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AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE OF DIETETIC REGIMEN ACCORDING TO *PRAKRITI* OF CHILD

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ABSTRACT

The dietary regime followed by the mother during pregnancy affects the *prakriti* (genetic constitution) of the child which is going to deliver. The born child shows the same predominance of *doshas* in later life according to the type of foods which are eaten by the woman. It results in development of three types of *prakriti* depending on the predominant diet consusmed by the mother as *vata sthuna* (*Vata* predominant constitution), *pitta sthuna* (*pitta* predominant constitution), *kapha sthuna* (*kapha* predominant constitution). The child gets accustomed to the same dietary items as the pregnant lady consumes during the gestational period, hence the mother should not consume the food items antagonistic or opposite to the *desha* (dwelling place), *kala* (time), *agni* (digestive power). Due to the varied dietary habits of every individual they have different amount of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* in body depending upon the food items which he consumes. Hence a person should consume only those diets which help in maintaining the balance of *doshas* in his body.

Keywords : Ayurvedic dietetics, Prakriti, child diet.

INTRODUCTION

Diet not only has profound effect on our body after taking birth only but according to the ancient Ayurvedic texts the diet governs our genetic constitution, right from the conception itself.

The diet consumed by a pregnant lady generally gets divided into three components:

- One part is utilized for the nourishment of her own body
- Second part is make use of providing nourishment to the developing fetus
- Third part is used for nourishing the breast of the pregnant lady.

The type of diet consumed by the mother helps in deciding the *prakriti* (genetic constitution) of the progeny and it results in development of three types of *prakruti* depending on the predominant diet consumed by the mother as *vata sthuna* (*Vata* predominant constitution), *pitta sthuna* (*pitta* predominant constitution), *kapha sthuna* (*kapha* predominant constitution). The child gets accustomed to the same dietary items as the pregnant lady consumes during the gestational period, hence the mother should not consume the food items antagonistic or opposite to the *desha* (dwelling place), *kala* (time), *agni* (digestive power) [1]

The diet consumed by the mother plays a vital role in determining the type of offspring the mother is going to deliver in future. The consumed diets decide the doshika predominance of the child and ultimately decide his *prakruti* (genetic consti-

tution) both at the level of body and mind. The food items having the physiological action of increasing the level of any one dosha cause the development of predominance of same dosha in the child. An expecting mother should also restrain from consuming diet which are antagonistic to her dwelling place, time and digestive power as all these factors of diet help in development of healthy offspring.

Diet according to the bodily *dosha* predominance in the child

All the beings do not have the same amount of three *doshas* due to their varied dietary habits or each individual have different amount of *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* in body depending upon the food items which he consume. Hence a person should consume only those diets which help in maintaining the balance of *doshas* in his body. [2]

Depending on the predominance of *doshas* all persons can be categorized into 4 types:

- *Sam prakriti* (one with the balance of all three *doshas*)
- *Vata* predominance
- *Pitta* predominance
- *Kapha* predominance.

The person having balance of all three *doshas* should consume food items to maintain a balance of *doshas*, consuming diet which increases only one type of dosha causes vitiation of that particular dosha and hence food items which pacify the three *doshas* are palatable for these individuals, for the persons having predominance of any one *dosha* should follow the dietary regime which is opposite in nature to the predominant *dosha* so as to maintain the internal harmonium of body. [3]

These are general guidelines for dietary regime of genetic constitution of the child.

Diet according to *manas dosha* predominance in child

Every child has inherent *manas prakriti* (mental constitution) similar to the bodily *prakriti* which is decided at the time of conception. There are three basic types of *manas guna* (mental attributes) *satva*, *raja* and *tama* which dominate in any child, depending on which his mental constitution is decided. Since every matter in the nature is constituted of *pancha mahabhuta* and so the *tridosha*, *triguna* and the food items which we consume. With the help of *samanya* and *vishesha* principle it can be inferred that the *samanya* (homologues) *guna* food items cause to increase the same attribute in body at mental level and *vishesha* (non homologous) *guna* food items tend to decrease the same attribute. The relation between *panch mahabhuta*, *tridosha* and *triguna* can be understood as follows:

SATVA	***= AKASHA***	***AND AKASHA + VAYU***	***=VATA***
RAJA	***= VAYU***	***+ TEJA AND TEJA***	***= PITTA***
TAMA	***= JALA***	***+ PRITHVI***	***= KAPHA***

Hence from the above relation it can be seen that *manas dosha* are affected by the *mahabhutas* and in turn the bodily *doshas*. So in order to maintain the balance of *manas doshas* diet must be consumed in accordance to the bodily *doshas* as child with *satva prakriti* should consume more of *vata* wholesome diet, raja *prakriti* should be given more food items of *pitta* wholesome diet and a little bit of *vata* wholesome diet as well and the *tama manas prakriti* child

should consume diet of *kapha* wholesome diet.

