



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Ayurveda

AAHARVIDHI – CONCEPT OF FOOD INTAKE IN AYURVEDA AND PRESENT ERA

KEY WORDS: *Aahar Vihdi Vidhan, Aahar Sevan, Aaharvidhi Vishesaayata, present era.*

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a holistic system of natural health care that originated from *Vedas*. As it is an ideal way to attain healthy life. Adequate nutrition is the basic need for healthy life but without knowing proper dietary guidelines one cannot remain healthy. *Ayurveda* concentrates of various rules and regulation diet rule (*Aahar Vidhi*) is also among that. If *Aahar Vidhi* is followed properly, it helps to increase health and enhance life span. According to *Ayurveda Aahar* is included in *Tri-Upstambh* means it is subpillar of life and *Aahar* is most important among *Tri-Upstambh*. If *Aahar* is taken in accordance with the rules, it promotes mental as well as physical strength of body. *Upnishad* said that purity of food helps in purifying the inner self and hence of the mind and intellect. *Aahar* is life of living being. *Aahar* is First and most important factor for the “*Swasthaysaswastyarakshanam*” if we did not follow the proper rules for *Aahar* then body leads to *Rogaavastha*. *Aahara* plays vital role in Healthy and diseased condition. so, this is the very important to know that the concept *Aaharvidhi* in context of *Ayurveda* and present time.

INTRODUCTION

Aahara is the most essential requirements of all living beings. Our physical body is the product of food. To nourish the *Sharirika Panchmahaabhoota* we are taking the food, which is also *Panchbhautika* like all the universal matter our body is also formed by *Panchmahabhutas*. 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 the *Aahara* for an individual and in general both. This discipline is titled as *Aahara Vidhividhan* also explained all the law about the diet and drinks are given. Basically, *Ayurveda* is having an introducing concept that the health and disease both are the product of *Aahara*. If food is used in proper way it nourishes the body, otherwise it became cause for the manifestation of diseases. *Acharyas* had described *Aahara, Nidra* and *Brahmcharya* are *Trayopstambha* (three sub pillars) which support the body itself. Here *Aahara* has been placed first which shows that it is most important to maintain and sustain the life. *Aahara* supplies bio energy to the body. This bio-energy is supplied by proper and adequate nutrition in the form of its essential constituents (viz.- protein, carbohydrates, fats, minerals, vitamins and water). In *Ayurveda, Aahara* as well as the method of its intake both have equal importance. Food which are consumed according to the prescribed methods (in the scriptures) are the seat for the satisfaction for the life. *Ojas, Teja* (splendor), *Dhatu*s, senses, *Bala* (strength), *Tushti* (satisfaction of mind), *Arogya* (Health), are all dependant on food. According to *Charak Samhita*, the life of all living things is food and all the world seeks food. Complexion, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength and intelligence are all established in food. In the present modern life style, we do not take care of our health and the consequences of our eating habits and other styles of life, which are harmful for us.

AAHAR

The life of an individual is present in the food and this food gives life to living creatures. *Aahar* is life of living being. Happiness, voice, life, satisfaction, power, intelligence all are depended on *Aahar*. All work which a person does to run his life like agriculture, business has *Aahar* as its base. So *Aahar* is base of life.

Classification of Aahar

The sages of the *Vedic* times, the *Rishis*, had researched and categorized the gross and subtle qualities and effects of food in three categories 1. *Satvika* 2. *Rajasika* 3. *Tamasika*.

- a) Based on *Rasa*
- b) Based on *Guna*
- c) Based on *Vikalpa- Aparisankheya (Charak)*
- d) Based on *Varga*

Ashta Ahar Vidhi Vishesha Ayatanani Eight Aspects of Dietics.

- 1 *Prakruti*:- It is nature of food i.e., *guru* or *laghu*.
- 2 *Karana*:- *Sanskar* of food is called *Karan*.
- 3 *Samyoga*:- The combination of two or more than two *Dravyas*
- 4 *Raashi*:- Quantity of food
- 5 *Desha*:- It means place of food grains that is habitat where they are cultivated
- 6 *Kala*:- Means time, it is of two types- *Nityag* and *Awasthik*
- 7 *Upayogasamtha*:- These are the rules and regulation for using the food.
- 8 *Upyokta*:- Means users

Rules For Food Intake (Aharavidhi Vidhanam)

All persons should follow these rules while eating the food to remain healthy and enhance the span of life.

1. Ushnam Ashniyat -

Food should be warm and freshly prepared.

Significance

- 1. *Charaka*:- *Swadista, Agnidipaka, Kshigrapachana, Kaphahara*
- 2. Modern:- Appealing to senses, fresh food without contamination and highest bioavailability of nutrients will be suitable nourishment for everyone.

2. Snigdham Ashniyat

Eat food which is not roasted, hard to eat & dry to eat

Significance

- 1. *Charaka*:- *Agnidipaka, Vataanuloman, Balvridhikar, Varnaprasadar.*
- 2. Modern:- Food products which are hard, roasted are generally unwholesome in their nutritive value and satiety quotient is also very less hence are not recommended

3. Matravat Ashniyat

Adequate quantity either less or more.

