashtaaharvidhi visheshayatana with help in reducing agnidushti (digestive distress) and achieving the both prayojana of Ayurveda.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a science of healthy life. The purpose or aim of Ayurved medical science is not only to prevent the diseases but also to keep the person healthy through the life time. There are three pillars of life according to Ayurveda are Ahara, Swapna (Nidra) and Brahmacharya. Ahar is the most important factor in life 'Health as well as disease is depending on ahar. Ahara is described as one of the most important factors of life in Aurveda. Ahara is the main source of strength, complexion, and vitality. Wholesome food is one of the causes of growth and the compensation of the decay of the tissues. Food causes immediate nourishment, strength, and support to the body. It increases the expectancy of life, brilliance, enthusiasm, memory, Ojas and digestive capacity. Each food we take either has Dosha Prakopaka or Dosha Shamaka action on the human body. Improper digestion (Mandagni) produces toxins (Ama) which leads to the majority of diseases. Health is dependent upon food and the food looks for proper methods. In Ayurveda Acharya Charak has described 8 specific factors of the method of dieting in a very systematic and scientific manner which is known as Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana. Present article emphasized importance of Ahara and concept of Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatan.

ASHTA AHARA VIDHI VISHESHA AYATANA

SR. NO.	CONTENT
1.	PRAKRITI
2.	KARAN
3.	SAMYOGA
4.	RASHI
5.	DESHA
6.	KALA
7.	UPYOGA SAMSTHA
8.	UPYOKTA

The general considerations related to the Aahar vidhi vidhan are as follows:

- ✓ One should eat appropriately warm food
- ✓ One should eat food in sufficient quantity not too less or not in excess
- ✓ One should eat food after proper digestion of previously ingested food
- ✓ Food should be prepared by using appropriate combinations of ingredients Proper place and utensils should be used for taking food
- ✓ One should not eat food too quickly or too slowly
- ✓ Food should be consumed without talking and laughing.

1. Prakruti (Nature of Food)

Prakruti means nature of food i.e. natural quality which is inborn, like guru laghu, sheet, ushana i.e. by consuming whether it is heavy or light for digestion. As we know every individual has specific physical and mental characters, every food substance also has its prakruti which depends on sheet, ushna, guru etc. properties of food. In the substance used as food or medicine Masha or black gram is said to be guru or heavy in nature, therefore it is heavy to digest. Similarly mudga or green gram is laghu or light for digestions. Shukaramansa (pork) is guru and Enamansa (deer) is laghu. By the knowledge of prakruti of food items we can select these food according to human prakruti, season, time so that they are beneficial for our health and not doing any adverse affect. Knowledge of sheet ushna property of food will help in taking food according to deha prakruti. E.g. People with pitta prakruti should avoid ushna dravya. So considerations of Prakruti is very important to pacify Doshas and Agni, one should consume food as per his/her internal constitution.

2. KARAN (Processing of food)

Karan means the processing of food (i.e. samskara). Some food articles are not suitable for consumption in their original form. It has to undergo some procedure or samskara so that it can be accepted by body. It is the making or refinement of the natural products which means imparting other properties. The factor karan includes various methods like. Jalasamyoga, -cleansing with water, It includes cleaning of substances i.e. contact with water. It is done to remove impurities. Agnisamyoga, -heat processing (heating, boiling, cooking, Different types of agni causes different change in the property of food e.g. food cooked on coal or natural wood has better taste than food cooked over electrical one. The nature of rice is guru but by agnisamyoga it can be converted into laghu by shaucha, -cleaning and washing to eliminate the impurities is known as shauch. Manthana-grinding, For example -Dahi is said to be heavy for digestion and also shothkrit i.e., it is responsible for shotha/inflammation, but when it undergoes churning process, it gets converted into ' buttermilk having laghu property i.e light for digestion and used as the best medicine for shotha desha, -place or region of food (the food properties can be changed by changing its place). It is well explained by modern science in terms of bioavailability of micronutrients. Several cooking methods like thermal processing, fermentation etc. are used to increase bioavailability of micronutrients in plants.

3. Samyoga (Combination/mixing)

Though the property of substance is different it changes after mixing with another substance.

i.e. Samyog of two or more articles results in the manifestation of special qualities, which cannot be achieved by using the same article separately. The combination altogether produces new qualities so, it should be taken in to consideration that while preparing the food; the ingredient must be compatible to each other and should be properly mixed together. For example: Honey and ghee when taken alone is wholesome to the body but when combined in equal quantity they become toxic so their combination in equal quantity is not advised. Also, milk and fish both are sweet in taste but milk is of sheet veerya and fish is of ushna verya. As they have contradiction in their potency it causes vitiation of Rakta and obstruction of strotas. In today's era people are using food with different combinations. We should learn the art of combination of substances that they should become compatible to each other. The concept of viruddhaahara is well explained in ayurveda which tells about the incompatible food and their harmful effect to the body. It is the cause of different types of diseases mention in Ayurveda. 'Tropology' is the branch in modern science which is related with food combination. It provides information about specific combination of food that is good for health. e.g. It is instructed to avoid mixing of food rich in both carbohydrate and protein. For digestion of protein acidic medium is required, while for digestion of carbohydrate alkaline medium is necessary. If we take both food at same time it will not digested and will get accumulated in stomach and cause indigestion and blotting (formation of aama).

