



AHARA SEVAN KALA – TIME OF CONSUMPTION FOOD ACCORDING TO AYURVEDA – A REVIEW

Divyarani

¹Associate Professor, Dept. of Samhita Siddhanta and Sanskrit, Yenepoya Ayurveda Medical College and Hospital, Naringana, Mangalore -575018, Karnataka, India

Corresponding Author: divya.hpatil@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.46607/iamj11022023>

(Published Online: February 2023)

Open Access

© International Ayurvedic Medical Journal, India 2023

Article Received: 30/01/2023 - Peer Reviewed: 11/02/2023 - Accepted for Publication: 09/02/2023.



ABSTRACT

Ahara (food) is the most important factor for the sustenance of life. It is described as the foremost pillar among the three pillars of life (*Trayopstambha viz. Ahara, Nidra, and Bhramcharya*) in Ayurveda. When the body is supported by the *Trayopstambhasa*, it is endowed with growth, strength, and complexion. Which when consumed in appropriate proportions, helps in providing nourishment to *Deha Dhatus* (body tissues), growth, development, and enhancement of *Ojas*. Ahara is considered *Mahabhaishajya* (the superior medicine). Various lifestyle disorders and numerous diseases occur due to faulty dietary habits which may be prevented by proper Ahara and eating habits. Ayurveda emphasizes basic dietary guidelines in terms of appropriate food, combinations of food, methods of cooking, storage, eating atmosphere, hygiene, and etiquette (*Ashtavidha Ahara Vidhi Visessa Ayatana*). Science and nutrition are called dietetics. It includes planning meals for both the normal and sick. There are many factors that influence the diet like *Matra* (quantity), *Desha* (region/place), *Kala* (time), etc. *Kala* represents time in terms of climate, phase of digestion, the timing of the day, Stage (*Avastha*) of disease, etc. Hence to consume food proper timings and factors influencing the time of consumption of food is very essential.

Keywords: Ahara, Trayopastamba, Kala

INTRODUCTION

Since food is considered the source of life as well as the cause of diseases dedicated to a discussion on various dietary preparations. Food is the most important source to achieve health and disease according to Ayurveda and is even considered a source of life as well as diseases. A wholesome diet is considered not just to be nourishing, but also to be therapeutic. It has also been given importance in other vedic texts. For instance, Maharshi Kashyapa considered food as *Mahabheshaja* (great medicine)¹. However, there are some differences between *Ahara* (food) and *Bheshaja* (medicine) - the former is *Rasa Pradhana* (taste-centric) while the latter is *Veerya Pradhana* (potency centric). The etymological meaning of *Ahara* (food) is to collect (*Ahiyate*) for the nutritional purpose of the body. *Ahara* is a generic term that can mean *Anna* (literally, cereals, but also mean solid food) and *Pana* (beverages or anything drinkable). According to Ayurveda, a balanced diet besides nourishing the body maintains the equilibrium of *Doshas*, *Dhatu*s, and *Malas*.

AHARA SEVANA KALA – Different times of consumption food according to Ayurveda

1. *Eka Kala Sevana* (One time per day)
2. *Dwikalabhajana* (Two times per day)
3. As per the appearance of *Jeerna Lakshanas* (Based on digestion symptoms)

Eka Kala Sevana is considered the best for proper digestion². Persons with impaired digestion should be given only one meal every day, so that the digestive fire may have opportunities to be rekindled.³ Light food should be given to fever patients and to the persons who just recovered from the fever at the end of the day because at that time there will be digestive fire is good and in a normal state.

Dwikalabhajana is for Persons with the proper amount of digestion should be given two meals a day.⁴

Ahara Sevana Kala as per the appearance of Jeerna Lakshanas

The time of Appearance of *Jeerna Lakshanas* can be considered as the time for *Ahara Sevana* (food consumption). Localization of *Doshas* in their own plac-

es, clarity of *Srotasas* (channels), and development of a desire for food is the period of intake of diet.

When the *Rasa*, *Dosa*, and *Mala* are properly formed from the *Ahara* taken the person experiences hunger hence when the person is hungry, he should take food irrespective of the time.

Factors influencing Ahara Sevana Kala

Ahara Sevana Kala is influenced by several factors namely *Rutu* (Season), *Agni* (digestive fire), *Ahara Matra* (quantity of food), etc.

Rutu - In *Hemanth* and *Shishira Rutu* that is from November to March (winter season) nights are longer hence persons may feel hungry in the early morning hours as digestion power is more, in *Greeshma* and *Varsha Rutu* nights are shorter also there will be less digestion power hence person may feel hungry at afternoon.

