



THE UNDERSTANDING OF VIRUDDHA AAHAR IN TODAY'S SCENARIO: AN AYURVEDIC AND MODERN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, the concept of Viruddha Ahar (incompatible food combinations) plays a vital role in maintaining health and preventing disease. While modern nutritional science has begun to understand and validate the physiological basis behind some food incompatibilities, Ayurveda has long emphasized their importance in daily diet. This article explores the concept of Viruddha Ahar, its classical understanding, practical examples, contemporary relevance, health consequences, and guidelines for preventing diet-related disorders in today's fast-paced, globalized food culture.

KEYWORDS : Viruddha Ahar, Biochemical Conflicts

INTRODUCTION

Food is not merely a source of energy but a potent therapeutic agent in Ayurveda. The ancient seers of Ayurveda stated, "Ahara sambhavam vastu roga ahara sambhava" — health and disease are both outcomes of food. Among various aspects of Ayurvedic dietary guidelines, Viruddha Ahar holds great significance. In today's era of fusion food, fast food, and haphazard dietary habits, understanding Viruddha Ahar is essential for preventing lifestyle-related diseases and ensuring holistic well-being.

2. Definition Of Viruddha Ahar

The term Viruddha means "opposite" or "antagonistic," and Ahar means "diet or food." Thus, Viruddha Ahar refers to food combinations that are inherently incompatible with each other in terms of:

- Desha (region)
- Kala (time or season)
- Agni (digestive fire)
- Dosha (body constitution)
- Matra (quantity)
- Satmya (wholesomeness)
- Virya (potency)

Charaka Samhita classifies 18 types of Viruddha Ahar, such as Desha Viruddha, Kala Viruddha, Agni Viruddha, Dosha Viruddha, Veerya Viruddha, and others.

Aims And Objectives

The Concept of Viruddha Ahara – A Systemic Review

- 1. Understanding Viruddha Ahara:** To provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of Viruddha Ahara and its significance in Ayurveda.
- 2. Promoting Digestive Health:** To highlight the importance of food compatibility in maintaining digestive health and preventing disorders.
- 3. Encouraging Mindful Eating:** To foster awareness about mindful eating practices that align with Ayurvedic principles.

Types of Viruddha ahara In Ayurveda texts, certain types of Viruddha Ahara have been told.

What is Viruddha Ahar?

A Foundational Concept in Ayurveda.

- **Viruddha** means "opposite" or "contradictory."
- **Ahar** means "food."

Viruddha Ahar refers to the consumption of foods that are incompatible with each other, leading to negative health effects.[2] Ayurveda posits that certain food combinations, even if the individual foods are healthy, can disrupt metabolism, inhibit tissue formation, and create toxins in the body.[3][4] This concept emphasizes that not only what we eat, but how, when, and in what combination we eat is crucial for health.[5]

All drugs and diet which dislodge the various doshas but dosh not expel them out of body one be regarded as unwholesome .such of drugs & diet are unwholesome for normal dhatus (tissue element) and doshas of the body ,are in opposed to proper growth of tissues elements and doshas

The ahara should be unwholesome when it is not taken properly in the quantity, combination & in right way and natural sources

Those amount of food substances vitiates /expels kapha pitta from their (shtana) but not from body (sharir)those substances are called unwholesome diet (viruddha aahar)

The amount of food which disturbs the equilibrium of doshas but not expels from out of body called unwholesome diet /unbalanced food .

As in Charaka Samhita, 18 kinds of Viruddha are explained briefly: 18 Types of Viruddha Ahara.

Types Of Viruddha Ahara

In Ayurveda texts, certain types of Viruddha Ahara have been told. As in Charaka Samhita, 18 kinds of Viruddha

Are Explained Briefly:

1. Desha (place) Viruddha	2. Kala Viruddha
3. Agni Viruddha	4. Matra (quantity) Viruddha
5. Satmya (wholesome) Viruddha	6. Dosha Viruddha
7. Sanskar (mode of preparation) Viruddha	8. Veerya (potency) Viruddha
9. Koshtha Viruddha	10. Avastha (state of health) Viruddha
11. Krama (sequence) Viruddha	12. Parihar Viruddha
13. Upachar (treatment) Viruddha	14. Paak (cooking) Viruddha

