

A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW ARTICLE ON AHAR VIDHI VIDHAN

Pooja Singh^{1*}, Gitanjali Sasmal², Vinay Bhardwaj³¹M.D. Scholar, Department of Kriya Sharira Shri NPA Govt. Ayurvedic College, Raipur C.G.²Professor and HOD Department of Kriya Sharira Shri NPA Government Ayurvedic college

Raipur C.G.

³Reader Department of Kriya Sharira Shri NPA Govt. Ayurvedic College, Raipur C.G.

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19589267>***Corresponding Author****Pooja Singh**M.D. Scholar, Department of Kriya
Sharira Shri NPA Govt. Ayurvedic
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Attribution 4.0 International license.**ABSTRACT**

Ahara (diet) is a crucial factor in maintaining health and preventing disease according to *Ayurveda*. The concept of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*, which refers to the rules for dietary intake, is an important aspect of *Ayurvedic* nutrition. This review aims to explore the principles of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* and their relevance in modern times. The study involved a comprehensive review of classical *Ayurvedic* texts and online sources. The rules of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* include consuming warm, unctuous food in proper quantity, eating only after the previous meal is digested, avoiding incompatible food combinations, eating in a suitable environment, avoiding eating too fast or too slow, eating with concentration, and considering individual constitution and digestive capacity. Adherence to these principles is believed to promote optimal digestion, prevent the vitiation of doshas, and maintain overall health. In

contrast, violating these rules can lead to various gastrointestinal disorders and other diseases. The modern lifestyle, characterized by stress and improper dietary habits, has led to an increased prevalence of lifestyle diseases. Incorporating the principles of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* in daily life can help prevent and manage these conditions. Further research is needed to validate the efficacy of these dietary guidelines in the contemporary context. Understanding and applying the concept of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* can contribute to the promotion of healthy eating habits and the prevention of diet-related disorders.

KEYWORD: *Ahara, Ahara Vidhi Vidhana, Dietary rules.*

INTRODUCTION

Ahara is an extremely important entity in everyone's life. No living being can sustain itself without food. *Acharya Charaka* while describing *Trayopastambha* i.e. *Ahara, Swapna (Nidra)*, and *Brahmacharya* state that these three factors support life. Among the *Trayopastambha*, prime importance is given to *Ahara* since it is primarily responsible for the growth, development, and protection of the body from decay and disease.^[1]

Acharya Charaka rightly said that diet sustains life if taken with discipline. If taken incorrectly, it may cause death.^[2]

Acharya Charaka says that such diets and drinks whose colour, smell, taste and touch are pleasing to the senses and conducive to the health, if taken in accordance with the rules; in fact represent the very life of living beings. The effects of such diets and drinks can be directly perceived. If consumed according to the rules, they provide fuel to the *Jatharagni*, promote mental and physical strength, strengthen tissue elements and complexion, and are pleasing to the senses; otherwise, they are harmful. *Hita Ahara* is only important to maintain health.^[3]

In Ayurveda, many concepts such as *Ashtau Ahara Vidhi Visheshaytna, Dwadasha Ashana,* and *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* are given for diet and dietetic rules. Among them, *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* is an important concept. *Ahara Vidhi* refers to the method of diet intake, and *Vidhana* refers to statements, codes, and rules. Thus, *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* refers to the rules for dietary intake. These rules are specified for "How to eat?" This is the *Swasthya* aspect. Second, many diseases in which *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* is mentioned as *Hetu*. Therefore, the advice of *Pathyasevana* and *Nidana Parivarjana*, in the form of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*, can also help in *Vikarashamana*.

In the present era, the lifestyle of Urban Society is becoming very fast and stressful. This is the primary cause of lifestyle diseases. *Ahara* taken without proper methods and understanding of dietetic rules has a significant impact on GI tract disturbance.

GI disorders are caused by faulty dietary habits, while their treatment comprises the suggestion to follow *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This conceptual study involved a review of the available literature in classical Ayurveda texts and online sources.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ahara Vidhi Vidhana

The Ahar Vidhi Vidhana is the rule for the method of food intake for healthy people as well as for some unhealthy people who usually take timely wholesome food. One should follow the specific rules while consuming Ahara to remain healthy and have long life.

