



Review Article

www.ijrap.net

(ISSN Online:2229-3566, ISSN Print:2277-4343)



A REVIEW ON UNDERSTANDING MATRASHITEEYA ADHYAYA OF ASHTANGA HRIDAYA ON MAINTAINING HEALTH

Bishnupriya Mohanty ^{1*}, Surabhi Kadu ²

¹ Professor and Head, Department of Sanskrit Samhita and Siddhanta, Gomantak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya and Research Centre, Vazem, Shiroda, Tal: Ponda, North Goa, India

² PG Scholar, Department of Sanskrit Samhita and Siddhanta, Gomantak Ayurveda Mahavidyalaya and Research Centre, Vazem, Shiroda, Tal: Ponda, North Goa, India

Received on: 20/8/24 Accepted on: 02/10/24

*Corresponding author

E-mail: drbishnupriyadas@gmail.com

DOI: 10.7897/2277-4343.155169

ABSTRACT

Maintaining health depends not only on the amount and quality of food consumed, but also on how it is consumed. Food digestion, absorption, and assimilation are intricate processes in which physiological, psychological, social, and physical elements all come into play. In order to get full benefit from food, it's also important to abide by Ayurvedic guidelines on what, when, where, and how to eat. Aharavidhi Niyama (rules for consuming food) as mentioned in Ashtanga Hridaya Sutra Sthana Matrashitiya Adhyaya has explored and interpreted here in this study. Eating and dietary guidelines are compiled from various Ayurvedic text with central focus on Ashtanga Hridaya. In order to gather information about the dietary guidelines prescribed by Ayurveda, several Ayurvedic texts were examined, including Ashtanga Hridaya, Ashtanga Samgraha, Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita, Sharangdhara Samhita, Bhavaprakasa, and Yogaratnakara. The idea has been presented with Ashtanga Hridaya at its core. Dietary restrictions and dining rules make up the two categories of rules. According to the review's conclusions, breaking these guidelines can cause a person to become engulfed in a sea of illnesses; therefore, observing them will be beneficial to one's general health.

Keywords: Aharavidhi, Ayurveda, Dietetic rules, Dining rules.

INTRODUCTION

Anna or Ahara (Food) is considered as precious gem from the Vedic period itself. In Bhagwat Geeta, it is said that "from the supreme being was born the extremely subtle element known as Akasha (ether). From this came Vayu (air), and from air came Tejas (light) and Agani (fire). From fire came Aap (water). From water came Prithvi or earth, which yielded plants. In turn, from plants, food and from food the bodies of all creatures¹. Similar to how pillars sustain a home, so too do Ahara (eating), Shayana (sleep), and Abrahmacharya (non-celibacy) maintain the body continuously². Priority is given to Ahara, which is regarded as the first of the three sub pillars that sustain life³. Ahara is the source of all qualities that contribute to a high-quality existence, including strength, intelligence, complexion, cheeriness, a clear voice, contentment, and happiness⁴. Food is the cause of all living things' growth, sustenance, reproduction, and disintegration, according to Ayurveda⁵. As the only substance that may improve health in both healthy and sick individuals, food is referred to as Mahabhaishajya, or the "Ultimate Medicine"⁶. Food is categorized according to several characteristics, including season, age, purpose, advantages, and individual constitution, in the ancient Indian medical system known as Ayurveda. The goal of this classification is to provide an ideal diet that is well-balanced and adapted to various requirements and circumstances, including age and seasonal changes. Ayurveda encourages adherence to particular dietary guidelines and precepts, generally known as Ahara Vidhi Niyama, in order to reap the maximum benefits of the food consumed. These recommendations are meant to enhance the food's efficacy and advance general health. While many texts or Ayurvedic scholars, talk about these dietary guidelines; one of the main Ayurvedic text i.e., Ashtanga Hridaya

offers some very helpful guidance. It describes about who should abide by what in addition to outlining, what should be done and what should be avoided. His method makes these ideas easier to use in real life, which makes it a more approachable and useful manual for anyone looking to change their diet for health reasons.

Therefore, to assess and compile information on the several eating and dietary guidelines Matrashitiya Adhyaya chapter has reviewed with detail compilation from several other Ayurvedic texts including Ashtanga Hridaya, Ashtanga Samgraha, Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita, Sharangdhara Samhita.

