

AHAR VIDHI- DIETARY RULES

Introduction

Ahara (Diet), Nindra (Sleep), Brahmcharya (Abstinence) are recognized as Three Essential Pillars for The Smooth-Running Life.

Ahara (diet) is believed to be one of the Upastambha of life. Faulty diet results in disturbed functions of the body. That is the reason why while describing causative factors of diseases, dietary articles (apathya) have been given prime importance. Acharya Charak has stated that diet sustains life if taken with discipline in a proper manner. Ahara has a prime role in maintaining health and in treating various disorders. According to Acharya Kashyap, Ahara is considered as the Mahabhaishajya i.e. the great medicine. Ayurveda emphasizes that the Ahara is the nourisher of the body elements; vital essence, vitality, complexion and other things, but its action is dependent on the proper function of Jatharagni. (metabolism)

Health benefits of Ahara according Ayurveda

Below mentioned are the benefits of Ahara or food -

Upastambha - Ahara is one of the supporting pillars of our body and life

Preenana - Ahara provides good nutrition of all the cells and organs, provides vitality

Bala Krit - Enhances strength and immunity

Dehati Dhamaka - Supports the body | and makes it strong and sturdy

Ayu vivardhanam - Enhances the life span as a whole, increases the lifespan and functioning capacity of all the cells and structures of the body

Tejo Vivardhanam - Enhances the lustre

Utsaha Vivardhanam - Enhances enthusiasm and keeps one in good spirit

Smruti Vivardhanam - Enhances memory

Ojo Vivardhanam - Enhances ojas or essence of all the tissues which in turn reflects the immunity of an individual

Arogya - Bestows best quality and quantity of health

Pranam Abhidhavati – Helps in sustenance of life in all the living beings

Varna Prasada - Provides good complexion and color

Sauswaryam - Provides good voice

Jeevitam - Provides longevity of life

Pratibha - Provides intelligence and capacity of using the intelligence in the proper places in proper times

Sukham - Provides happiness and pleasure

Tushti – Provides satisfaction and content

Pushti - Provides nourishment

Balam - enhances strength and vigour

Medha - enhances intellect

Ayurveda diet means dynamic understanding of

When to eat?

What to eat?

How much eat?

How to eat?

When to eat?

It is very important when we should eat, because Ayurveda says we should eat when we fill hunger or when our agani is strong. So It is important to allow food to digest and true hunger to return before taking another meal Ayurveda teaches that taking food before true hunger returns leads to poor digestion. This poor digestion leads to formation of ama (failed metabolism) and many disease and dosha imbalance.

So as per Ayurveda, what is the correct time for food to be eaten? Well, the answer is pretty simple. **Eat when you are hungry.**

How can we know about true hunger? With hunger sensation below mentioned condition also essential..

- **Visrushta vin mutra** – Stools (feces) and urine should have been voided properly
- **Vishada karane** – When the senses are clear, i.e. in the presence of pleasantness of mind
- **Dehe cha su laghau** – Presence of lightness of the body
- **Vishuddhe cha udgare** – Presence of clear belching
- **Hrudi suvimale** – Clarity and lightness in the region of heart, heart being devoid of blemishes (feel of goodness in the chest area)
- **Vate cha sarati** – Proper movement of Vayu, Vayu being in a normal state
- **Anna shraddayaam** – Presence of interest for intake of food
- **Kshut upagamane** – In the presence of hunger
- **Kukshau cha shitile** – The stomach should be empty and clear, light

One should eat two times in a day-prath kal (morning time) and sayam kal (evening time).

MORNING TIME IS TAKEN AS AFTER 1st PRAHAR & INBETWEEN OF 2ND PRAHAR = THAT'S AROUND 9 AM TO 12PM TIME. (1 Prahar Is 3hrs Time).

At that morning time sun is in his peak so your pitta energy is high so agni is also high, so lunch should be heaviest and largest meal of a day.

Dinner should be light and with the sunset for ease digestion.

What to eat?

According to Ayurveda diet should be balanced, what is balanced diet? balanced diet means where all six tastes are present. So this diet is tridoshik diet means with these six tastes can balance the dosha.

Sweet

Sour

Salty

Pungent

Bitter

Astringent

Daily and balanced intake of six tastes increases the immunity also.