Taste preferences according to *dosha*

All food items consist predominantly one or two of *panch mahabhutas.* The six basic taste found in nature also consist of *mahabhutas* depending on which they exert their pharmacological effect on *doshas*. The *mahabhutika* predominance of six tastes has been summarized in table no D1. Of the six basic tastes found in nature the combination of three of these tastes helps in increasing a particular dosha and similarly the combination of three causes decrease in particular dosha as can be inferred from the table no.D2.

Table no. D1 Showing the predominance of *mahabhutas* in six tastes [4,5]

***Rasa* (taste)**	***Mahabhuta* content**
Madhur	*Jala* and *Prithvi*
Amla	*Prithvi* and *Agni*
Lavana	*Agni* and *Jala*
Katu	*Vayu* and *Agni*
Tikta	*Aakash* and *Vayu*
Kashaya	*Vayu* and *Prithvi*

Table no.D2 showing the effect of six tastes on *doshas* [6,7]

Dosha	**Taste that Increase *Dosha***	**Taste that decrease *Dosha***
Vata	*Katu* (Pungent)	*Madhur* (Sweet)
	Tikta (Bitter)	*Amla* (Sour)
	Kashaya (Astringent)	*Lavana* (Salty)
Pitta	*Katu* (Pungent) *Amla* (Sour)	*Madhur* Sweet *Tikta* (Bitter)
	Lavana (Salty)	
	Katu (Pungent) *Amla* (Sour)	*Kashaya* (Astringent)
Kapha	*Madhur* (Sweet)	*Katu* (Pungent)
	Amla (Sour)	*Tikta* (Bitter)
	Lavana (Salty)	*Kashaya* (Astringent)

Hence in order to balance any particular dosha the child must be prescribed with the food items of the taste which helps in pacifying particular dosha.

So ***vata prakriti*** children should be advised food items which are *madhur* (sweet), *amla* (sour) and *lavana* (salty) in taste and food items of *katu* (Pungent), *tikta* (bitter) and *kashaya* (astringent) taste should be kept in minimum.

Pitta prakriti individuals should consume more foods that are *madhur* (sweet), *tikta* (bitter) and *kashaya* (astringent) in taste and keep *katu* (pungent), *amla* (sour) and *lavana* (salty) taste food items at minimum in their diet.

Similarly a child with ***kapha* predominance** should involve himself in consuming more of *katu* (Pungent), *tikta* (bitter) and *kashaya* (astringent) taste and restrain from consuming food items which are

madhur (sweet), *amla* (sour) and *lavana* (salty) in taste. [8]

All the food items consist of predominantly one taste or the other among six basic tastes; these tastes have pharmacological action on our *doshas* according to their constitution as shown in table no. D2. Hence one should judiciously choose the food items to maintain the balance of *doshas* in our body.

Guna (attributes) preferences according to doshas

All the three *doshas* have few basic *gunas* (attributes) which they inherit, hence in order to counter balance the *doshas* the food items which are opposite in *guna* (attribute) to a particular dosha should be consumed. The *guna* (attributes) of *doshas* and their counterparts are shown in table no.D3.

Table no. D3 Showing the effect of different _gunas_ on _doshas_[9,10,11]

Dosha	Inherent guna	Opposite guna
Vata	*ruksha* (dry), sheet (cold), *laghu* (light), *sukshma* (coarse), *chala* (mobile), *vishada* (non slimy), *khara* (rough)	*snigdha* (demulscent), *ushna* (hot), *guru* (heavy), *sthula* (gross), *sthira* (immobile), *picchila* (slimy), *slaksha-na* (smooth),
Pitta	*ssneham* (with oily properties), *ushna* (hot), *tikshna* (sharp), *drava* (liquid), *sara* (fluid),	Food items with less oily content, *sheet* (cold), *manda* (slowness), *san-dra* (concentrate), *sthira* (stable),
kapha	*guru* (heavy), *sheet* (cold), *mridu* (soft), *sthira* (immobile), *picchi-la* (slimy),	*laghu* (light), *ushna* (hot), *kathin* (hard), *sara* (fluid), *vishad* (non sli-my)

Food items can be classified according to the inherent properties referred to as *guna* in ancient texts into 20 types, the food items cause the increase of same attribute which they contain and counter balance the attribute opposite to their properties. Hence food items which contain attributes opposite to one's *doshika* predominance are considered as beneficial for them and the one which are similar are considered as unwholesome and should be consumed in lesser amount.

