



Review Article

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AHARA VIDHI VIDHAN: A DISCIPLINED DIETARY GUIDELINES BY AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Ahara Vidhi vidhan which describes in Ayurveda classics includes the right way to consume food for the proper digestion and assimilation of food. It is believed that a person's diet and lifestyle have a significant impact on a healthy life as well as in a diseased condition. Ayurveda focuses a lot on Ahara (food), and of course, a balanced diet feeds the body, mind, and soul, but an interesting fact is that Ayurveda also focuses on the way that should be taken, posture of the body, calmness of the mind, surrounding everything together, which determines the nutritive value of food. In Ayurveda, Ahara is regarded as one of the fundamental pillars (Upstambhas) of existence. The change in eating habits of the present era plays a major role in several ailments for example taking without concentration results in indigestion, laughing in between causes nasal regurgitation etc. Keeping aware for these facts and properly practicing Ahara Vidhi Vidhan can assure better health and a healthier longer life too. This article will outline the dos and don'ts regarding food intake so that a healthier society can be established.

Keywords: Ayurveda, Ahara Vidhi Vidhana, Aahara, Dietary rules

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charak has addressed the significance of Aahara in healthy individuals and the relevance of Ahara in the treatment of ailments in his discussion. It is one of the contributing factors to both Bal and Sharir Vruddhikar Bhava (factors that influence to increase strength).

Aahara Vidhi Vidhana is a ritualistic action that should be performed deliberately while eating. People in good health and those who are ill alike should adhere to it. According to Acharya Lolimbaraj, if one diligently practices Pathya, no medication is necessary; but, if one does not practice Pathya, the medication is useless.

In this 21st century people are more prone to lifestyle disorders, where poor eating habits are a major contributing factor. Ayurveda has provided specific guidelines and a procedure for taking the Ahara and life's satisfaction is found in foods that are consumed in the manners instructed. The Ojas, the Teja (slender), the Dhatus, the senses, the Bala (strength), the Tushti (pleasure of the mind), and the Arogya (health) are all dependent on eating.¹ Complexion, understanding, a long life, happiness, fulfilment, growth, strength, and intelligence are all firmly rooted in food.² In the current busy lifestyle, people do not prioritise their health and the consequences that result in. By this time, curable diseases will become incurable.

According to Acharya Charak, society can lessen most lifestyle disorders by taking the appropriate laws and regulations into consideration. In addition to the nutritional value of food, food processing methods should be considered. Significant changes in society can be brought about by raising awareness of Ahara Vidhi Vidhan and encouraging people to adopt it as a habit. Acharya Charak explains the Ahara Vidhi Vidhan in Vimana Stana. Has

also referred other Samhita, compilation books and related articles and the content is also explained in numerous books and articles.

Ahara Vidhi Vidhan

Ahara Vidhi Vidhan, that are the base of dietetics, indicates the method to which Ahara (food) should be taken; these are warm food (Ushna), unctuous food (Snigdha), proper quantity (Matravat), which is consumed after the digestion of previously ingested food, food that is not in contradictory potency (Virya avirudha Ahara), Is to be taken in favourite place (Iste Deshe),. With instruments (Ista sarvopakarana), Not to be taken speedily (na atidruham), Not to be taken too slowly), taken without talking with others (ajalpa), taken without laughing (ahasan), taken with utmost concentration (atmanaabisameekshya)³.

Ushnam Asniyat (Consuming warm food)

The term "Ushna" refers to the food's temperature rather than the food's Ushnaguna (warmness). By having warm food, Jatharagni (fire) can work properly, and eating such stuff is enjoyable with the utmost taste. It stimulates the production of digestive juices, stimulates hunger, ingested food gets quickly absorbed, and helps with easy flatus passage. The biggest advantage of having warm food is Vata anulomana. Pita will be energized and released, thereby increasing Agni and assimilation⁴.

Snigham Asniyat (Diet should include fat)

The term "Snigdha" is not only applied to Snehadravyas (unctuous substance) like oil or ghee, but it also applies to other foods like Godhuma and Sali rice. Unctuous food is delicious; it helps in the downward movement of the Vata, increases plumpness of the body, increases strength, strengthens sense faculties, and also brings out the brightness of the complexion. It is mentioned that Ksheergitabhyaso Rasayanam (rejuvenate effect of milk and ghee) by Charak Acharya⁵.

Matratvat Asniyat (Diet should include fat)

As per Ayurveda, there are two types of matra (amounts), sarvagraha (total amount), and parigrah (amount of each element separately)⁶. Charaka Acharya has provided certain guidelines in the chapter "Trividha Kuksiya" of Vimansthana for choosing the right amount of food to maintain a reasonable level of well-being⁷. A balanced diet promotes longevity, good digestion, and easy passage to the rectum⁸. Dietary intakes should be determined by the body's Agni and Bala. The Lakshanas of a person having Matratvat food are relief from distress in the stomach, clarity of the senses, absence of cardiac discomfort, and a sense of ease in standing, sitting down, walking, inhaling, exhaling, and talking⁹.

Jirne Asniyat (Meal taken after digestion of previous meal)

When food is taken after proper digestion of the previous meal, the Dosas are in the usual locations, Agni (fire) is fuelled, hunger is experienced, and all of the Srotas are transparent and open; eructation is purified; there is unimpaired cardiac function; and downward passage of the Vata, urine, and stool is normal, as mentioned by Charakacharya¹⁰. If one eats before the preceding meal has been digested, the partially digested product of the prior meal and the undigested Aahara of the subsequent food will mix up, resulting in the provocation of all the Dosas.