Madhura (Sweet)

Madhura means very appealing, pleasant or very sweet. Sweet taste is due to the Water and Earth elements. The sweet taste shows qualities or gunas such as cooling, heavy and unctuous.

Physical effects: The sweet taste is related to strength and stability of the body. It pacifies the Vata and Pitta doshas. However, an excess of sweet can aggravate Kapha dosha. Sweet taste is homologous to body since birth; small babies enjoy the sweet taste of breast milk. Food with sweet taste is wholesome; it promotes longevity when consumed in moderation. It enhances the growth of all seven tissue-elements. It is beneficial to the health of skin, senses and general growth of the body.

Psychological effects: Sweet taste is very pleasant and exhibits pronounced satisfying and gratifying effects. It increases cheerfulness, love and compassion. It gives the feeling of love but if consumed in excess, it increases greed and attachment.

Side effects: If a person consumes excess sweet food, then his Kapha dosha aggravates. It

can lead to many diseases like obesity, diabetes, lethargy, increased cholesterol etc.

Food items: Foods with sweet taste include sugar, honey, sugarcane juice, maple syrup and dates to name a few. Foods like rice, wheat, milk and fruits like mango and grapes are also good food items of sweetness.

Amla (Sour)

Amla means sour taste and is made up of Earth and Fire elements. This taste has qualities like lightness, hot and unctuous.

Physical effects: Sour taste increases the digestive power. It exhibits a sharp taste, which stimulates salivation and increases the appetite. It pacifies Vata but increases Pitta and Kapha. It promotes strength and stability of tissue-elements. It regulates peristalsis; it regulates downward movement of vata and helps in the digestion of food.

Psychological effects: Sour taste is very sharp. It brings alertness to the mind and increases attention. It is responsible for bringing appreciation but if consumed in excess it brings out hate, jealousy.

Side effects: If a person consumes excess food with sour taste, then he will experience symptoms like excess thirst, hyperacidity and heartburn. A number of other diseases like loss of skin tone, hyperacidity, skin rashes, gastritis and ulcerative colitis.

Food items: Citrus fruits like limes, lemons and oranges are good examples of amla food. Other food products include sour cream, yogurt, vinegar & fermented food.

Lavana (Salty)

Lavana means salty taste and it primarily gives relish to the food. Salty taste is due to the predominance of Water and Fire element. Salty taste exhibits qualities like oily, heavy and hydrophilic in nature. Salty taste pacifies Vata but increases Pitta and Kapha.

Physical effects: Salty taste has a laxative effect and it removes obstruction from the channels (srotas). It liquefies mucus and clears the channels. Apart from this, it improves digestion and increases salivation. It balances the blood pressure by maintaining electrolytes in the body. It gives muscles strength.

Psychological effects: Salty taste enhances the taste of food so one can enjoy it. This taste brings interest and enthusiasm. Hence, generally people show a kind of addiction to the salty things.

Side effects: Excess consumption of Salty foods causes ill effects like premature graying of hair, wrinkles, baldness and inflammatory diseases. It causes water retention leading to edema and increase in blood pressure. It also increases Pitta dosha leading to hyperacidity.

Food items: Sea salt, rock salt and table salt and predominant food items for salty taste. Apart from this, consumption of salty food like salted chips, salted nuts also act as food items of this taste.

Katu (Pungent)

Katu means pungent or very hot taste. It shows predominance of Fire and Air elements. Pungent food shows qualities like hot, dry and light nature. Pungent taste pacifies Kapha but it aggravates Pitta and Vata.

Physical effects: Pungent taste improves digestion. It stimulates the digestive fire (Agni) in the body. It improves circulations and clears the channels. It has an anti-spasmodic action. It causes instant watering of eyes and nose if consumed directly. It produces heat in the body and breaks clots in the circulation.

Psychological effects: Pungent taste also has sharp and penetrating effects on the mind. It aids the clarity of mind, increases attention and brings clarity of perception.

Side effects: Pungent food, if consumed in excess causes irritation and inflammation and leads to aggravation of Pitta. It destroys virility. It can cause diarrhea, peptic ulcers, giddiness, insomnia and some skin conditions.