15. Samyoga (combination) Viruddha	16. Hriday Viruddha
17. Sampad (richness of quality) Viruddha	18. Vidhi (rules for eating) Viruddha

Comparative Examples From The Present Perspective

S. No.	Viruddha Ahara	Examples from Ayurveda texts	Examples from the present era
1.	Desha viruddha	I am consuming rooksha and teekshna dravyas in jangala desha and snigdha and sheeta guna dravyas in anoopa desha.	Eating spicy food in a hot city
2.	Kaala viruddha	Consuming sheeta kaala and katu-ushna ahara in ushna kaala (greeshma ritu)	Ice cream in the winter season Pickles chatanis /excessive tea in summer
3.	Agni viruddha	We are consuming food that is not made with these varieties of jatharagni.	- Large Heavy meals at night in Tikshnagni are easily digested, whereas, in Mandagni, food is slowly digested and takes a long time. - Sizzling Browne ice cream with Hot Chocolate - Cold water or Soft Drinks before Hot tea - Instant noodles
4.	Matra viruddha	Consuming an equal quantity of madhu and ghrita (ghee).	Popcorn with Watching Movie
5.	Satmya viruddha	For a person who is habituated to katu and ushna ahara, swadu and sheeta veerya ahara.	- Vegetarian person eating cake containing eggs. - Instant noodles - Frozen food/ packed food
6.	Dosha viruddha	Consumption of ahara and aushada, like the qualities of vatadi dosha but adverse to the person's practice constitutes.	- Kapha prakriti person eating ice cream. - Vata prakriti person eating light, dry foods Excessive exercise - Heavy diet to childrems
7.	Samskara viruddha	The meat of a peacock bird roasted on a castor stick.	- Potato chips - Marinating Chicken with dahi. - Iced tea. - Cold coffee - Cold coffee with ice cream
8.	Veerya viruddha	Consumption of ahara and aushada, which are cold potency, along with those which are hot in potency.	- Eating Ice cream with Hot fudge - Milkshakes, Fruit salads. - Iced tea
9.	Koshtha viruddha	Administration of medicines having manda veerya and mild purgatives to a person having. Krura koshta and, on the	- Milk is given in crura koshta person. - Spicy Punjabi food with cold drinks - Cold water or Soft

		contrary, administering medications that are a guru in nature and strong purga- tives to a person with mrudu koshta is considered as koshta.	Drinks before Hot tea
10.	Avastha viruddha	The use of foods that cause aggravation of vata dosha by the persons indulging in exertion, copulation and physical exercise and the use of food that cause aggravation of kapha dosha by the persons who sleep more and are lazy constitute.	- Vata vitiating foods and drinks like dry, cold food by the person with heavy manual work, etc. - Spicy Punjabi food with cold drinks
11.	Krama viruddha	Consumption of food by a person with- out elimination of urine and faeces, or when he is not hungry or very hungry, etc.	Consume food before the earliest food is digested or without proper appetite.
12.	Parihara viruddha	Consuming ushna veerya ahara after consumption of meat of varaha etc.	Cold water after hot tea
13.	Upachar	Consumes sheetala jala after ghrita pana.	- Drinking cold water after taking ghee - Juice, Alcohol, Alcohol after Hot spicy food
14.	Paka viruddha	Consumption of food cooked using fuels of forbidden trees like dishtadaru, dur- daru, etc. and consumption of food that is inadequately cooked, overcooked, or burnt.	Half-cooked, Burnt food All chinease food ,chicken fried rice,egg,noodles
15.	Samyoga viruddha	Amla rasa with milk	- Fruit Salad, Cheese, fruit, milk, along with banana - Sizzling Browne ice cream with Hot Choc- olate
16.	Hridi viruddha	Consumption of food which is not liked by one's manas.	Eating food not liked by the person
17.	Sampat viruddha	Consumption of diets and drugs that have not yet acquired their natural taste, which have lost their natural taste, or which have an unnatural or bad taste.	Over ripen mangoes, Banana
18.	Vidhi viruddha	Eating in an open place.	- Eating food while watching T.V. or talking - Popcorn Along with a Cold drink

