

**THE SCIENCE OF EATING: EXPLORING ASHT AHARA  
VIDHVISHESHAAYATAN****<sup>1</sup>\*Dr. Nisha Kumari, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Anupam Pathak, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Sudesh Kumar Bhambu**

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**ABSTRACT**

Ayurveda's ancient wisdom on Ahara (diet) is often misunderstood. As a key pillar of health (Trayopastambha), Ahara's balance is crucial. The concept of Balanced Ahara dates back 5000+ years, emphasizing proper food processing, intake methods and timing. Aharvidhvisheshayatane guides balancing food according to Dosha, Prakriti and physical needs, considering properties, origin, environment, season and preparation methods. Aharavidhi vishesh aayatan is basically the rules for eating right and it's all laid out in Ayurvedic texts. Aharvidhvisheshayatane looks at factors like food properties, where it comes from, the environment, season and cooking methods – helping you balance food for your body type and needs.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, ahara vidhi vishesh aayatan, prakriti, ahara, dosha.

**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda aims to keep people healthy and cure illnesses. Diet (Ahara) and lifestyle (Vihara) are crucial for health and can cause diseases if not right. Ahara's a key pillar of life, listed first in Trayopastambha, showing its importance.<sup>[1]</sup> Ahara's considered the most important, leading the three pillars that sustain life.<sup>[2]</sup>

Ayurveda emphasizes Agnibala and food intake (Aharamatra) varies for each person based on their digestive strength.<sup>[3]</sup> Samyoga means combining two or more substances, creating unique properties that aren't seen in the individual components. Ayurveda's got some solid concepts for staying healthy through food. Acharya Charaka talks about Ashta Aharavidhi Visheshayatana – eight factors that decide what's good for you.<sup>[4]</sup>

According to acharya charak food is the foundation of life, and it's what everyone craves. It influences your looks, voice, lifespan, clarity, happiness, growth, power and even intelligence.<sup>[5]</sup>

Aharavidhivisheshayatana highlights factors like food properties, source, environment, season and cooking methods that impact Ahara. It shows how to balance diet based on your dosha, prakriti and body's needs.

#### Ashta Aharavidhi vishesh ayatana

ॐ तत्र खल्विमान्यष्टावाहारविधिविशेषायतनानि भवन्ति; तथाथा—  
प्रकृतिकरणसंयोगराशिदेशकालोपयोगसंस्थोपयुक्तष्टमानि ( भवन्ति ) ॥ २१ ॥<sup>[6]</sup>

#### Ashta Ahara Vidhi Visheshayatana

1. Prakruti (nature of food)
2. Karana (methods of preparation of food)
3. Samyoga (combination of food substances)
4. Rashi (quantity of food)
5. Desha (place where food items are grown)
6. Kala (time of consumption of food)
7. Upyogasamstha (rules of consumption of food)
8. Upabhokta/Upyokta- (the person who consumes Food)

#### 1. Prakriti

Prakriti is the inherent nature (swabhava) of substances used as food and drugs. It refers to natural properties such as guru (heavy), laghu (light) etc.

**Example-** urad and boar meat are guru, mudga and deer meat are laghu.

## 2. Karana

Karana refers to processing or refining natural products to add new properties. This involves techniques like treating with water and fire, cleansing, churning and using specific places, times and containers. These methods infuse new properties into the products over time.

**Example:** Curd increases phlegm but the curd obtained after churning is not phlegmatic.

## 3. Samyoga

Samyoga means combining two or more substances, creating unique properties that aren't seen in the individual components.

**Example:** honey and ghee in same quantity or combining honey, fish and milk - each mix has distinct effects.

## 4. Rashi

Rashi refers to the quantity of food, considering two aspects:

- Sarvagraha: Total quantity of food consumed.
- Parigraha: Quantity of individual ingredients.

## 5. Desha

Desha refers to the place or region where food is grown and distributed, impacting its qualities.

### Types 3

A. Anoop desha B. Jangam desha C. Sadharan desha

**Example:** Food from Himalayas is generally heavier, while desert-grown food is lighter. So, choose food suited to your local environment (Bhoomi Desha) and your body's needs (Dehadesha).

## 6. Kala

Kala refers to time, which influences food in two ways

**A- Nityaga** (Eternal Time): Seasonal cycles affecting food growth and suitability.

### Example

- Rainy season: Sweet, sour and salty foods balance Vata
- Summer: Sweet, cold and liquid foods help combat heat.

**B- Avasthika** (Conditional Time): Impact on digestion, metabolism and health.

**Example**

- Atisara (diarrhea): Fasting (langhana) helps
- Jaundice: Skip spicy food
- New fever (nava jwara): Fast for 7 days
- Chronic fever (jeerna jwara): Ghee is beneficial
- General rule: Eat only when previous meal is digested.

**7. Upayogasamstha**

Upayogasamstha refers to the rules for eating.

**Example**

- Eat when hungry
- Stop when satisfied
- Consider digestion time.

Basically, mindful eating based on your body's cues.

**8. Upayokta**

Upayokta is the person eating the food and their unique constitution (okasatmya) matters. So, diet rules are tailored to the individual.

**DISCUSSION**

Bad eating habits are a major factor in today's health issues. We need to spread awareness about fresh food and mindful eating. Ayurveda's Aharavidhivisheshayatana has guidelines for cooking and eating that support health and help manage diseases.

We're ignoring our digestion, nutrition, and eating timing, opting for tasty, processed food instead. This leads to lifestyle diseases like obesity, diabetes and hypertension. Ashta Aharavidhivisheshayatana's guidelines are super relevant today.

**CONCLUSION**

Understanding and avoiding Viruddha Ahara (incompatible diet) is crucial for maintaining health and preventing diseases. Regular consumption of incompatible foods disturbs digestion, aggravates Doshas, and leads to various health issues. By following Ayurvedic guidelines and being mindful of food combinations, we can promote overall well-being and reduce the risk of lifestyle diseases.

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