They are

1. Ushnam Ashniyat (Food should be warm)

One should eat warm food because it tastes good, the eaten food stimulates the digestive fire, gets digested quickly, carminates flatus, and reduces mucus; hence, one should eat warm food.^[4]

2. Snigdham Ashniyat (Diet should include fat)

One should eat unctuous; because its testes well, eaten food stimulates the unstimulated digestive fire, gets digested quickly, carminates flatus, develops the body, provides firmness to sense organs, increases strength, produces clarity of complexion; hence one should eat unctuous.^[5]

3. Matravat Ahsniyat (in proper quantity)

One should eat in the proper quantity. Food taken in proper quantity without disturbing *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha* promotes life span, easily passes down to the anus, does not disturb the digestive fire, and gets digested without discomfort.^[6]

Humans should always eat a determined quantity of food. Such as a quantity depends on the digestive capacity and nature of the food material.

The quantity of food that is guru is either three-fourths or half of one's satisfaction, and for those that are laghu, it is the quantity that does not cause oversatisfaction.

The consumer of food should make room for the food in the belly in three portions: one portion of the space for solid food items, one for liquids, and one for *vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. While consuming food in such quantities, one is not inflicted with any harmful effects caused

by food consumed in inappropriate quantities.^[7]

4. *Jirne Ashniyat* (Consuming food after digestion of previously consumed food)

One should eat when the previous meal is digested because if one eats during indigestion, the food mixing the product of the earlier meal with that of the later one vitiates all the dosas quickly; in contrast, when one eats after the previous meal is digested well, the dosas are situated in their own locations, *Agni* is stimulated, appetite is arisen, entrances of the channels are open, eructation is pure, heart is normal, flatus passes down and urges of flatus, urine, and feces are attended to, the eaten food promotes only life span without afflicting any dhatu.^[8]

5. *Veerya Avirudham Ashniyat* (Consuming food that is not contraindicated in potency)

One should consume food consisting of items that are non-antagonistic in potency. While doing so, one is not afflicted with the disorder caused by food antagonistic potency.^[9]

Acharya Charak will mention the antagonistic as part of food which is mostly used- Sach as, one should not take fish with milk. Combination of both of them is madhur (rasa), madhur (vipaka), mahabhisyadi, because of sita (milk) and ushna (fish) is viruddhavirya, due to conflicting viryas, it vitiates blood and due to being mahabhisyadi, creates obstruction in channels.^[10]

Antagonistic foods are the cause of impotency, blindness, erysipelas, ascites, pustules, insanity, fistula-in-ano, fainting, narcosis, tympanitis, spasm in throat, anemia, *amavisha*, leukoderma, leprosy, *grahaniroga*, edema, acid gastritis, fever, rhinitis, genetic disorders, and even death.^[11]

6. *Ishte Deshe Ishta Sarvopakaranam Ashniyat* (Eat in suitable place/time)

One should eat in a favorable place and with favorable accessories. While eating in a favorable place, one does not fall victim to psychic disturbance due to such factors found in otherwise places. Similarly, while having favorable accessories.^[12]

7. *Na Atidrutam Ashniyat* (Not consuming food too fast)

One should not eat fast because by eating fast, the food may enter the wrong passage, there is depression, and the food is not established in its place. Moreover, the detection of food defects and the achievement of their merits are not certain.^[13]

8. Na Ativilambitam Ashniyat (Not consuming food too slow)

Eating too slowly can lead to dissatisfaction, overeating, cold food, and irregular digestion.^[14]

9. Ajalapan Ahasan Tanmanabhunjeet (mindful eating)

One should eat without talking or laughing and with concentration. By eating while talking or laughing or with his mind elsewhere, he is inflicted with the same defects as by eating too fast. Even wholesome food taken in proper quantity does not get digested due to anxiety, grief, fear, anger, and improper bedding, leading to indigestion, obesity, malnutrition, and depression.^[15]

10. Atmanam Abhisamikshya Bhunjita (Eat according to self)

One should eat after due consideration of themselves. This is suitable or unsuitable for me if known in this way, then only it becomes suited to his self.

Diet should be based on *Prakruti*, *Satmya*, *Agni*, and *Bala* of the person. Consuming without consideration of *Prakruti*, *Satmya*, *Agni* and *Bala* can lead to *Samprapti* of various *vyadhi*.

Therefore, one should eat after considering themselves.^[16]

CONCLUSION

Ahara Vidhi Vidhana is a scientifically structured dietary guideline that emphasizes not only what to eat but also how and when to eat. Proper adherence ensures optimal functioning of *Jatharagni*, prevention of GI Disorder and promotion of overall health. In the current lifestyledominated era, re-establishing these principles can significantly contribute to disease prevention and health promotion.

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