



ROLE OF PATHYA AAHAR IN MAINTENANCE OF HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

According to Ayurveda, we can maintain our health and get prevention from diseases for a long time. if we eat an adequate amount, Wholesome diet, and proper way of taking food, and follow the proper lifestyle like sleep cycle and many as per our needs and in line with the *Dincharya* and *Ritucharya* (seasons and cycles of nature). *AAHAR* (Food), *NIDRA* (sleep cycle) & *BRAHMACHARYA* are three Sub columns of the body. According to Ayurveda, *Satva* also depends upon the food we take. Food is an essential part of everyone's lives, it gives us the energy and nutrients to grow and develop, to move, to work, to play, to think, to be healthy and active and learn, that's way Food is very important for nourishing not just the body, but also the mind and conscience. Hence, the time of eating, the right kind of posture while eating, and the amount of food consumed matter equally as much as the type of food eaten. So, we should know about our bodies whether we supply our bodies with the proper food at the proper time. A balanced diet and healthy daily habits can contribute profoundly to the treatment or prevention of diseases that are way *Aahara* is called '*mahabhaishajyam*'. So, this article will conclude about how important is to have the right food which is going to help the individual to remain healthy for a long time.

Keywords: *Pathya, Aahar, Bramhacharya, Dincharya, Ritucharya, nidra, Mahabhaishajya, upstambha, food, Aahar vidhi vidhan*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is not only the oldest medical science it is the mother of all medical science, or we can say it is the mother of life science. Ayurveda's first aim is the prevention of health after the treatment of diseases. For a healthy life, there are three Pillars of a healthy lifestyle viz. *AAHAR* (Food), *NIDRA* (sleep cycle), *BRAHMACHARYA* called *Thriyo upasthamba* mentioned in Ayurveda.^[1] *Aahar* is an important factor for survival, and it is a very essential part of human being. It gives nutrition and health to a person, and it helps with normal bodily functions or Physiological Functions. According to Ayurvedic philosophy, everything in this universe is constituted of five *bhutas-prithvi, Aap, tejas, vayu, and Akasa*. Food essentially contains the five basic elements of nature. When food is consumed in appropriate proportions, it can help in balancing similar elements in the body. According to Acharya Kashyap health is dependent upon *Bhojan* (food)^[2]. Equilibrium of *Tridosha*, all *Agnis*, all *Dhatu*s, *mala*, and all bodily function goes smoothly also the person is in a good state of mind is called *Swastha*^[3]. According to WHO, Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.^[4] and For *Samagni* or healthy life, there is a very important role of *Pathya Aahar* (Right food), proper time of taking food, etc. According to Ayurveda, the Derivation of *Aahar* is the substance which is taken down from the throat for the functions of the body and to compensate for the loss of *dosha, dhatu, and mala* that is called *Aahar* (food). And the Definition of *Aahar* according to ayurveda, is the substance that goes inside the body through the elementary canal, gets digested there, nourishes, protects, compensates for the damage, increases the strength of the body, and gives life, it is called *Aahar* or food.^[5] According to WHO, Food is any substance consumed to provide nutritional support for an organism. It is usually of plant or animal origin and contains essential nutrients, such as carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, or minerals.^[6]

Diet (*Aahar*) and *Prakriti*: Ayurveda insists that diet (*Aahar*) should be chosen according to the *Prakriti* or

constitution of every individual.^[7] Food habits that are pacifying to the body and mind are known as *pathya*, and food habits that are harmful or disease-producing are known as *apathya*. *Pathya* can be categorised based on their aggravating or pacifying effects on the *Tridoshas* – *vata, pitta, and kapha* or based upon their effect on the human mind – *Satvik, Rajasik, and Tamasic*.