Ahara Matra - Food taken in the morning should get digested by the evening and food taken in the evening should get digested by the next morning.

Agni - Under normal conditions, when the *Agni* is in *Prakrta Avastha* or *Sama Avastha*, the food gets digested in a period of four *Yamas* (*Yama* denotes three hours) and medicine in two *Yamas* respectively. If the *Agni* is powerful or *Tiksna* the time taken for digestion is curtailed. If the *Agni* is weak or *Manda*, more time is taken, hence the digestion is delayed.

If in the state of *Samagni*, *Ahara Matra* is according to the *Bala*, *Sharira*, and *Vaya* then the *Ahara* gets digested in four *Yamas*.⁵

Contemporary view

Modern science has particularly described food according to the nutritional value of its components. Modern dietetic science emphasizes more on the number of Carbohydrates, Fats, Proteins, etc. in food. Modern dietetics though do not specify a time for the consumption of food, they advocate the concept of a balanced diet to ensure all the required nutrients in optimum amounts. For example, 70% of the total calorie intake should be Carbohydrates; Proteins constitute 20-25%, and Lipids 5-10%. Based on this Recommended Dietary Allowance the meal frequency has to be planned.

The time of day of food intake would be related to total intake such that intake early in the day would tend to reduce overall intake, whereas intake later in the day would tend to increase intake over the entire day. For ex. large amounts of food in the morning restrict intake during the evening might reduce overall intake and serve as a treatment or a preventive measure for obesity.

As per modern dietetics, some diseases are advised to take a specific diet at a specified time. Example in Diabetic patients' frequent diet is advised.

- 7:00 am- Breakfast
- 10:00 am- Light snack
- 12:00 am – Lunch
- 4:00 pm- another snack
- 8:00 pm- small dinner

DISCUSSION

The biological responses of the body vary with the season and time of the day. In Ayurveda, these variations in biological responses are explained on the basis of alterations in relative proportions of different doshas in response to climatic and geographical variations. Thus, the suitability of an individual to a particular food- the item may be influenced by changes in climate and time of the day and thus, for perfect health, the diet should be adjusted according to it.

Ahara Sevana Kala in Ayurveda can be understood in the following terms.

- The season and time of the day it is consumed,
- The time is taken for its proper digestion.
- Duration between two *Ahara Kala*
- The time required for eating.

Ahara Sevana Kala has a significant role in both healthy and diseased persons. Though various *Ahara Sevana Kalas* have been explained, *Eka Kala Bhojana* is considered as *Agrya/Shresta* (superior). The rationality behind quoting various *Ahara Sevana Kalas* is explained by different authors which are analysed as follows.

A specific time for the intake of food is necessary as delayed or early intake will lead to harmful effects. In substantiation, Yogaratnakara states that one should not take food within 3 hours of consumption of food as it leads to *Ama*, and one should not fast for more than 6 hours as it leads to loss of strength. During the

night one should consume food within one *Prahara* & it should be less compared to the food taken during the daytime. After that one should not take anything⁶. Based on the state of digestion Acharya Sushruta explains that food that is taken in the mornings though not digested properly, the next food can be taken at the night without any harmful effects. If the food is taken in the morning, without the food being digested that was taken the previous night, causes harmful effects. Just as the lotus flower opens up with the sun's rays, like wise. The channels of the body are clear and open during the daytime.

Because the man in the awake, active phase gets involved in physical activities during the day, the process of digestion will have been carried out efficiently by the evening. So taking a meal at night will not cause trouble to the body. Whereas at night when the man is asleep and not doing any physical activity, the process of digestion will be dull and inefficient, so the person who is having indigestion should not consume a meal the next morning.

Based on the time of intake it is said that Food should not be partaken of either before the usual time or after the lapse of the usual time, neither in inadequate quantity nor in excess quantity.

Food that is taken long after the prescribed time, will obstruct the movements of the flatus, gas, his digestive power getting affected by *Vata*, the food gets digested with difficulty, takes a longer time for digestion, makes the body lean, and diminishes the desire for taking second meal.⁷

The person who eats before the usual time though stout becomes a victim of many diseases or even of death; It also implies that one should not control the urge of hunger as it leads to body pain, anorexia, fatigue, weakness, loss of strength, etc.

The time required for the intake of food also influences the process of digestion. If food is taken very fast, then it may enter the wrong passage. One cannot relish the taste of the food and cannot make out some foreign bodies if present.

