

**CONCEPT OF ASHTA AAHAR VIDHI VISHESHAYATANE: AN  
AYURVEDIC REVIEW****<sup>1\*</sup>Dr. Kailas R. Sonmankar and <sup>2</sup>Dr. Pritee P. Patange**<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Kriya Sharir, R. A. Podar Ayurvedic Medical College Worli Mumbai-400018.<sup>2</sup>PG Scholar, Kriya Sharir R. A. Podar Ayurvedic Medical College Worli Mumbai-400018.Article Received on  
02 Jan. 2025,Revised on 22 Jan. 2025,  
Accepted on 11 Feb. 2025

DOI: 10.20959/wjpr20254-35617

**\*Corresponding Author****Dr. Kailas R. Sonmankar**Associate Professor, Kriya  
Sharir, R. A. PodarAyurvedic Medical College  
Worli Mumbai-400018.**ABSTRACT**

The Ahara diet refers to dietary practices rooted in traditional Indian systems like Ayurveda, where food (Ahara) is considered a critical component of health, well-being, and balance. The diet emphasizes the quality, timing, and nature of food based on an individual's constitution (Prakriti) and current health status. As growth, strength, good health, complexion and the alertness of senses are traceable to food and its inequality causes illness. Diet therapy is a broad term for the practical application of the concept of nutrition as a preventive or corrective treatment of diseases. It comprises food prescribed, regulated or restricted in kind and amount for therapeutic and other purposes. This usually involves the modification of an existing dietary lifestyle to promote optimum health. Ayurvedic principles are concerned about every part of the body, mentally and physically through diet. One has to consume the diet; which is suitable to him in all aspects. If one

doesn't follow these laws of consuming Ahara he has to face health problems. So, how we eat is as much as important as what we eat. Ashta- Ahara-Vidhi-Vishesh-Ayatanani (Eight aspects of Dietetics) means the factors responsible for good and bad effect of the Ahara and methods of Ahara sevan. These eight factors should be considered before taking food.

**KEYWORDS:** Ahara, Aahar-vidhi, Aaharvidhivisheshayatane.

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of Ayurveda is to promote and maintain the health of the healthy person (Swastha) and to cure the diseases. Ahara (diet) & Vihara (lifestyle) are the main factors which influence on our health status and are responsible for generation of diseases. Ahara is one of the main pillars of human body as included in "Trayopastambha".

As Ahara is kept first in this sutra of Trayopastambha; it denotes that it is the main among three for maintenance of human life.<sup>[1]</sup> Prevalence of life style disorders has dramatically increased worldwide in 21st century. These occur neither due to single cause nor does it have single solution. Its treatment is combined effect of medicine, balanced diet, behavioural changes and exercise. In Ayurveda the concept of Balanced Ahara dates back more than 5000 years. The food which passes through the process of Aharan is called Ahara.

In Ayurveda, types, processing, right method of intake of Ahara is discussed in detail very beautifully. Ojas, Teja, Dhatus, senses, Bala (strength), Tushti (satisfaction of mind), Arogya (Health), are all dependant on food.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to Charak samhita, the life of all living things is food and all world seek food. Complexion, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength and intelligence are all established in food.<sup>[3]</sup>

Nowadays, many lifestyle diseases are taking place due to lack of or incorrect information about cooking procedures, irregular timings and consuming imbalanced diet and not following the prescribed rules for preparing, preserving and eating food. Also, due to competitive environment, job insecurity, desire to make extra money, fulfilment of family needs are some of the reasons why all people are getting addicted to bad eating habits or giving food as a secondary importance. In today's fast paced life; most of the health problems are developed due to some sort of digestive distress.

Ayurveda strongly believes that; the reason for all the diseases lies within our digestion process and power.<sup>[4]</sup> Vidhi means laws and Aahar-vidhi means laws of dietetics which are beautifully explained in Ayurvedic literature. Aaharvidhivisheshayatane emphasizes various factors that influence Aahar, such as its properties, origin, environmental factors, season and methods of preparation. They guide us about how to balance diet according to one's dosha, prakriti and physical needs.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials on the subject Manas have been gathered from a variety of periodicals, Ayurvedic text books, original literature, Sanskrit dictionaries, reliable websites (Pub Med, for example), reputable magazines, etc.