Food lists palatable and non palatable for different _prakriti_

Keeping in mind the *rasa* (taste) and *guna* (inherent properties) of the different food items from basic food groups there can be a number of food items which can be listed as wholesome or unwholesome for particular *dosha*. In ancient texts the scholars have described the properties of different food items, making this description as base the following wholesome and unwholesome list of food items has been prepared. The food items which should be favored for particular dosha predominance *prakriti* and the foods which must be eaten in less quantity are listed in table no. D4, D5, D6. Since in ancient texts the general and therapeutic effect of all food items has been given according to the bodily *doshas* and not on mental *doshas* hence the planning of food for *manas doshas* should be done

keeping in mind the relationship of different manas *doshas* to the bodily *doshas*.

If any individual has mixed *prakriti* (basic constitution) i.e. *vata-pitta or vata-kapha*, then he should include portions for the second influential dosha also in his dietary regimen.

Table no. D4 Food list for *vata dosha*

Food groups	Foods to be favoured	Foods to be reduced
Cereals	*jai* (oats), *shali* and *shastika* rice, *godhuma* (wheat), *mung* in less quantity (green gram), urad (black gram)	*Yava* (barley), *china* (Indian millet), corn, rest all other legumes
Fruits	All sweet fruits, *urumana* (apricots), *kadli* (bananas), *narikela* (coconut), *phalgu* (figs), *draksha* (grapefruit), *jambir* (lemons), *amra*, (mango), *kalinda* and *kharbuja* (melons), *narang* (oranges), *dadima* (pomegranate), ripen lakocha (monkey jack)	*Vata*d (almonds), akshota (walnut), *sinchitika* (apples) *amritphala* (pear), *shringataka* (water chestnut)
Vegetables	shatavari (asparagus), *garjanaka* (carrots), *trapusa* (ripen cucumber), *rasona* (garlic), *palandu* (onion), *moolaka* (radish), *kushmandi* (pumpkin), *ajmoda* (celery), *vrantaka* (eggplant), *patola* (pointed gourd), *nenua* (sponge gourd), *changeri* (Indian sorrel)	*tinda* (*Citrullus vulgaris*), *aluka* (yam), *manakanda* (*Alocasia indica*), *chatraka* (mushrooms), *torai* (*Luffa acutangula*), onions, *satina* (peas), *palakya* (spinach), *chaulai*, (amaranthus), *karela* (bitter gourd)
Spices	*Jeeraka* (cumin), *ardraka* (ginger), *sharshapa* (mustard seeds), *ajwain* (*Tachyspermum ammi*), *methika* (fenugreek), dhanyaka (coriander), bay leaves, *tulsi* (basil), *keshara* (saffron), *hingu* (asafoetida), *ela* (cardamom), *lavanga* (cloves), *saunf* (fennel) , *krishna maricha* (black pepper)	
Dairy products	cow or goat milk, butter, ghee, cream, cheese cream	
Others	*Ikshu* (sugarcane), meat of *anupa*, *jalaja*, *prasaha*, *vileshaya* and *jalachara* animals (mainly aquatic animals)	*madhu* (honey)

Table no. D5 Food list for *pitta dosha*

Food groups	Foods to be favoured	Foods to be reduced
Cereals	*Yava* (barley), *jai* (Oats), shali and shastika (rice), *godhuma* (wheat), all legumes except	Corn, *china* (Indian millet) *masha* (black gram), *kulattha* (horse gram)