Significance

- 1. *Charka*:- *Ayurvedhak*, easily digested
- 2. Modern:- Quantity based on calorific value and satiety quotient of particular food either alone or in combination with other must be kept in mind when ever food is consumed otherwise it will lead to excess nourishment or inadequate nourishment.

4. Jirne Ashniyat

Eat only when the food taken is digested (don't munch too

much in between)

Significance

1. *Charaka*: -*Ajir nabhojana, Doshaprakopaka, Jirna, Ayurvedhak*
2. Modern: - Digestion process has its own biological clock and pattern. Honouring it is very important to ensure smooth functioning of the organism.

5. Virya Avirudha Ashniyat

Do not take food which is incompatible

Significance

1. *Charaka*: -*Virudhaaharajanya* diseases can be avoided
2. Modern: - Incompatibility of food must be viewed in light of bio-availability of nutrients. Sometimes the combination of different kinds of food together may cause local irritation or may result in toxic substances which may cause more harm than good.

6. Ishta Deshe / Ishta Sarvopkarnam Ashniyat

Eat at a suitable and pleasant place where you are comfortable and happy.

Significance

1. *Charaka*: -Gives happiness
2. Modern: -Mood plays a vital role in eating digestion and even assimilation of food. Digestion is predominantly a parasympathetic activity which is activated and functions at its best when the organism is relaxed and calm. Hence it is must to be very relaxed clean and well settled before taking food.

7. Na Atidrutam Ashniyat

Avoid eating too fast.

Significance

1. *Charaka*: -Food is tasteless when is consumed fast
2. Modern: -Flight and fright are the responses to emergency. It is predominantly mediated by sympathetic activity. When this system is on, secretion is lowered blood circulation is shifted from central pool to periphery and person is very tense such situation is not good for food intake.

8. Na Ativilambit Ashniyat

Avoid eating too slow.

Significance

1. *Charaka*: -Unsatisfaction
2. Modern: -Too slow eating may result in excess food intake, hence must be avoided. It may indicate depression and lack of attention. Hence must be attended appropriately

9. Ajalpana, Ahasan, Tanmanabhunjitam

Eat quietly

Significance

1. *Charaka*: -Food does not go to its place properly
2. Modern: -Eating silently without taking, laughing will avoid autophagy (engulfing air) and ensure proper eating and early satisfaction

10. Aatanam Abhisamikshya Bhunjitam

Paying total attention while you take food is essential.

Significance

1. *Charaka*: -Maintains the Equilibrium of *Tridosha*
2. Modern: -Help to make choice regarding what to eat what not to eat how much to eat etc.

Proper Time To Intake Food

1. After urination & defecation
2. When all *Indriyas* are having *Prasannata*

3. When *Apaan Vayu* is normal & eliminated
4. When "*Kukshi*" is *Shithil*
5. When body feels lightness
6. When there is *Shuddhaudgara*
7. When there is desire of taking food

DISCUSSION:

Improper dietary habit is primary reason for the increasing trend 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 importance of fresh food. According to *Charaka Samhita*, processing of substances which leads to alteration in the inherent properties of substances is known as *Sanskar*. In the process of freezing large ice crystals are formed that can damage cell walls and destroy the texture and flavors of foods. Even though freezing is regarded as the simplest and most important presentation process for fruits and vegetables, it is not a perfect process since it is well known that some nutritional value (vitamins and minerals) may be lost during the freezing process. Losses of nutrients during freezing can be the result of physical separation (peeling during thawing), leaching (especially during blanching), thermal (during blanching) or chemical degradation (during storage).

At present many newer foods processing methods are in practice. These methods bring about chemical as well as physical changes in consumption of the food substances. They definitely improve the appearance, taste, flavors, shelf life, preservation of food. At the same time, they are changing the properties of food constituents making them unsuitable for human consumption, causing many diseases. According to modern perspectives processing techniques are used for the preservation of food. To increase the digestibility, to enhance the colour and flavors of the food in order to and increase the appearance of the food and ultimately to increase the appetite and they reduce the cooking time but, becoming a root cause for various diseases.

Many diseases can be prevented arising merely due to faulty dietary habits. According to traditional methods of cooking prescribed by *Ayurveda*, gradual cooking helps the food to become more digestible, which is not achieved by microwaving. The plastic containers are used to cook food in microwave many a time. Another problem with microwave oven is that carcinogenic toxins can leach out of plastic and paper containers or covers, and into the food. Nutrition Action Newsletter reported the leakage of numerous toxic chemicals from the packaging of common microwave foods, including pizzas, chips and popcorn. Frozen products initially lose fewer nutrients overtime due to oxidation even in a frozen state while fresh food provide greater nutrient intake than frozen food. Viewing the above points, it can be concluded that *Aahara* should be taken according to *Aahara Vidhi Vidhana* (dietary guidelines) and which are truly scientific as mentioned by our *Acharyas*.

CONCLUSION

"*DEHO HIAAHAR SAMBHAVA*"

1. Human body is said to be the bio-product of food
2. Healthy life starts with healthy food
3. *Asahara* plays vital role in healthy and diseased condition
4. The strength and complexion of a person will enhance only if he practices correct diet and regimen

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