Some Examples Of Modern Dietary Incompatibilities :-

Milk And Banana: In the modern era, this combination is most popular among fitness enthusiasts and foodies. But, in Ayurveda this is considered as Samyoga Viruddhahara. A

study has been conducted which shows its effects on various haematological parameters where it has been found that on repeated administration there is increase in total and direct serum bilirubin levels, Increased serum urea levels (due to some muscle tissue breakdown or excess of catabolic proteins), low serum creatinine Increase in body weight on follow ups after every week. Histopathological Examination reveals mild to moderate changes in both liver and heart, increased SGOT and SGPT levels. Mild to moderate myocarditis in heart sections. Apart from these, micro fatty changes in liver sections are found, mild to moderate increase in white pulp of spleen.

Milk And Curd: These both are animal sourced proteins and hence, are advised not to be consumed together as it causes diarrhoea, acidity, bloating. Moreover, it precipitates milk in side stomach that may irritate and induce vomiting [8]. Also, Yogurt is sour, heavy and increases secretions from glands present inside the body and these properties are antagonistic to milk. Any fermented products should not be taken with milk as this will lead to obstructions of the channels (Srotas), thus results in ill-health.

Jaggery + Milk: This is considered as Veerya Viruddha Aahara as jaggery is having hot potency while, milk is of cold potency. Food combinations such as Proteins+ Starch: These should not be taken together as they decrease each other's absorption. Proteins+ sugar in absence of water forms AGE (Advanced Glycation End products) which damages functioning of biomolecules thus, causes various age-related disorders such as, Diabetic vascular complications, neurodegenerative disorders, and carcinoma. e.g.: eggs+ toast, fried chicken + potato chips, Meat+ Potatoes, Nuts/peanut butter+ starchy vegetables.

Sugar+ Citrus Fruits: Together these items hamper salivary secretion, ptyalin, pepsin and thus delays digestion. E.g.: Orange juice+ Cereals, various fruit jams, marmalades, fruit syrups etc. Fats and Proteins: Fats decreases secretion of digestive juices (such as pepsin and HCl). E.g.: Nuts+ Olive oil taken as components in various types of salads.

Green tea/Black tea+ Milk: Tea contains flavonoids (catechins) having antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anticancerous, hypotensive effects while, milk contains caseins. When they both combined together caseins will decrease the concentration of catechins. Food combinations such as Cinnamon + Ginger/Tea+ Peanut Butter/ Coffee+ Garlic Bread: When these are taken together, it increases the bleeding risk due to their anticoagulant effect.

Wine + Lemon Enriched Starters: These have synergistic effect in blocking cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme system in intestine which leads to the higher serum levels of unmetabolized entity of medications leading to toxicity.

Alcohol + Unripe Potatoes/tomatoes: Alpha solanine is found in alcoholic beverages and solanine is found in potatoes, which when taken together have synergistic sedative effect.

French fries/Potato chips: Deep frying of potatoes leads to Acrylamide which is having carcinogenic property.

Reheating of Oil (Roadside Bread Pakora and Samosa): It comes under Paakaviruddha. Reheated oil when consumed increases oxidative stress and hence, increases free radicals. Also, when fatty acids are exposed to O₂ in presence of heat/ light, it forms H₂O₂ compounds which deteriorate vitamin A and E, forms aldehyde molecules which leads to oxidative stress in body cells and increases risk of degenerative diseases and atherosclerosis.

Deep fried foods+ Corn/sunflower/soyabean oil: They form HNE (4-Hydroxy-trans-2-nonenal) toxin which leads to Cardiovascular diseases, stroke, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's, liver disorders and cancer. Processed baked foods/corn chips/Tofu: These all are omega-6 rich foods (corn chips: 85% per cup, tofu: 64% per cup) which aggravates inflammatory pathology.

Overripen Grains, Vegetables, Fruits: This can be considered under Sampat-viruddha. All these have some protein in them, when these turn brown in colour, it is an indication of AGE (Advanced Glycation End products) that ultimately leads to various systemic disorders.

Milk + Eggs, reheated cow's milk, consuming too much sugar+ saturated fats: leads to immunological disorders. Raw meat, uncooked eggs: These can be considered under Paaka-viruddha. These contain Salmonella bacteria which causes gastroenteritis in humans and salmonella poisoning which leads to serious complications.