Virya Avirudha Asniyat (Food of Contradictory potencies)

Food items possessing contradictory potencies should be avoided. Intake of such food items generates various diseases like Kushtha, Visarpa, impotency, hereditary disorders, etc., and even death. The Viruddha aahara sevana results in the formation of Dushita Aahararasa, which starts the vitiation of Dosas, leading to the above-mentioned diseases.¹¹

Iste Deshe/Ishte Sarvopakaranam Asniyat (Meal taken at proper place and with proper instruments)

Food should be taken in the appropriate place, and the utensils or cutlery should be proper. Dining in improper or unhygienic places and using the wrong cutlery may result in certain psychological effects. Even highly nourishing food itself won't pay well¹².

Na Atidrutham Asniyat (Not eating too fast)

If food is consumed quickly, it could suffocate the swallowed air or enter other cavities, such as the trachea, lungs, or other tissues. Grittiness or hairs in food can be inadvertently consumed, and they can't enjoy the taste of food. Hence, eating quickly should be avoided¹³. Also, the benefits that the food offers are not absorbed by the person, as Acharya Chakrapani has indicated in his commentary.

Na Ativilambitham Asniyat (Not eating too slowly)

Food consumed very slowly leads to consumption in large quantities, gets cold, and is processed sporadically, making it impossible to feel satisfied¹⁴.

Ajalp, Ahasan, Tanmanabhunjitham (Eating without talking or laughing, Mindful eating)

Avoid talking or laughing while having food because, in doing so, the food is consumed unmindfully. Talking and laughing take the focus away from eating, so either the food is consumed too slowly or quickly. According to Acharya Charak, even Pathyaahar consumed is not digested because of Chinta (anxiety), Shok (sorrow), Bhaya (fear), Krodh (rage), Dukh (sadness), unsuitable bedding, and improper sleeping habits¹⁵.

Aatmana Abhisamikshya Bhunjitham (Eating after analysing one's needs)

Be mindful and aware of the constitution of the food that you are having. A person with this knowledge can identify the foods that

are good and bad for them. Even though Ahara's ideas are generally sound, they are still merely guidelines. Use them in conjunction with thoughtfulness towards the user¹⁶.

DISCUSSION

People in this busy environment rushed around looking for ready-to-eat food that was frozen, canned, fast food, etc. Even if most of them are aware of the complications and side effects of this, no one is prepared to fix it. Therefore, it is essential to rouse the populace about the current situation. According to our Acharyas, the processing (Samskara) of food results in alterations to its inherent qualities, such as the loss of nutrients during thermal blanching and the breakdown of cell walls by ice crystals during freezing¹⁷. Recent studies on the composition of the microbial community in the gut were examined using 16S rRNA. The microbiota's makeup was altered, and short-chain fatty acids were released because of both food composition and cooking techniques. In general, when compared to more gentle methods of cooking (boiling), intense cooking techniques (roasting and grilling) increased the abundance of good bacteria like Ruminococcus spp. or Bifidobacterium spp. However, intense cooking reduces the number of beneficial bacteria in some foods (like bananas or bread)¹⁸.

According to contemporary viewpoints, processing techniques are used to preserve food, increase digestibility, and improve colour and flavour so that it looks better and increases appearance, which ultimately increases appetite and shortens cooking time but becomes a cause of various diseases. It is best to follow the Ahara vidhi vidhana of Acharya Charak, which can provide good appetite, good assimilation, and good motion in short, because, as the adage goes, prevention is better than treatment.

Taking food while working can be time-efficient, but it won't always be profitable. Eating while watching television and having fun with friends can also cause one to overeat and slow down their metabolism. The results showed that those watching television consumed more than the social or driving conditions¹⁹.

The new generation is more interested in partying, drinking, eating late at night, eating raw or unprocessed food, eating an unbalanced diet, and other activities that go completely against the Ahara vidhi vidhana and promote an unhealthy lifestyle.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), eating cold food, particularly for women, can lead to a variety of digestive issues such as bloating, puffiness, and cramping. Consuming cold foods shocks the body, which may result in additional issues like exhaustion, sinus infections, and digestive sensitivities.

For those in today's world who value appearance on the outside, dieting is a surefire way to get slim, but they don't always consider the long-term effects, such as poor bone health, an increased risk of CVD, infertility, muscle loss, nutrient deficiencies, etc²⁰.

When people use food to deal with feelings instead of to satisfy hunger, it is said to be emotional eating. This is a typical sight in the area. People won't give their bodies the food they need, even though it is a basic human need. Their lives are governed by stress and overplanning.

Food intake and food selection are influenced by several external factors, including social and physical surroundings, other people's presence, sound, temperature, smell, color, time, and distraction. Food characteristics like temperature, flavour, and colour also have an impact on how much and what kind of food is consumed.

The impact of the environment on nutritional health is not fully understood, though²¹.

A cross-sectional study done on young adults and adolescents based on eating habits has revealed the current uptrends of overweight and obesity, in which the diets of approximately 90% of those teens had been characterized with the aid of using excessively low pro-health product content²².

CONCLUSION

Ahara vidhi vidhana is not just for people in good health; it can also be used by people who are ill. Ahara can only be referred to as Ahara when it is properly ingested. Only a proper assimilation of food can derive proper nutrition from the food. It is preferable to break all unhealthy habits to avoid all consequences. People won't notice it right away, but they will eventually develop a variety of lifestyle disorders, such as diabetes, thyroid dysfunction, high cholesterol, and hypertension. As Acharya Charak mentioned, Aptavachana (supreme form of knowledge) is unquestionably true, and many studies are going on.

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