4. Rashi (Quantity Of Food)

Rashi means quantity or matra of food. Ayurveda explained the importance of aharmatra and its effect on digestion. There is a particular fixed quantity of food which needs to be consumed. Digestive capacity i.e. Agni varies from person to person, so ahara matra should also be vary with same. The food which get digested in proper time without disturbing the balance of Dhatus and Doshas is called samyukt rashi i.e. proper quantity. A person whether in a healthy or diseased state has to consume food only in limited quantity. Again, the quantity depends upon the nature of the drug or food whether it is guru i.e. digested with difficulty or laghu i.e. digested with ease. The quantity of food intake will be different for different individuals. Ideal food should be taken in proper quantity. If food is taken in proper quantity it activates digestion while excess or insufficient food will harm the body. Laghu food also should not be ingested in excess quantity, otherwise it causes decrease digestive power.

There are two types of rashi

- 1) **Sarvagraha**- In this type, the quantity of the food is taken in its totality (entirety) i.e. all the substances, ingredients and inclusion of food to be served will be considered in totally.
- 2) **Parigraha**- Parigraha is that one of the individual items in food.

Ayurveda gives equal importance to both types of matra i.e. sarvagraha and parigraha. Ayurveda also explains another aspect of matra. While eating, the stomach should be filled up with two parts of solid food, one part of liquids and the fourth part should be left free to facilitate the free movement of air or vayu. So Ahara should be consumed in proper amount since less food causes malnutrition while excess food leads indigestion and felling of heaviness.

5. Desha (Habitat)

Desh is the place where food items are grown or cultivated. Habitat is a geographic region. It indicates variation in the qualities of substances, due to difference in the soil, and climate. For example: Himalaya is considered as Guru Pradesh, substances grown in this place are guru in nature, while substances grown in dessert are laghu in nature.

Ahara should be taken according to both Bhoomi Desha & Deha Desha. Desha parikshana is vital aspect in understanding patient regarding dietary habits of patients, probability of diseases related to the diet and accordingly treatment and Pathyapathya aspect. So far the Deharoopa Desha is considered, the Doshas are distributed in three different regions of the body. Our classics says that the first region of the body which extends from Hridaya to complete upper portion is place of Kapha Dosha, the second region extending between the Hridaya and Nabhi is place of Pitta Dosha while the third region extends from Nabhi' to extreme down and have Vata Dosha.

6. Kaala (Time & Seasonal Variations)

The seasonal regiment in the stage of health & disease must be followed to maintain proper health. Nityaga and Avasthika are two types of kala. Kala is considered as Nitayaga In this condition Ahara should be taken accordmg to Dincharya and Ritucharya, Avasthika Kala is considered by VyadhiAvastha. E. g. in Naveen Jwara, Langhana should be done for 7 days, but if Jwara is Jeerna Ghritpana is indicated. Time of meal also affects nutritious value of food thus time and season should be consider befor taking meal.

7. Upayoga Samstha (Classical Ayurveda Rules of Eating)

It simply means the dietetic rules. It contains everything related to Diet, how to eat, when to eat, what to eat.

1. Food should be ushna, hridya.
2. The food should be eaten after the last meal has been digested.
3. Should include all the Rasas namely - Madhura, Amla, Lavana, Katu, Tikta, Kashayain daily diet.
4. The food should be taken in suitable quantity according to the prakriti and agni of a person.
5. Eating with full concentration and one should bring only good thought in mind that this food is good for me.
6. Too fast or too slow eating habit should be avoided
7. Laughing, talking, speaking or using mobile while eating should be avoided.

8. Upyokta (The User)

Finally comes the Upyokta. That is the one who uses the Ahardravyas. Food should be taken considering individuals place, digestive power, season, kala and jeerna ahara lakshana.

CONCLUSION

Ahara is one of the vital aspects of life and provides several health benefits especially when consumed in proper manner. The food consumed in proper manner helps to balance Doshas, Dhatus and Agni. In today's era we followed most of western life style or due to busy schedule and modern life style we followed faulty food habits which results in various diseases. As health is wealth we should first take care of our health. The appropriate dietary considerations synchronize physical, mental and spiritual health. Ayurveda presented concept of Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatan as rules of preparing and consuming meal which helps to achieve health benefits of food. As per ayurveda considerations of Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatan provides longevity, complexion, strength and immunity, etc. The consumption of meal as per rule imparts many health benefits and gives maximum nutritious value of consumed foods, while avoidance of concept of Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatan not only deprived nutritious value of food but also causes many health ailments including; diarrhoea, indigestion, hyperacidity and anorexia, etc.

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