If food is taken very slowly than one eats more than required, one does not get satisfaction, and food becomes cold and results in irregular digestion.

Thus, For proper digestion, it is necessary that the food should be taken at the appropriate time, considering all the rules of *Ahara Sevana* i.e. when the person feels hungry Food eaten at in appropriate time feels tasty, increases satisfaction, and nutrition, gets digested easily and the diseases do not develop.

Application of *Ahara Sevana Kala*

The healthy body as well as the diseases are nothing but the outcome of *Ahara*. In today's fast-paced life, many norms regarding diet & regimen have been compromised which is showing the overall declining status of health in society.

Nowadays meal frequency is planned based on individual needs. Some may consider the three meals-a-day concepts, but some may not accept this view. Also, the concepts of *Eka Kala Bhojana* and *Dwi Kala Bhojana* cannot be followed in the present era. This may be due to low socio-economic status, faulty dietary habits, busy schedules, and altered lifestyles of the people.

For example, some individuals often skip their meals due to their work schedule, which can be considered as *Ksudha Vegadharana*. Due to this individual may develop the symptoms like weakness, body aches, anorexia, and Giddiness

Some housewives wait for the other family members; adjust the food timings according to others. They do not have fixed rules for meals, and the students or office staff take the meals at fixed timings without giving attention to the demand of the stomach. Thus, actually, when they feel hunger they do not eat, and they eat when there is no strong feeling of hunger.

CONCLUSION

- So, the ideal way to plan meal frequency is by considering the *Lakshanas* of *Jeerna Ahara* mentioned in classics to ensure proper digestion.
- Food has taken at the proper time and food of the proper quantity gets digested comfortably and bestows normalcy of the *Doshas* and *Dhatus* (issues).
- The concept of *Ahara Sevana Kala* is invariably needed for advising diet to healthy and diseased and also to prevent disease.
- Ayurvedic dietetics does not follow the modern norms of fixing a constant amount of *Ahara* for all individuals in general but instead relies on the status of *Agni Bala* for each and every individual.

- Ayurvedic concept of planning meal frequency based on *Jeerna Lakshanas* holds good even today as the *Parinaman Kala* (Time for Metabolism) is different according to the *Guru (Heavy)*, *Laghu (Light) Gunas* (qualities) of *Ahara Dravya* or its *Matra*, or *Agni*, etc.; But the *Jeerna Laksanas* are similar for all even if the other factors change
- Out the all the factors described for *Ahara, Kala* is the most important. As the other factors, e.g. *Matra, Ahara Parinama, Bala*, and even *Agni* also depend.

REFERENCES

1. Prof. P. V. Tewari, Kasyapa Samhita of Vriddhajivakiya Tantra, Text with English Translation and Commentary, Khillia Sthana, 4th chapter, 5th & 6th verse Choukambha Visvabharati, Varanasi, 2018.
2. Vd. Yadavaji Trikamaji Acharya, Charak Samhita - Ayurveda Dipika commentary by Chakrapani, Sutra Sthana, 25th chapter, 40th verse Choukambha Surbharati Prakshan, Varanasi, 2011.
3. Keval Krishna Takaral, Susruta Samhita with Hindi Translation of text and Nibandha Sangraha of Dalhana's commentary, Uttar Sthana, 64th chapter, 62nd verse, Choukambha Orientalia, Varanasi, 2016.
4. Keval Krishna Takaral, Susruta Samhita with Hindi Translation of text and Nibandha Sangraha of Dalhana's commentary, Uttar Sthana, 64th chapter, 62nd verse, Choukambha Orientalia, Varanasi, 2016.
5. K.R. Srikantha Murthy, Astanga Samgraha of Vagbhata with English Translation, Sutra Sthana, Volume I, 11th chapter, 37th verse, Choukambha Orientalia, Varanasi, 2018.
6. Vaidya Lakshmipathi Shastri, Yogaratanakara with Vidyotini Hindi Commentary, Purvardha Bhagha, 1st Chapter, 109th Verse, Choukambha Prakashana, Varanasi, 2020,
7. K.R. Srikantha Murthy, Astanga Samgraha of Vagbhata with English Translation, Sutra Sthana, Volume I, 10th chapter, 15th verse, Choukambha Orientalia, Varanasi, 2018.

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Divyarani: Ahara Sevan Kala – Time of consumption food according to Ayurveda – A Review. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2023 {cited February 2023} Available from: http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/405_408.pdf