



AHARA:- CONCEPT OF FOOD INTAKE IN AYURVEDA WITH COMPARISON TO PRESENT ERA

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a holistic healing science where health is considered as a prerequisite for leading a positive life. It is the unique gift of Lord Brahma to the mankind and is believed to be the origin of all other system of Medical Sciences. Anadi** Which is a characteristic of creativity and self determinative with the true existence of facts and incidence, the fundamentals of these Samhita (literature) are always eternal and Suitable for all the time period. In present era, Diet, Sleep and Lifestyle are the major factors thought to influence susceptibility to many diseases, Ayurveda place special emphasis on Ahara (Diet), Nidra (sleep), Brahmacharya (the way of ideal lifestyle) as three basic pillars of life, which holds the healthiness of mankind's among these diet play a important role to maintain the health. Nowadays people are attracted to the outside foods which are in the form of fast foods and junks also less hygiene. In fact they have a damaging effect on our health.

KEYWORDS : Ahara, Diet, Pillars of Life, Food, Life Style Disorder, Health.

INTRODUCTION

Ahara is the most essential requirements of all living beings. Nowadays there is increased prevalence of life style disorders, in which faulty dietary habits play an important role, Ayurveda has given detail discipline and process to take Ahara for an individual and in general both. This discipline is titled as Ahara and explained under Trayopastambha. Trayopastambha is a word made up of three terms i.e. Traya which means three, Upa which means sub and Stambha means pillar, Thus Trayopastambha means three supporting pillars. They are as below mentioned –

1. Ahara (food)
2. Nidra (sleep) and
3. Brahmacharya (celibacy)

They are said to be the support pillars because they support our life and all many activities related to life.¹

Trayopastambhas are said to support the body just like the house is supported by the pillars of the house² among these Ahara stands first. In the modern lifestyle, we do not take care of our health and the consequences of eating habits and other styles of life which are harmful for us.

Ahara (food)

Food is one of the main sources needed for supporting our life. The source of food may either be a plant product or animal product. When one consumes good food he will keep healthy. On the other hand when he consumes food which is not good, conducive or balanced, he will be a victim of many diseases. The energy needed for our daily life activities is mostly derived from the food itself.

While considering food we should also look into the methods of preparation of food and also the way in which it is served. The food will have a very good impact and positive vibes on health when it is prepared by our loved people with good and happy feel and also served with love and affection. On the other hand when the food is cooked and served by a person who is not compatible to us or in a mood of grief or anger, the

food will have a negative effect on our physical and mental health.

Now a days people are attracted to the outside foods which are in the form of fast foods and junks also less hygiene. In fact they have a damaging effect on our health. The people who prepare such foods especially the road side vendors will recycle the food products like oil etc to prepare stuffs. The food is not stored or preserved properly. Clean water is not used to prepare foods and the vendors do not maintain hygiene around them and also use unclean hands to prepare foods. All these are responsible for many food induced health issues and also Food Poisoning.

Reused oil can create free radicals inside the system can cause many ailments in the long run. According to the diet consultant NainiSetalvad, free radicals attach themselves to the healthy cells and lead to disease. These free radicals can be carcinogenic i.e. can cause cancer and also increased bad cholesterol and atherosclerosis and many diseases due to the blockages occurring in the arteries.³

Some other potential health risks of consuming reused oil includes :

- Acidity
- Heart disease
- Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease
- Irritable throat
- Anemia

Tempted by delicious foods many times we tend to over eat in spite of our stomach being filled. Sometimes we also over eat due to lack of control over eating or erratic eating practices and indiscipline with respect to food. This is harmful for health. Ayurveda advocates reasonable eating according to one's capacity. It hints towards eating solid foods to one third of one's full capacity. What will happen if we overeat beyond our capacity?

When we consume more food crossing our limitation it may

cause one or more of the below mentioned conditions -

- Vomiting sensation
- Feeling of heaviness in the stomach
- Lassitude

According to Ayurvedic principles the koshta or stomach should be divided into three equal parts. Among this –

1/3 portion should be reserved for solid foods
1/3 portion should be reserved for liquid foods and
1/3 of the stomach portion should be left empty for the action and movements of doshas⁴.

One should avoid heavy food for dinner as it becomes very difficult to digest. Ayurveda recommends that lunch should be the largest meal of the day, since that is the time when digestive fire is working at its maximum potency. Lunch time or noon is also Pitta kala (time when digestive fire is optimally functional).

Dinner should be lighter than lunch, and should ideally be eaten before 8pm. If you eat after 10 pm, the food is difficult to digest and may cause Ama (toxins) to accumulate in the system.

Ayurveda suggests to eat the fruits and the vegetables according to the season, so as to get optimum nutrition from it.

Ahara Vidhi Vidhan (Rules for taking food.),

- Eat warm food
- Eat unctuous food
- Eat food in proper quantity
- Eat food only when you feel hungry
- Eat food which is not contradictory (desa, kala, dosha, dusya satmya ahara)
- Eat food in desired place and in desired environment
- Do not eat in hurry
- Do not eat very slowly
- Eat with concentration without talking and laughing
- Eat after considering oneself thoroughly.

DISCUSSION:-

Improper dietary is primary reason for the increasing trends of health disorders in current era. Intake of frozen, canned, processed food plays an important role. So there is need to awake the people about the fresh food. According to Charak Samhita processing of substances which leads to alteration in inherent properties of substances is known as Samskara. If it is possible, we can plant and grow our own vegetables if we have small garden. Food products grown in our own backyard will be healthier and conducive. We can also take part in adding to the greenery of the environment and in reducing the pollution by doing so.

Nowadays it is very difficult to get fresh fruits and vegetables. Lot of chemicals are used to grow fruits and vegetables and also to haste them grow and mature in quick time. Consumption of such fruits and vegetables poses danger to our health.

Due to wrong food habits and choices man is becoming victim of many diseases like Diabetes, Obesity, Gastritis etc. eating without reasoning the quality and quantity of food and binge eating is leading to the manifestation of serious diseases like obesity which by itself is root cause for many systemic diseases.

Instead of correcting their food habits the modern man is of the belief that all their health issues can be addressed and solved by consumption of medicines. Example a Diabetic is convinced in taking insulin and anti-diabetic medicines while

not giving interest in making good changes in their food patterns. By doing so they would give scope for many other diseases and complications appearing in future days. Right food choices may prevent many diseases. At the same time alterations in diet habits and taking healthy foods in proper quality and quantity will help in recovering from long standing diseases.

CONCLUSION:-

Our classics are store houses of valuable thoughts. Diet is considered as basic most cause of life. Not only diet but also method of food intake has an important role in the continuity of healthy life. The rules and methods of diet intake are mentioned in Charak Samhita as Asta Ahra Vidhi Vishesha Ayatan. The application of these rules is effective in maintenance of Health as well as in curative aspects of many diseases. 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. In the present modern lifestyle we do not take care of our health and the consequences of our eating and drinking habits and other styles of life. It is very important aspect regarding dietetics that when to take food. Many diseases can be prevented arising merely due to faulty dietary habits.

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