### A) ASHTA AAHAR VIDHI VISHESHAYATANE

There are eight specific factors of method of dieting such as-nature, processing, combination, quantity, place, time, rules for use and consumer, the eighth one.<sup>[5]</sup>

**1) Prakruti:** Prakruti is swabhava which is the natural existence of properties like guru etc. in substances used as food and drug; properties such as-black gram (heavy) and green gram (light), meat of pork (heavy) and meat of deer (light).

**2) Karana:** Karana is the making or refinement of the natural products which means imparting other properties. These properties are infused by contact of water and fire, cleansing, churning, place, time, infusing, steeping etc. and also by long duration, utensil etc.

**3) Samyoga:** Samyoga (combination) is aggregation of two or more substances. This exhibits peculiarities which are not seen in case of individual substances. Such as combination of honey and ghee, and that of honey, fish and milk.

**4) Rashi:** Rashi consists of sarvagraha and parigraha which ascertain the results of the food taken in proper and improper quantity. The accounting of the quantity of the entire food in totality is sarvagraha while parigraha is the quantity of individual items in food. Thus, accounting of the entire is sarvagraha while that from all angles is parigraha.

**5) Desha:** Desha denotes place relating to growth as well as distribution of the substance and also the suitability in respect of place. Habitat is a geographic region. It indicates variations in the qualities of food substances due to difference in soil and climate. Food items grown in the region of Himalayas are heavy in property while those grown in the desert or sandy region are light. Ahara should be taken according to both Bhoomi Desha & Dehadesha.

**6) Kala:**<sup>[6]</sup> Kala is eternally moving as well as conditional. The conditional one is related to disorder while the eternally moving one to seasonal suitability. Kala is a basic cause for the Parinaman of immature substance to mature & also its destruction i.e., Utpati-Sthithi-Laya. Nityaga and Avasthika are two types of Kala.

**Nityaga:** is one in which Ahara is consumed according to Rutu. For example, during rainy season sweet, sour and salty foods are preferred to pacify increased vata. During summer, the sun draws up the moisture of the nature. Hence, sweet, cold, liquid food and more drinks are beneficial.

**Avasthika:** Intake of Ahara according to condition of body i.e. vyadhi awastha. For example, langhana is advised in atisara, spicy food should be avoided in jaundice, in nava jwara, langhana should be done for 7 days, but in jeernajwara ghritapana is indicated. Also, food should be taken only after complete digestion of previous food.

**7) Upayogasamstha:** Upayogasamstha denotes the rules for dieting. This depends on the digested food.

**8) Upayokta:** Upayokta is that who consumes the food. On him depends the 'okasatmya'. Thus, are described the specific factors of the method of dieting.

### AHARVIDHIDHAN

This is the prescribed method of dieting for the healthy and the sick (in certain cases) who take wholesome food timely and usually-one should eat warm, unctuous, in proper quantity, after the previous food is digested, non-antagonistic, in favourable place, with all the favourable accessories, not too fast, not too slow, not while talking or laughing and with full concentration after due consideration to the self.<sup>[7]</sup>

**1) Ushnam ashniyat:** One should eat warm (food) because it tastes well, the eaten food stimulates the digestive fire, gets digested quickly, carminates flatus, reduces mucus; hence one should eat warm.<sup>[8]</sup>

**In rules for taking Ahara:** When food is taken Ushna, proper taste of food is developed due to secretion of jivasthit bhodhak kapha. It brings ruchi in food. Ushna ahara also increases jatharagni consequently ingested food gets easily digested. Vata Anulomana is achieved as well as stimulation of Pitta results in secretions of various digestive juices. It decreases excessive kapha dosha. That's why it is advised to eat ushna ahar.