Aharamatra Apeksha (Right Amount of Food): One should always eat the recommended amount of food. The proper quantity of food awakens Agni. Both foods that are difficult to digest (Guru) and those that are light to digest (Laghu) need a certain amount to be digested properly. Anything that is difficult to digest (such as fatty foods, meat, sweets, etc.) should only be eaten up to half full (Sauhitya Ardha). Food that is easily digested should be eaten until it does not cause undue satiety (Na Ati Truptata). The quantity of food that easily passes through digestion is the ideal amount. One should always consume proper quantity of food. If taken in excess causes instantaneous Tridoshakopa and Amapradoshha (Diseases of Ama), which can lead to numerous other metabolic diseases. Conversely, eating insufficiently causes all forms of Vataj Roga, as well as the loss of body strength, color, and valor⁷. When the three bodily humors (Tridosha) are kept in balance through proper food consumption, an individual's longevity is increased. Appropriate quantity guarantees adequate peristalsis and smooth movement of food toward the rectum following adequate digestion before being ejected out, without compromising the ability to digest⁸. Food that is ingested in the

right quantity remains in its rightful position and does not interfere with other Doshas, as Chakrapani makes clear⁸. The measure of right quantity, or *Matra*, is the amount of food consumed that is properly digested within the allotted time frame without interfering with the body's natural functioning⁹.

Ahara Vidhi (Regimen of Diet)

Kale Satmyam (Eating at the appropriate time): Eating at appropriate times promotes mental and emotional health, helps digestion, maintains metabolism, and frequently complies with cultural norms. Maintaining a regular eating habit can improve health in many ways and help to live a more peaceful living¹⁰. For instance, eating breakfast in the morning kick-starts your metabolism after a night of fasting, providing energy and helping maintain stable blood sugar levels throughout the day or having dinner at the same time each evening allows your digestive system to function efficiently and can help prevent issues like indigestion or bloating. Eating on a regular schedule has a favourable impact on mental health as well.

Shuchi Hitam (pure and beneficial): In the context of food and diet, "Shuchi Hitam" interprets to something like "pure and beneficial". It emphasises how crucial it is to eat food that is hygienic, comfortable, and appropriate for one's needs. Through adhering to these principles when preparing and consuming food, people can improve their general health and keep their diet well-balanced¹¹.

For instance, thoroughly cleaning food before consumption helps to get rid of pesticides and bacteria. Appropriate food handling procedures are essential to ensure food safety. Meat to be cooked under proper temperature and avoiding cross-contamination.

Someone accustomed to a Mediterranean diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats may experience better health outcomes compared to someone abruptly changing to a completely different diet. *Ajanma Satmya Ahara* can also make it easier to stick to a healthy eating pattern.

Snigdha, Ushna, Laghu (unctuous, hot, easily digestible): The phrases "Snigdha," "Ushna," and "Laghu" relate to certain properties of food. According to conventional dietary regulation, a balanced and wholesome diet depends on the attributes of Snigdha, Ushna, and Laghu. Unctuous, hot, and easily digestible foods can nourish, assist healthy digestion, and enhance general wellbeing. Ushna Ahara is recommended but it shouldn't be taken by those with severe Pittaja diseases. *Shadanga Paniya* (Medicated Cold Infusion) is said to be administered in fever. Hot water is restricted in Pittaja disease, *Kshatakshena* (Exhausted), and *Raktapitta*, in burning sensation, unconsciousness and loose stools.

Warm food is easier to digest, helps to preserve flavor, and increases the activity of the digestive fire. Since Ushna Guna (hot potency) is an antagonist to the aggravating factor of Vata, it will also aid in *Anulomana* (normalize appropriate movement) of Vata. Warm food also aids in lowering the body's elevated Kapha levels. As per *Sharangdhara Ushna Jala* (Hot water) is a best example of *Lekhana* (Scraping) *Dravya*. Cold food consumption can cause nausea, distension of the abdomen, anorexia, and a decrease in digestive fire. Extremely spicy foods should also be avoided. If consumed cold or stale it become a cause for loss of strength, giddiness, *Daha* (burning sensation), *Mada* (intoxication), and *Raktapitta* (bleeding issues).