Fruits	All *madhur* (sweet) fruits, *sinchitika* (apples), *narikela* (coconut), *phalgu* (figs), *draksha* (grapes), ripen *amra* (mango), *naranga* (ripen oranges), *amritphala* (pears),*sauvira* (sweet plums), *amalki* (embelica)	All *amla* (sour fruits) jambiri (lemons), *tada* (palm) unripen *karmarda* (*Carissa carandas*),
Vegetables	*madhur* (sweet) & *tikta* (bitter) vegetables, *shatavari* (asparagus), *trapusa* (cucumber), *ajmoda* (celery),leafy greens, *chatraka* (mushrooms), okra, *kalaya* (peas), *patola* (pointed gourd), *makoya* (solamun nigrum), *kakdi* (snake cucumber), *karela* (bitter gourd)	*katu* (pungent) Vegetables mooli (carrots), *vartaka* (eggplant),*rasona* (garlic), palandu (onions), *garjanaka* (radish), *palakaya* (spinach)
Spices	dhanyaka (coriander), haridra (turmeric), keshar (saffron), saunf (fennel), ela (cardamom,)	*sharshapa* (mustard seeds), celery seeds, fenugreek, *hingu* (asafetida), *jeeraka* (cumin), *ardraka* (ginger), *krishna maricha* (black pepper), *lanka* (chili), *shatpushpa* (dill)
Dairy products	*dugdha* (milk) , *ghrita*(clarified butter), *navneeta* (butter), *takra* (buttermilk)	*Dadhi* (yogurt)
Others	*Ikshu* (raw sugar cane) date sugar, *gur* (*jaggery),* meat of *jangala* (arid land animals), *vishikir* and *pratuda* animals	*Nadeya matsya* (fresh water fishes), meat of *anupa*, *jalaja*, *prasaha*, *vileshaya* and *jalachara* animals (mainly aquatic animals)

Table no. D6 Food list for *kapha dosha*

Food groups	Foods to be favoured	Foods to be reduced
Cereals	*Yava* (barley), corn, *china* (Indian millet), *shali* and *shastika* rice , All legumes especially *mung*, *lentils* & beans.	*Godhuma* (wheat), *masha* (black gram),
Fruits	*Urumana* (apricots), *amra* (mango), *aruka* (peaches), *dadima* (pomegranate), *vatad* (almonds), *akshota* (walnut), *sinchitika* (apples) *amritphala* (pear), *shringataka* (water chestnut), *kalinda* (water melon)	*Madhur* (sweet) and *amla* (sour) fruits *kadli* (bananas), *narikela* (coconut), grapefruit, lemons, *naranga* (orange) *erandkarkati* (papaya), *ambada* (Indian hog plum), *lakocha* (monkey jack), *panas* (jack fruit)

Vegetables	All *katu* (pungent) & *tikta* (bitter) vegetables, *shatavari* (asparagus), *ajmoda* (celery), *vartaka* (eggplant), *rasona* (garlic), *chaulai* (amaranthus), *changeri* (Indian sorrel), *shalmali* flowers (*Salmalia malabarica*) *palandu* (onions), *kushmandi* (pumpkin), *alabu* (white gourd), *karela* (bitter gourd), *patola* (pointed gourd)	All sweet and juicy vegetables. *torai* (*Luffa acutangula*), *aluka* (yam), *poi* (Indian spinach)
Spices	*ardraka* (ginger), *krishana maricha* (black pepper), *jeeraka* (cumin), *sarshapa* (mustard seeds), *ajwain* (*Tachyspermum ammi*), *keshara* (saffron), *hingu* (asafoetida), *dalchini* (cinnamon), *ela* (cardamom), *lavanga* (cloves), *saunf* (fennel), coriander, *shatpushpa* (dill), mint, *jatiphala* (nutmeg),tamarind,	
Dairy products	Small amount of milk and *ghee* (clarified butter)	sour cream and *dadhi* (yoghurt)
Others	*madhu* (honey) and *gur* (*jaggery),* sea salt, lemon juice.	meat of *anupa*, *jalaja*, *prasaha*, *vileshaya* and *jalachara* animals (mainly aquatic animals)

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Generally child having predominance of any one *dosha* should follow the dietary regime which is opposite in nature to the predominant *dosha* so as to maintain the internal harmonium of body.

- The *rasa* (taste) and *guna* (attributes) of food items affect the physiology of *doshas* in body. The effect of *rasa* (taste) and *guna* (attributes) on *doshas* are given in table no. D2 and D3. The *rasa* and *guna* of food items opposite in nature of the predominant *doshas* cause their decrease whereas same attributes lead to their increase according to the concept of *samanya* and *vishesha* in body. Hence the food items which are opposite in nature to the predominant *dosha* in the child are considered as palatable for him as they will help in maintaining the balance of *doshas* in his body.
- The correct *prakriti* assessment of the child should be done by the physician and the food items should be prescribed accordingly. The different food items which are wholesome and unwholesome for different types of *prakriti* (genetic constitution) prescribed in ancient texts and based on their properties have been collected and prescribed in table no. D4, D5 and D6. Children having mixed *prakriti* (genetic constitution) i.e. *vata-pitta or vata-kapha*, should include portions for the second influential *dosha* too in their dietary regimen, one having *sama prakriti* should try to include food items from all three lists.

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