Fresh prepared Ushna Ahara if ingested develops good taste. Jathragni gets stimulated. Food is digested faster. It induces vatanuloman, decreases excess Kaph Dosha. Brings laghuta to

the body. Also detoxify the koshtha. Ushna ahara is also said to be increasing strength. All these effects are seen when Ushna (warm) Ahara is taken.<sup>[9]</sup>

Sushruta has described Tyajjahara (food which should be avoided) which includes ahara prepared long time ago (payurshit), sheeta ahara and punaha ushnikrut ahara (food made hot again after long time of preparation).<sup>[10]</sup>

**2) Snigdham ashniyat:** One should eat snigdha (unctuous); because it tastes well, stimulates the agni (digestive fire), gets digested quickly, carminates flatus, develops the body, provides firmness to sense organs, increases strength, clears the complexion; hence one should eat unctuous.<sup>[11]</sup>

Snigdha word includes Sneha dravyas like oil or ghee but also food having Snigdhtva lika Godhuma, Sali rice etc. Snigdha guna moisturises the food bolus and makes it easier to swallow and to digest. It decreases the Jaraavastha (senility) of body. In Kashyapsamhita, it is said that Snigdha Ahara replenishes the body, offers energy, bala, varna, paurusham (virility) to the body and helps in Dhatuupchay.

**3) Matravat ashniyat:** One should eat in proper quantity. Food taken in proper quantity without disturbing tridoshas only promotes life-span, helps in easy passage of food through GI tract, does not disturb the agni (digestive fire), gets digested without any discomfort; hence one should eat in proper quantity.<sup>[12]</sup>

The food taken in proper quantity provides certainly strength, complexion and happy life to the person without disturbing normalcy.<sup>[13]</sup> Matravat ahara is praised as it maintains normal levels of vatadi doshas in their own location and helps in smooth digestion of ingested food from mouth to anus. If Ahara is taken amatravat i.e., not in proper amount then Vatadi doshas get vitiated.

Regarding the Matra of food intake, Charakacharya had mentioned the idea of Kukshi and its three parts. There are three sections: one for liquid, one for solid food, and one left empty for doshas for their sancharan.<sup>[14]</sup>

Charakacharya has mentioned lakshana of matravat ahara.<sup>[15]</sup>

They are as follows.

1. Ahar which does not exerts any pressure on stomach.

2. Ahar which does not exerts pressure on heart.
3. Ahar which does not exerts pressure on flanks.
4. Ahar which does not cause any heaviness in abdomen.
5. Ahar which replenishes all the senses.
6. Ahar offering relief from hunger and thirst.
7. Ahar after eating still feeling of comfort in daily activities like sitting, sleeping, walking, breathing, talking etc.
8. Ahar which gets easily digested either in morning or evening.
9. Ahar which promotes complexion gives strength and develops the body.

Matravat Ahara is the amount of Ahara consumed without disturbing the body's Doshas and Dhatus balance. It should be considered the appropriate amount of Ahara. There is no doubt that this amount will differ from person to person.

**4) Jirne ashniyat:** One should eat when the previous meal is completely digested because if one eats during indigestion, the eaten food mixes with the ahar rasa of the earlier meal which vitiates all the three dosas quickly. On the contrary, when one eats only after the previous meal is digested well, the dosas are situated in their own locations, agni is stimulated, appetite arises, entrances of the channels open up, eructations are pure, heart is in normal pace, flatus passes down and urges of flatus, urine and faeces are attended to, the eaten food promotes longer life-span without afflicting any dhatu. Hence one should eat after the previous meal is digested.

Sushrutacharya also described Lakshana of matravat ahara as it gets digested quickly and results in dhatusatmya. Food taken at the proper time bestows satisfaction, accustomed food do not give troubles to the body, light foods get digested quickly; unctuous and warm foods bestow strength to the body and digestive fire; food taken quickly gets digested properly, food with more of liquids does not aggravate the dosās; food of proper quantity gets digested comfortably and bestows normalcy of the dhātus (tissues)<sup>[16]</sup>

**5) Virya aviruddham ashniyat:** One should take food consisting of the items non-antagonistic or opposite in potency. Viruddha ahar means taking ahar dravya having sheeta and ushna virya together. By taking virya aviruddha ahar, one is not afflicted with the disorders caused by food antagonistic in potency or viruddha ahar. Hence one should take the food non-antagonistic in potency.