Snigdha foods is recommended since it makes the food tasty and boost the body's digestive system in a similar way to how ghee

sparks in fire. The food will be easily digested, and the softness that Snigdha Guna imparts causes *Anulomana* of Vata Dosha. It improves the growth, strength, and complexity as well as fortify the sense organs. When food is eaten dry and without moisture, it remains as a hard mass, leading to poor digestion and resulting *Vidagdha Paka* as well as vitiation of Pitta Dosha. Ghee is a classic example of an unctuous food. It is used in many traditional Indian dishes and is believed to aid digestion and provide energy.

Spices like ginger, cinnamon and black pepper are considered as Ushna. For instance, a ginger tea or a curry made with these spices can create hot effect and may be beneficial in cold weather or for individuals with a sluggish digestion.

Cooked Moong Dal Yusha is considered Laghu because they are light and easy for the stomach. Similarly, foods like *Rakta Shali* or lentil soup are easily digestible and can be gentle for the digestive system.

Tanmanaa (eating mindfully): "Tanmanaa" describes the practice of eating mindfully and with complete focus. Being present during meals is emphasised by this approach, which can improve digestion and food¹⁰. It highlights the importance of complete attention. This method promotes a healthier connection with eating, improves digestion, and complete enjoyment of food. People can enhance their general eating habits and well-being by emphasising the sensory experience of food and being present at meals. This entails paying attention to the food's flavours, textures, and fragrances, all of which can increase satisfaction and deter overindulgence. Chewing carefully, enjoying the flavour of each bite, and paying attention to every meal helps to learn respecting food. It also teaches about how the body describes when it is full.

Shadrasa, Madhura Praayam (six taste, sweet taste in prominence): The phrase "Shadrasa, Madhura Praayam" refers to the concept in traditional dietary principles where a meal should include all six Rasa, with a prominence in Madhura Rasa¹⁰. In traditional dietary systems, including all six rasas in a meal with an emphasis on the sweet taste is believed to promote a balanced and healthful diet. Each Rasa plays a role in balancing the others and contributing to overall well-being. By incorporating a variety of Rasa, meals can be more satisfying and nutritionally complete. The Madhura Rasa should predominate in the meal, which means it should be the most dominant Rasa among the six. This is thought to be particularly beneficial for overall health, as it provides nourishment and balance.

Na Atidruta, Vilambitam (neither too quickly nor too slowly): The phrase "Na Atidruta, Vilambitam" refers to the principle that food should be eaten neither too quickly nor too slowly. This concept is important for proper digestion and overall health¹⁰. Food should not be consumed in a hurry. Fast food consumption can cause food to enter the wrong passageways, move improperly and end up in inappropriate areas, which increases the risk of food asphyxiation. In addition, the individual eating the meal will be unable to recognize any flaws in it, such as hair or other foreign objects.

High quality haste in food causes Vata to become agitated and misdirect food into other areas, resulting in symptoms like hiccups and *Avasada* (low placed). *Mala* and *Agni* can both benefit from the application of *Avasada* because it increases Vata. Food shouldn't be consumed slowly.

Eating slowly prevents one from feeling full or satisfied, encourages overindulging, causes food to go cold, and causes irregular digestion because the digestive fire is not in constant

contact with the food⁸. It is likely that those who eat while watching television, stressed out, thinking about different things, or under stress are unaware of how quickly they are eating. As a result, they often consume more and show less appreciation for the positive or negative aspects of food, which is comparable to eating quickly. Therefore, the psychological concerns about eating in a hurry that were discussed earlier can also be used here. It highlights the importance of eating at a moderate pace, not too quickly or too slowly. Eating at a balanced pace supports better digestion, prevents overeating and allows for a more enjoyable and mindful eating experience. By finding this balance one can improve overall health and make mealtimes more satisfying. Multitasking people (like eating at your desk while working) may end up swallowing larger chunks of food that are harder to digest. This can also lead to overeating.

Snataha (eating food after bath): The term "Snataha" refers to the practice of eating after taking a bath. Snana is Agni Deepka according to Acharya Vaghbhat in Ashtanga Hridaya¹¹. It is believed that bathing helps to open the micro pores of body which works for better circulation of bodily fluids and end result is increased hunger and proper digestion. Taking bath with Lukewarm / warm water also helps to maintain adequate temperature and affects in a positive way.

