

**AYURVEDIC DIET OF YAVA (BARLEY) FOR DIABETIC PATIENTS:
A REVIEW BASED ON CHARAKA SAMHITA*****Dr. Revati Deshmukh**

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ABSTRACT

Diabetes mellitus (Madhumeha) is one of the most prevalent metabolic disorders globally, characterized by impaired glucose metabolism and excessive urination. Ayurveda describes Madhumeha under the group of Prameha, primarily caused by Kapha-Meda vitiation due to improper diet and sedentary lifestyle. The Charaka Samhita emphasizes Ahara Chikitsa (dietary therapy) as the cornerstone in the management of Prameha, where Yava (barley) is considered the most beneficial grain.

This review explores the Ayurvedic rationale, pharmacodynamic properties, and clinical relevance of Yava in the management of diabetes. Yava, possessing Laghu (light), Ruksha (dry), and Kashaya (astringent) properties, helps reduce Kapha and Meda, enhancing digestion and metabolism.

Therapeutically, it acts as Lekhana (scraping), Medohara (fat-reducing), and Mutrala (diuretic). Various Yava preparations such as Peya, Manda, Odana, and Rasala are discussed as ideal dietary options for diabetic individuals.

Modern research supports these Ayurvedic concepts, attributing barley's efficacy to its high fiber and beta-glucan content, which regulate blood glucose and lipid levels. Thus, Yava stands as an exemplary integration of ancient Ayurvedic wisdom and modern nutritional science for sustainable diabetic care.

KEYWORDS: Yava, Ayurveda, Diabetes, Charaka Samhita, Prameha.

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, diet (Ahara) is considered the first line of treatment in almost all diseases, particularly in Prameha. Charaka has emphasized the role of Pathya Ahara (wholesome diet) in disease prevention and management. Yava (*Hordeum vulgare* Linn.), a widely available cereal grain, holds an important place in Ayurvedic nutrition. According to the Charaka Samhita (Sutrasthana and Chikitsa Sthana), Yava is recommended as one of the chief grains for patients with Prameha, Sthoulya (obesity), and other Kapha-Meda dominant disorders.

Ayurvedic Description of Yava

Sanskrit Name: Yava

Botanical Name: *Hordeum vulgare* Linn. Family: Poaceae (Gramineae)

Common Name: Barley

Rasa (Taste): Kashaya (astringent), Madhura (sweet) Guna (Qualities): Laghu (light), Ruksha (dry)

Virya (Potency): Sheeta (cold).

Vipaka (Post-digestive effect): Katu (pungent) Dosha Karma: Pacifies Kapha and Pitta doshas Yava, being Laghu and Ruksha, reduces excessive Kapha and Meda Dhatu, which are the principal pathological factors in Madhumeha. It enhances Agni (digestive fire), promotes metabolic activity, and supports the excretion of excess Kleda (moisture) from the body.

Therapeutic Significance of Yava in Madhumeha

In Charaka Samhita Chikitsa Sthana (6/14), Yava is listed as a major Pathya (wholesome food) for Prameha patients. Its Lekhana (scraping), Medohara (fat-reducing), and Kapha-Pittashamaka properties make it ideal for metabolic correction. Regular consumption of Yava improves glycemic control, reduces body fat, and enhances insulin sensitivity naturally.

Qualities and Health Benefits of Yava

Laghu (Light): Easily digestible; Low glycemic index; slow glucose release. Ruksha (Dry): Reduces Kapha & Meda; Helps in fat metabolism. Kashaya Rasa (Astringent): Absorbs excess moisture and secretions; Reduces polyuria and thirst Lekhana (Scraping): Removes accumulated fat and toxins; Supports weight loss.

Mutrala (Diuretic): Promotes urine flow; Helps in detoxification.

Sthambhana (Binding): Controls excessive urination; Reduces urinary frequency.

Overall, Yava corrects metabolic imbalances, improves digestion, and normalizes carbohydrate metabolism.

Indications

Madhumeha (Diabetes mellitus) Sthoulya (Obesity) Prameha (Urinary disorders with excessive excretion) Medoroga (Disorders of fat metabolism) Kustha (Skin disorders) Arsha (Piles).

Contraindications

Underweight persons — due to its Ruksha and Lekhana properties, which may cause further tissue depletion.

Individuals with Vata disorders such as joint stiffness, dryness, or emaciation. Pregnant and lactating women, as its Ruksha guna may reduce nourishment.

Persons with weak digestion (Mandagni) — should use Yava preparations in moderation or with ghee.

Ayurvedic Recipes of Yava for Diabetic Patients

1. Yava Peya (Barley Gruel)

Ingredients: Whole barley – 50 g; Water – 800 ml; Rock salt – optional; Ghee – optional
Preparation: Roast barley, boil with water until reduced, strain, and serve warm.

2. Yava Manda (Barley Thin Porridge)

Ingredients: Barley flour – 3 tbsp; Water – 500 ml; Cumin powder – pinch
Preparation: Mix flour in water, boil till thick, and add cumin for flavor.

3. Yava Odana (Barley Rice)

Ingredients: Barley grits – 1 cup; Water – 3 cups; Ghee – optional
Preparation: Cook barley with water until soft. Serve with vegetable broth.

4. Yava Rasala (Barley Fermented Drink)

Ingredients: Barley powder – 2 tbsp; Buttermilk – 1 cup; Rock salt – pinch
Preparation: Roast barley, mix with buttermilk, and serve fresh.

Modern Nutritional Perspective

Barley is rich in beta-glucan, a soluble fiber that slows glucose absorption and improves insulin response. It has a low glycemic index and contains essential micronutrients such as

magnesium, chromium, and B vitamins which enhance glucose metabolism.

Regular intake of barley supports improved blood sugar regulation, reduction in cholesterol levels, weight management, and gut microbiota balance. Thus, Ayurvedic wisdom and modern science converge in validating Yava as an ideal grain for diabetic diet management.

CONCLUSION

The Charaka Samhita clearly recognizes Yava as a therapeutic grain for Prameha due to its Kapha-Medohara, Lekhana, and Mutrala properties. Incorporating Yava-based diets such as Peya, Manda, and Odana in daily meals can significantly aid in the management of diabetes by improving metabolism, reducing body fat, and stabilizing blood sugar levels. However, individual constitution (Prakriti), digestive strength (Agni), and associated conditions must be considered before long-term use. The integration of Ayurvedic dietary principles with modern nutrition can offer an effective, holistic, and sustainable approach to diabetes management.

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