Diet (*Aahara*) for balancing *Tridoshas*: These are some foods that are which pacify *Doshas* & some foods that may aggravate *doshas*. *Vata* aggravating food- dry fruits, apples, melons, potatoes, tomatoes, eggplant, ice cream, peas, green salads, etc. *Vata* pacifying food- sweet fruits, apricot, avocados, coconut, brown rice, red cabbage, bananas, grapes, cherries, oranges, dates, asparagus, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, mustard greens, okra, onion, peas, spinach, etc. *Pitta* aggravating food- spicy foods, peanut butter, sour fruits, bananas, papayas, peaches, plums, tomatoes, garlic, etc. *Pitta* pacifying food- mangoes, oranges, pears, plums, sprouts, green salad, sunflower seeds, asparagus, mushrooms, artichoke, beets (cooked), bitter gourd, broccoli, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, cucumber, fennel, green beans, leafy greens, lettuce, okra, onions (cooked), potatoes, sweet and white, etc. *Kapha* aggravating food- bananas, melons, coconut, dates, papayas, pineapples, figs, plums, dairy products, etc. *Kapha* pacifying food- Apples, apricots, dry fruits, pomegranates, peaches, raisins, cranberries, basmati rice, sprouts, chicken, green gram (Moong), kidney beans, parched rice, parched barley, wheat, etc. Diet (*Aahar*) for the mind - Since food equally affects the mind as much as the body, Ayurveda recommends specific kinds of food for individuals based on their *Guna* or natural behaviour. The three classifications of food are *Satvik* food: An ideal diet containing vegetarian, non-oily, and non-spicy food that is suitable for the mind *Rajasik* food: Too spicy, hot, sour, salty food that excites the mind. *Tamasic* food: Too oily, tasteless, stale & heavy food that leads to a lethargic or dull mind.

The function of *Aahar* - According to Acharya Charak, the function of *aahara* is "Food and drinks

with desirable smell, taste, and touch and having been taken according to prescribed method is said as vital strength by the experts on the basis of observing their results directly, because the condition of *Agni* (internal fire) depends on their fuel. They produce energy in the mind, the constitution of dhatus, strength, complexion, and clarity of sense organs, if properly taken, otherwise they become harmful.^[8] Food is the vital breath of living beings (that is why) people rush to the food.^[9]

Ayurvedic dietary guidelines: If we take food in a proper way, it gives us life that's why according to *Acharya Charak*, *Aahara* is called *Prana*. The proper way of taking food is called *Aahar Vidhividhan*: -

- Intake of food that is warm (*ushna Bhojan*)
- Intake of food that is unctuous (*snigdha Bhojan*)
- Intake of food that is in proper quantity (*Matra-vat*)
- Intake of food after the previous food is digested (*Jirna*)
- Intake of food that is non-antagonistic. (*Virya-avirudhdham*)
- Intake of food at a favourable place. (*Ishta Deshe*)
- Intake of food with all the favourable accessories. (*Ishta Sravapraman*)
- Food intake as per suitability (*satmya bhojana*)
- Food should be ingested calmly, neither too slow nor too fast (*na ati druta Vilambika*)
- Eat while there is interest in food and while eating concentrate on food and the process of eating (*tan mana: bhojana*)
- Intake of food Silently (*moun*)
- Intake of food at right time (*Kale bhojana*).
- Food intake as per the prakruthi of the individual (*hita Bhojan*)
- Proper hygiene (*suchi Bhojan*)
- Intake of food that is easy to digest (*Laghu Bhojan*)
- Eat food with six taste components (*sad-rasayukta ahara*)
- Food should be primarily sweet in nature (*madhura praya*)
- Intake of food After bathing (*snatah*)

- Food intake only when there is sufficient hunger (*kshudvan*)
- Proper washing of hands, feet, and face should be done before food intake (*dhauta pada-kara-anana*)
- After offering prayers and paying obeisance to gods and forefathers (*pithru -deva tarpana*)
- After offering food to guests, teachers, and children (*athithi- balakaguru tarpana*)
- Without disgracing food (*anindan bhunjaana*)

Effect of *Aahar* on human physiology: -

Food helps in the sustenance of the life of living beings. All living beings in the world require food. It gives: -