Kshut Vaan (strong appetite): The term "Kshut Vaan" refers to the state of having a good or strong appetite before eating. It highlights how crucial it is to eat when one is truly hungry¹¹. Controlled portion sizes improved nutritional absorption, proper digestion, and a more pleasurable eating experience all are supported by this technique. Eating only when one is truly hungry improve general health and wellbeing. Eating when one has a good appetite ensures digestive system is prepared to process food effectively. When one is genuinely hungry, the digestive enzymes and stomach acids are at their peak, which helps in the efficient breakdown and absorption of nutrients. It also helps to avoid issues like bloating or indigestion.

Viviktastha (sitting in solitude): It refers to the practice of sitting in solitude or seclusion. Eating in a quiet, solitary environment can reduce stress and anxiety, which supports better digestion¹¹. Even if food is consumed in the right amount, negative emotions like fear, anger, shyness, and jealousy can cause a person to perceive clean, healthy food as unhygienic, leading to indigestion (Ajirna). Susrutha Samhita provides specific recommendations for the location and manner of eating. He advised that food should be consumed in a pleasant and auspicious setting, free from Vaastu Dosha (unfavourable land conditions) and unwelcome individuals. The place should have a pleasant aroma and be well-protected from dust and other contaminants. Stress can negatively affect digestion, so a calm setting can facilitate a more effective digestive process. Solitude provides the opportunity to pay closer attention to hunger and fullness, which help one to eat according to body's needs rather than external pressures or distractions.

Dhauta Pada Kara Aananaha (washing feet, hands and face): It emphasizes the importance of washing the feet, hands, and face before eating to promote hygiene, cultural respect, and readiness for digestion¹¹. By incorporating this practice into routine, one can enhance cleanliness, support mindful eating, and foster a respectful and intentional approach to meals.

Tarpayitva Pitrun, Devan, Atitheen, Balakaan, Guroon (satisfying ancestors, deities, guests, children and teachers): The phrase "Tarpayitva Pitrun, Devan, Atitheen, Balakaan, Guroon" outlines a traditional practice of prioritizing certain acts

of respect and duty before eating the practice of prioritizing the satisfaction of ancestors, deities, guests, children, and teachers before eating is a way of honouring important aspects of one's life and values¹¹. It reflects Gratitude as Acknowledging the contributions and blessings from various sources. Respect demonstrating respect for divine, social, and familial roles. Fulfilling traditional duties and responsibilities it is considered important to ensure that all individuals and animals that rely on one for sustenance and care are adequately provided for before starting the meal. Ensure that household staff or workers are fed and comfortable. Provide food and care for animals such as horses, pets, and other animals that are part of our household¹². This reflects a sense of responsibility and compassion.

It is important to maintain a positive and respectful attitude toward food. Speaking negatively about food or expressing dissatisfaction can affect digestion and create a negative eating environment. Instead of criticizing the food, express gratitude for the meal. This positive attitude supports better digestion and enjoyment of the meal. While conversation is a natural part of dining, excessive talking can distract from the eating experience and affect digestion. A more focused and calm eating environment is beneficial. Liquid foods, such as soups, broths, and stews, are often easier to digest and can be more soothing for the digestive system. Eating foods that you enjoy and that suit your taste preferences can enhance the eating experience and contribute to overall satisfaction.

Ahara Kala (Proper Time of Meals)

When the body is light, the digestion is keen, the flatus is moving downward easily, the mind is clear and emotionless, the Doshas are moving in their natural paths and functioning normally, belching is pure and free of taste or odor, the body is clearly showing signs of hunger, and the flatus is moving downward easily are all the best times to eat. Food should be eaten according to the guidelines and customs around food consumption. That's the best time of day. Food that is over heated, contains more veggies and undesired grains, is extremely hot and salty and is tainted by grass, hairs, etc., should be thrown out.