Melon+ Grains: These should not be consumed together as melon digests quickly but, grains take more time. E.g. Fruit salad with roti.

Milk+ Solanaceae : Members of Solanaceae family contain complex array of compounds that once ingested leads to potentially dramatic cascade of chemical reactions in the body. These are difficult to digest and disturb homeostasis as well. When Solanaceae members are taken with milk/milk products, they overburden the digestive fire.

Hot Food Items Packed In Plastic Bags: Hormonal and metabolic abnormalities are associated with this. Plastic containers contain BPA, DEHA, polypropylene, polystyrene, polyethylene, cellulose ether, all these have disorganised polymer chains having weak bonds which on combining with hot food items break and release free radicals that contribute to the aetiology of various chronic disorders of reproductive and cardiovascular system, cataract and ultimately cancer. Another study reveals that plastic bags include styrene which is carcinogenic, phthalates and Bisphenol A leads to diabetes, heart and liver diseases.

Food preservatives/Additives: It contains Sodium benzoate that leads to cellular damage, enters into blood vessels which interfere with genes that are involved in blood clotting factor synthesis. It contains Aspartame which seems to cause neurological damage especially in younger children where brain is still growing, it breaks down into phenylalanine which is

Modern Concept Of Viruddha Aahar

1. Food Incompatibility (Biochemical Conflicts):

Some food combinations can cause **chemical reactions** that interfere with digestion, absorption, or metabolism.

Example:

- **Milk + Sour Fruits:** Milk is rich in protein and calcium; sour fruits are acidic. Acidic environment causes milk to curdle, impairing digestion.
- **Heating Honey:** Leads to production of **hydroxymethylfurfural (HMF)**, a potentially toxic compound.
- **Milk + Fish:** High protein + opposing thermal nature (milk is cooling, fish is heating) may disturb digestion and metabolism.

2. Digestive Conflicts & Gastrointestinal Effects:

Certain Food Combinations Affect:

- Enzymatic activity
- Gastrointestinal motility
- pH of the digestive tract

These Changes Can Cause:

- Bloating
- Acidity
- Indigestion
- Formation of harmful metabolites (similar to 'Ama' in Ayurveda)

3. Gut Microbiome Disruption:

- Incompatible foods may alter the **gut microbiota**, leading to **dysbiosis**.
- **Dysbiosis Is Linked With:**
 - Chronic inflammation
 - Autoimmune diseases
 - Skin disorders (like psoriasis, eczema)

4. Pro-inflammatory Food Combinations:

Modern research suggests that certain combinations or processed foods can trigger **inflammatory responses**:

- **Sugar + Fat** in processed foods increase in **cytokines** (IL-6, TNF-)
- **High glycemic foods + saturated fats** metabolic syndrome, insulin resistance

5. Immunological Reactions / Food Sensitivities:

Some individuals react adversely to certain combinations due to:

- Lactose intolerance (milk + cereal)
- Gluten sensitivity (wheat + dairy)
- Histamine intolerance (fish + fermented food)

These Reactions Can Cause:

- Skin rashes
- Hives
- Gastrointestinal distress

6. Toxin Formation / Carcinogenic Potential:

- **Reheated oils, microwaved processed meats, and preservative-rich foods generate:**
 - AGEs (Advanced Glycation End-products)
 - Nitrosamines
 - Free radicals

These substances are **toxic, pro-inflammatory**, and potentially **carcinogenic**, similar to the Ayurvedic concept of **Ama (toxic waste)**.

7. Circadian Rhythm And Meal Timing:

Eating **heavy, incompatible meals at night** (e.g., curd, meat, sweets) disrupts:

- Melatonin production
- Metabolism
- Insulin regulation

Modern chrononutrition supports Ayurvedic warnings against certain foods at night.