- Complexion (*Varna*)
- Cheerfulness (*Prasad*)
- Good voice (*Sauswar*)
- Longevity (*Jivitam*)
- Intelligence, imagination (*Pratibha*)
- Happiness (*Sukham*)
- Contentment, satisfaction (*Tushti*)
- Corpulence, nourishment (*Pushti*)
- Strength (*Balam*)
- Intellect (*Medha*)

all these are dependent on food.^[10]

Also, according to *Acharya Sushrut*

- Physical and Mental satisfaction (*Prinam*)
- Instant energy (*Sadhya balkrita*)
- Natural strength (*Deh dharak*)
- Longevity (*Aayu Vardhan*)
- Tejo Vardhan
- Increases Enthusiasm (*Utsaha Vardhan*)
- Increases Memory power (*Smriti Vardhan*)
- Ojas Vardhan
- Appetising power and Digestion power (*Agni Vardhan*)^[11]

Importance of *Aahar*: -

- Food is the source of birth and growth.^[12]
- When food is properly consumed it helps in longevity and health.^[13]
- One can live long by giving up wealth whereas one cannot live without taking food.^[14]
- Food consumed with grace props up strength and energy.^[15]

- Don't consume food for the sake of taste or ignorance, the body is the product consumed by food.^[16]
- Mind also becomes pure when food is pure.^[17]
- Acharya Chanakya says that water, food, and wise sayings are the three gems on this earth.^[18]

DISCUSSION

Indian dietetics is an ancient science. *Pathya Aahar* Ayurveda emphasizes basic dietary guidelines in terms of appropriate food combinations, methods of taking food-cooking food, hygiene, and etiquette. If we follow all criteria of *Pathya Aahar* like warm & unctuous *Aahar* (Food), test well, and if food is tasty then it stimulates the digestive fire which means digestive juices secrete well and food gets digested quickly & absorbed completely, and we all know if food digests and is absorbed fully it gives complete Nutrition which develops the body, increases strength, produces clarity of complexion & carminates flatus. If Food is taken in proper quantity, it does not disturb *Tridosh* and promotes lifespan because it easily passes down to the anus, does not disturb the *Agni* (digestive fire) so food gets digested with comfort; hence we should eat in proper quantity. We have to take *Aahar* after the previous meal is digested because if any one eats during indigestion, the eaten food mixed with the product of the earlier meal and vitiates all the *doshas* quickly, but if we eat after the previous meal is digested well, the *doshas* are situated in equilibrium, *Agni* is stimulated, appetite is arisen, *Sroto Mukh* (entrances of the channels) are open, eructation is pure, the heart is normal, flatus passes down and this type of eaten food promotes only the life-span without afflicting any dhatu and many more. According to Ayurveda if any person who is suffering from any disease, follows strictly the *Pathya* or *Aahar-Vidhi-Vidhan*, he may not require any medicine, but if he does not follow it, then even medicine may not be fruitful because the Main effect of taking *Pathya Aahar* is Stimulation of *Agni*, and if *Agni* is stimulated its increases our immunity, and as we all know that all diseases are due to *Agnimandya*. So, *Pathya Aahar* is a very important part of life, it is also one of the important parts of *Trayoupstambhas* and when

the body is Supported by these three Sub-pillars it is endowed with strength, growth & complexion, So Healthy body by intake of *Pathya Aahar* leads to happiness, observance of truth & brahmacharya and ultimately to SALVATION.

CONCLUSION

From the above details, we can know that *Aahar* is a very important factor in the sustenance of life. As we know health is wealth, we should first take care of our health. In today's modern era, we are neglecting the digestive capacity, nutritional value of food products. Right diet & lifestyle is also a very important part of healthy life. Lack of knowledge about correct eating habits is the primary region of the increasing trend of health disorders, especially Lifestyle disorders. Proper development of the body, thoughts, and actions take place only through *Pathya Aahar*. To enjoy our success, we should be healthy first and it is not a big deal. for proper maintenance of positive health, we should first eat a proper diet in proper quantity then do other things.

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