Food items: Chili pepper, cayenne pepper, habanera pepper and black pepper are food items of this taste. Apart from this, spices such as mustard, ginger, garlic and onion are also pungent in taste.

Tikta (Bitter)

Tikta meaning bitter taste produces a very unpleasant taste in mouth. In spite of its unpleasant taste, it is important to incorporate this taste in our meal. Bitter taste shows predominance of Air and Ether elements. It is cool, dry and light in character.

Physical effects: It demonstrates a strong wormicidal action. It has appetizing effects and reduces burning sensation. It gives firmness to the skin and muscles and reduces skin diseases by its anti-inflammatory effects. It also demonstrates a cleansing effect.

Psychological effects: Bitter taste helps to withhold the mind and senses from objects of desire.

Side effects: Bitter food consumed in excess will produce side effects on the body. Further, this taste exhibits spermicidal effects. Excess consumption of bitter taste leads to loss of strength and energy and increased Vata dosha.

Food items: Food items of this taste are bitter gourd and bitter melon. Herbs like neem (Azadirachta Indica) are also bitter in taste.

Kashaya (Astringent)

Kashaya means astringent taste that occurs due to the predominance of Air and Ether elements. It is heavy, dry and cooling in nature. It gives an immediate drying sensation in mouth on consumption.

Physical effects: By its drying property, kashaya absorbs water and helps in binding stools. It constricts the different channels of the body. It purifies blood by its anti-inflammatory effects. It reduces Pitta and Kapha but it increases Vata dosha in the body.

Psychological effects: Astringent substances help the mind to become collected or organized. But excess consumption of this taste causes insomnia, anxiety and depression.

Side effects: Excess use of astringent food causes choking sensation and difficulty in speaking. It causes constipation along with distension of abdomen. It affects the sperm count and can even reduce the sex drive. Prolonged consumption may lead to emaciation of the body.

Food items: Unripe banana, chickpeas, alum and okra are good food items of astringent taste.

These six tastes should be every day in diet but only quantity of each taste should be according to the prakuti, season, country.

For example, during spring season bitter, astringent and pungent taste should eat more to balance the Kapha dosha.

How much eat?

Aaharmatrapunragnibalapekshini “| *cha.su.5/3*

The above verse explains that, the food portion varies with individual depending upon his/her Agni and strength

This again varies with respect to the individual's age, season and health conditions. For instance food quantity reduces with aging, illness as the Agni weakens in both the conditions, and food requirement increases in individuals who exercise; as exercise kindles the Agni is in best of its condition in winter and young age, and so can also digest more portions of food.

If One Divides One's Stomach Into 3 parts, We Should Fill 1 Parts with Solid Foods, 1 Part with Liquid Food And 1 Part Leave Empty.

One Should Stop at That Point When One Gets the Feeling That A Couple of More Morsels and Once Will Be Really Full. For One to Know This Feeling One Should Be Aware While Eating Food. That's Why No TV, Mobile or Any Activity While Taking Food.

Even also quantities of food also based upon the qualities of food .if food items is heavy and then should eat up to half to 1/3 part of stomach.

Foods that are light can be had up to 1/3 rd. part of stomach.

Less consumption of food side effects

Taking less food also causes diseases of insufficient nutrition. They are called Apatarpana Rogas.

Apatarpana means less nutrition Rogas means diseases

Emaciation of body

Reduced digestion, strength, complexion, muscles, semen etc

Fever

Cough

Chest pain

Anorexia

Pain in heart region, calf, thigh, low

back, bones and joints

Pain in heart region, calf, thigh, low back, bones and joints

Upward movement of vata

Many vata disorders (because less quantity food leads to vata dosha vitiation)

Excessive consumption of food side effects

Excessive consumption of food is also not good for health. It also imbalances digestive fire and doshas and causes many metabolic disorders. its leads to Kapha dosha imbalance.

Taking food in excess also causes diseases of over-nutrition. They are called Santarpana Rogas.

Santarpana means over nourishment Rogas means diseases

Examples of diseases due to over nourishment

Urinary disorders,

Diabetes

Blisters

Urticaria

Anemia

Fever

Skin diseases

Dysuria

Anorexia.

SO, OUR FOOD SHOULD ALWAYS BE IN PROPER QUANTITY