As per Sushrutacharya, Virya is special power of that Dravya responsible for the action of the Dravya on the body. Virya-viruddham means taking opposite virya dravya in combination. The incompatibility of diet is of various types. For eg. Some food items become incompatible when mixed, some when mixed with different proportion, some by mode of preparation etc. Some examples of viruddha ahar are fish with milk, fruits with milk, honey and ghee in equal quantity etc.

In Kashyap Samhita, benefits of virya aviruddha ahar are mentioned as it promotes longer life span, health, complexion, strength and comfort.<sup>[17]</sup> On the other hand, viruddha ahar causes adverse effects opposite to above mentioned benefits. Viruddha ahar eaten regularly can cause adverse effect on body may become responsible for various disease.

**6) Eshte Deshe eshta sarvopkaranam ashniyat:** One should eat in favourable place and with favourable accessories. While eating in favourable place one does not fall victim to psychological disturbances otherwise it will affect one's hunger. Hence, one should eat in favourable place and with favourable accessories.<sup>[18]</sup>

Eshta means beloved, liked and useful; desha means place of eating food and upakaran means dining appliances. One should eat only where that person likes to eat. Eshta Deshe means the place which is neat clean, pleasant and mentally relaxing.

Sushrutacharya had described in detail about how should be the 'mahanas' (kitchen) i.e., place of food preparation, it should be properly ventilated, well-lighted, having proper level of dining, Hygienic etc. All these things should be kept in mind while considering eshta desha.<sup>[19]</sup>

Place of taking Ahara should be properly ventilated, ramya, favourable, hygienic, pleasant and calm. It should be decorated with different fragrant flowers and must have plain surface. Good smell calms senses and stimulates digestive fire i.e., Jathragni.<sup>[20]</sup>

**7) Natidrutam ashniyat:** One should not eat too fast because by eating fast the food may enter into a wrong passage as the food is not established in its place; also, one cannot experience the natural taste of the food, one cannot detect if there are any flaws in the food as well as can't appreciate if the food is nice. Hence one should not eat too fast.



Druti means in hurry. Atidruti means taking food too hurriedly. It is not advisable. If one eats food too hurriedly one cannot enjoy the food by all his sense for example real taste of the food, its smell, the look of the food, its different varieties etc. All of these things stimulate satiety to mind and body.

If one eats very fast, he might choke, vomit and develop disliking towards Ahara. Due to fast eating, one can't taste original Swada of that Ahara. Food is not chewed well thus can't be digested properly. Due to fast eating, one is not able to find out any lacunae or any Bhojanga Dosha i.e., any non-consumable substance like stones, hair etc. and avoid them. Not enjoying food, we eat with all our senses and not being grateful is like insulting Ahara. So, one should not eat food too hurriedly.

**8) Nativilambitam ashniyat:** One should not eat too slow because by eating too slow one does not get satisfaction, eats more, food becomes cold and is digested irregularly. Hence one should not eat too slow.

As eating time increases from preparation food gets colder and less tasty. And as a result food does not get digested properly. So, one should avoid eating too slowly.

**9) Ajalpan ahasan ashniyat:** One should avoid talking or laughing while eating and have food with all his concentration. By taking food while talking or laughing or with mind busy elsewhere, he is inflicted with the same defects as by eating too fast. The Reasons given are, one who talks or laughs during meals or who is preoccupied in other thoughts, suffers the same disorders as the one who eats too hurriedly i.e., choking, vomiting etc. Talking and laughing divert the attention from the meals. On the contrary food eaten with all our attention does not cause any adverse effects to body as well as mind.

**10) Atmanam abhisamikshya ashniyat:** One should eat after due consideration to his self. If what I am eating is suitable or unsuitable for me. If known in this way then only it becomes suited to his self. Hence one should eat after considering his self well.