Diseases Due To Viruddha Ahara

From the above list it can be understood that any procedure, combinations, dose, amount of food, opposite properties of food if consumed in a regular fashion can lead to number of disorders. Charaka has mentioned that such types of wrong combinations can lead to even death.[3] If above-said rules for the diet are not followed then the diseases occurring due to Viruddha Aahara can occur, which are mentioned below. Impotency, Visarpa (erysipelas), blindness, ascitis, bullus, insanity, fistula in ano, coma or fainting, intoxication, abdominal distention, stiffness in neck, varieties of anemia, indigestions, various skin diseases, diseases of intestines, swelling, gastritis, fever, rhinitis, and infertility. It can be observed from the above list that Viruddha Anna can lead to disorders up to impotency and infertility, thus it has an impact up to Shukra Dhatu Dushti. If the above list of diseases is

classified as per the body system, it can be said that, immune system, endocrine system, digestive system, nervous system, and circulatory systems are affected by continuous consumption of Viruddha Ahara.

Materials And Methods Literature Review:

Conduct a comprehensive review of classical Ayurvedic texts, such as the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, to gather foundational knowledge about Virrudha Ahara. Analyze contemporary research and publications on Ayurvedic dietary principles and their relevance to modern health practices.

Data Collection:

Collect qualitative data through interviews or surveys with Ayurvedic practitioners, nutritionists, and individuals who practice Ayurvedic dietary principles.

DISCUSSION

The concept of Virrudha Ahara serves as a critical lens through which we can examine dietary practices and their effects on health. As explored in the previous sections, incompatible food combinations can significantly impact digestion, nutrient absorption, and overall well-being. The discussions surrounding Virrudha Ahara highlight several key themes that warrant further examination. 1. Cultural Relevance and Modern Application 2. Digestive Health as a Foundation for Wellness 3. Personalization of Diet 4. Education and Awareness

CONCLUSION

1) Virrudha Ahara offers valuable insights into the interplay between diet and health. By understanding and applying the principles of incompatible foods, individuals can enhance their digestive health and overall wellness, creating a foundation for a more balanced and fulfilling life. The journey toward mindful eating through the lens of Virrudha Ahara not only reconnects us with ancient wisdom but also encourages a modern approach to nutrition that is rooted in balance and harmony.

2) From the above discussion, it is clear that Viruddha Ahara is an important aspect of today's improper dietary habits. This can lead to several hazardous diseases unknowingly to the patients. Therefore, it is important to enlist the causative incompatible dietary factors and train the patients to avoid such etiologic factors. The article also opens a new research window in the field of Ayurvedic dietetics to research upon a variety of incompatible factors to observe the effect

Avoiding Viruddha Ahar: Practical Tips

- **Eat Mindfully:** Pay attention to how you feel after eating certain food combinations.
- **Simplify Your Meals:** Avoid overly complex meals with numerous ingredients.
- **Honor Your Digestion:** Eat only when you are hungry and avoid eating before the previous meal has been digested.
- **Respect Time And Season:** Favor warming foods in winter and cooling foods in summer
- **Be Cautious With Common Incompatibilities:** Be mindful of the classic examples like milk with fish or sour fruits.
- **Consult An Expert:** For personalized dietary advice, consider consulting an Ayurvedic practitioner.

Guidelines To Avoid Viruddha Ahar

1. **Follow Ayurvedic Meal Principles:** Eat seasonal, regional, and constitution-appropriate foods.
2. **Respect Food Timings:** Avoid curd at night or fruits immediately after meals.
3. **Avoid Contradictory Combinations:** Such as milk with salty or sour items.
4. **Mindful Eating Practices:** Eat slowly, calmly, and with full

awareness.

5. **Personalized Diet:** Consider Prakriti (constitution) while planning meals.
6. **Proper Cooking Methods:** Avoid heating honey or overcooking oils.

Role Of Education And Public Awareness

There is a critical need to spread awareness regarding Viruddha Ahar among:

- **Healthcare practitioners** (for integrative advice)
- **School children** (through curriculum)
- **Parents and homemakers** (primary food decision-makers)
- **Restaurant industries** (fusion foods should follow food science)

Challenges In Implementing Viruddha Ahar Guidelines

- Lack of scientific awareness among masses
- Modern lifestyle constraints (travel, fast food culture)
- Overexposure to fusion food trends
- Limited inclusion in medical and nutritional education

Solutions involve digital awareness campaigns, mobile health apps, and research-backed food compatibility guides.

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