Typically, when rules are mentioned regarding food, the first things which come to mind are what the rules are, when and where they apply, and how to follow them. The rules in Ashtanga Hridaya are categorized based on these questions. Food should be Ushna (warm), Snigdha (unctuous), Laghu (light), and consumed Matravat (in proper portions). Eating warm, velvety, and harmonious food provides the body with a balanced diet, and eating enough food facilitates simple digestion and absorption. Ashtanga Hridaya explains rules such as Meals should be consumed slowly and preferably right after taking a bath and washing your hands, feet, and face. Focus and digestion can both be enhanced by eating alone. Showing respect to Gurus, children, gods, guests, and ancestors before meals are mentioned in classics. Qualities of food are joined by the involvement of physical and psychological aspects. These include worries about mental health issues and the hygiene of the food being provided. Scientific studies have shown that the micro geographies of the built environment subtly and unconsciously influence food choices, intake, obesity, and overall health. A study found that eating intake increased significantly in the presence of close friends and while watching TV, as both distractions divert attention from the food and can stimulate greater consumption. Finally, it is advised to consume food at a moderate pace neither too fast nor too slow without talking or laughing, and with mind full attention to oneself.

CONCLUSION

People often find it simple to disregard dietary guidelines in their hectic daily routines and sometimes it becomes difficult to follow them as well, either to save time or because of mental health issues. Although the general public does not believe these to be the cause of diseases, they are in fact the most significant and established causes of metabolic and psychosomatic disorders. Therefore, based on the observation and debate already mentioned here, we can come to conclusion that all the rules explained by Ashtanga Hridaya should be followed depending upon the condition of a person. These are only guidelines; modifications may be made in light of the particular subject and illness state by a physician or keen observation of self. Overall, nevertheless, abiding by these guidelines will assist a typical person in preserving and enhancing their health, and disregarding them will progressively cause a variety of metabolic and lifestyle diseases to appear.

REFERENCES

1. Swami Mukundananda; Bhagvad Geeta. Adhyaya Karma Yoga, 3rd Chapter / 14th verse. Jagadguru Kripaluji Yog, p 2013.
2. Brahmanand Tripathi. Ashtanga Hridaya. Sutrasthana 7th Chapter /52. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan; 2019. p. 129.
3. Trikamji Y. Charaka Samhita. Sutra Sthana 27th Chapter /349–350. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Sansthan; 2011. p. 174.
4. Murthy Srikanta KR. Susrutha Samhita. Sutra Sthana 46th Chapter /3. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2012. p. 370.
5. Tewari PV. Kashyapa Samhita. Khila Sthana 4th Chapter/3–6. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Visvabharati; 2016. p. 468.
6. Bulusu S. Ashtanga Hridaya. Sutra Sthana 8th Chapter/1-2. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 2008. p. 114.
7. Trikamji Y. Charaka Samhita. Vimana Sthana 1/25. New Delhi, India: Chaukhamba Publications; 2016. p. 236-237.
8. Paradakara HSS. Ashtanga Hridaya. Chikitsa Sthana 1/14. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Surbharati Prakashan; 2002. p. 545.
9. Hetherington MM, Anderson AS, Norton GN, Newson L. Situational effects on meal intake: A comparison of eating alone and eating with others. *Physiol Behav* 2006; 88:498-505.
10. Sharma S. Ashtanga Samgraha. Sutra Sthana 10th Chapter/49Verse. Varanasi, India: Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series Office; 2008. p. 108.
11. Chordia S. Evaluation of the Effect of Ahara Vidhi Vidhana in Annavaha and Purisavaha Srotogata Vyadhis with Special Reference to Tanmana Bhunjita Basic Principle. Jamnagar, India: IPGT&R; 2002. p. 33-4.
12. Sobal J, Wansink B. Kitchenscapes, tablescales, platescapes, and foodscales influences of microscale built environments on food intake. *Environ Behav* 2007; 39:124-42.

Cite this article as:

Bishnupriya Mohanty and Surabhi Kadu. A review on understanding Matrashiteeya adhyaya of Ashtanga Hridaya on maintaining health. *Int. J. Res. Ayurveda Pharm.* 2024;15(5):123-126 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.7897/2277-4343.155169>

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

Disclaimer: IJRAP is solely owned by Moksha Publishing House - A non-profit publishing house, dedicated to publishing quality research, while every effort has been taken to verify the accuracy of the content published in our Journal. IJRAP cannot accept any responsibility or liability for the site content and articles published. The views expressed in articles by our contributing authors are not necessarily those of the IJRAP editor or editorial board members.