Atmanam abhisamikshya means one should eat what is satmya (suitable) to himself with appropriate portion. This may vary from person to person because nobody is same as the other.



## DISCUSSION

Improper dietary habit is primary reason for the increasing trend of health disorders in present era. There is need to awake the people about the Importance of fresh food and the method of diet intake. These methods of cooking and eating food which are mentioned in Ayurveda are known as "Aharvidhivisheshayatana". The application of these rules is very important for maintenance of health as well as preventive & curative aspect for many diseases.

Nowadays, we are neglecting the digestive capacity, nutritional value of food products and time sense of food intake and are more interested in eating tasty, ready to eat food materials. It is also observed that many diseases are arising merely due to these faulty dietary habits. In this context, concept of Ashta Aharvidhivisheshayatana is most ideal in today's lifestyle. Life style diseases are defined as the diseases linked with the way people live their life. Obesity, Stroke, HTN, some Cancers, Diabetes Mellitus are some of the life style disorders.

Ayurveda explained this phenomenon under the heading of "Prajnaparadha", which is one of the three basic causes of any disease. Management of these life style disorders include various aspects such as Dinacharya, Rutucharya, Panchakarma and Rasayana. As Ahara is the main part of day to day life it has a great clinical importance in treatment of diseases.

## CONCLUSION

In today's fast paced life, many rules regarding diet have been compromised which is showing overall declining status of Health in the society. The rules & regulations related to Ahara have been forgotten. Ayurveda is a store house of much valuable knowledge for a disease free life. Therefore, in this context, there is a need to enlighten the concept of Ahar Vidhi Visheshayatana. The aim of Ayurveda is Swasthyarakshana and Vyadhiparimoksha, which can be fulfilled by these dietetic rules. Diet is considered as basic most need and as a supporting pillar of life. Not only diet but also method of food intake is important for healthy life.

According to Kashyap Samhita, food as always been an important way to treat illness and maintain health and that's why he called food as Mahabhaishyajya (most important Medicine).<sup>[21]</sup> So, many diseases can be prevented arising merely due to faulty dietary habits. Thus, healthier eating habits i.e. knowledge and application of Ahar-vidhi-visheshayatana can help to lower the risk for many lifestyle disorders in present era.

**REFERENCES**

1. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Sutrasthan 11/35, pg no 75.
2. Murthy Srikantha K.R., vol 1, Susruta Samhita, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2010; sutrasthan, 46/3, pg no 370.
3. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Sutrasthan 27/349, pg no 225.
4. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 1/21-22, pg no 305.
5. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 1/21, pg no 306.
6. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 1/24, pg no 306.
7. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 1/24, pg no 307.
8. Murthy Srikantha K.R., vol 1, Susruta Samhita, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2010; sutrasthan, 46/466, pg no 445.
9. Murthy Srikantha K.R., vol 1, Susruta Samhita, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2010; sutrasthan, 46/47, pg no 447.
10. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 1/24 -2, pg no 307.
11. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 1/24 -3, pg no 307.
12. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Sutrasthan 1/8, pg no 33.
13. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 2/3, pg no 309.
14. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 2/6, pg no 310.
15. Murthy Srikantha K.R., vol 1, Susruta Samhita, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2010; sutrasthan, 46/466-467, pg no 445-446.
16. Pandit H.S. Kashyapa Samhita Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, 2022; Khilasthan 4/6 page no 378.

17. Sharma P. V., Caraka-samhita, vol 1, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2011; Vimansthan 1/24 -6, pg no 308.
18. Murthy Srikantha K.R., vol 1, Susruta Samhita, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2010; sutrasthan, 46/465, pg no 445.
19. Murthy Srikantha K.R., vol 1, Susruta Samhita, chaukhamba Orientalia, Varanasi, 2010; sutrasthan, 46/458-459, pg no 444.
20. Pandit H.S. Kashyapa Samhita Chaukhambha Sanskrit Sansthan, Varanasi, 2022; Khilasthan 4/6 page no 378.