

THE CONCEPT OF INCOMPATIBLE FOOD

Gupta Bijay Kumar

Reader, SBLD Ayurved Vishwabharati, Gandhi Vidya Mandir
Sardarshahar, Churu, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT

Food plays a decisive role in development, reproduction and termination of life. Through centuries, Food has been recognized as an important factor for human beings, in health and diseased state. When food (*Ahara*) is taken judiciously and according to the codes of dietetics then only the benefits of food can be achieved. Any aberration in diets and even in their preparation style leads to ill health. Hardly few individuals follow these codes and rules of dietetics. As a result men have to pay penalty for his non - judicious changes in food habits and life style. In Ayurveda the concept of incompatible food is described vividly by almost all the acharyas. The incompatible food is one of the potent causative factor for several diseases. It gives rise to various disturbances of mild to violent nature and disease of acute to chronic nature. This shows the potency and lethal effect of incompatible food

Keyword: Incompatible food (*Viruddhahara*)

INTRODUCTION

A person who does not live according to the rules of nature brings calamity upon himself in the form of various upsets in his system. The human body is designed in such a way that it is perfectly in tune with the events occurring in the environment. Ayurveda gives prime importance to the prevention of diseases by elaborating the right lifestyle for a healthy today and healthier tomorrow. This is meant for strengthening the immune system of the body. Right diet and regimen are essential components of this right lifestyle.

Many kinds of wrong methods of food intake can thus lead to different types of diseases. A most important faulty food intake is incompatible diet (*Viruddhahara*), which plays a major role in the causation of diseases. Incompatibility among food items can result from the antagonism in properties like taste (*rasa*), properties (*guna*) and potency

(*veerya*) inherent in them. In some cases two compatible substances may become incompatible due to the processing techniques they are subjected to. The food articles are supposed to maintain the humors (*doshas*), tissues (*dhatu*s), and excreta (*malas*) in their equilibrium state.

Significance of incompatible food

At present scenario the increasing complexity of our modern industrial society and the wide-ranging nature of the international food trade have increased the risk of contamination of food by chemical and biological agents which in turn leads to incompatibility. In our broadening search for new sources of food as well as man-made toxicity occasioned by harmful chemicals in foods eaten as they are grown, or by chemicals entering foods as accidental contaminants or as a result of food processing also leads to incompatibility.

tibility of food items.

Now a day's adulteration of the foodstuff is a common practice. It is also primary cause

of incompatibility in food. Common food adulterants are as follow:

Food stuff

Common Adulterants

1. Milk -	polluted water, removal of butter and addition of refined oil or hydrogenated Fat.
2. Ghee -	Hydrogenated Fat.
3. Vegetable oil (Mustard)-	Argemine oil, non-edible oil.
4. Wheat flour -	Tapioca flour, Talc.
5. Bengal gram -	<i>Kesari Dal</i> (Lathyrus Sativus)
6. Honey -	Coloured come sugar syrup.
7. Tea -	other leaves with added colour.
8. Oils	Rancid oil

At present food-preservatives & packed food have a very extensive use, which often constitutes adulteration & incompatibility. Salicylic, benzoic, and boric acids, and their sodium salts, formaldehyde, ammonium fluoride, sulphurous acid and its salts are among the principal preservatives. Many of these appear to be innocuous, but there is danger that the continued use of food preserved by these agents may be injurious and leads to serious health disorder.

Today we are taking the products from bakery; they are adding many synthetic chemicals to give attractive colour for products. Intake of these bakery products leading to various non communicable health problems. Most of Bakery products made out of *maida*. This *maida* processed with harmful chemicals then used for preparing variety of products leading to incompatibility inside the body.

Concept of incompatible food does not exist in modern dietetics in the form, which is mentioned in ayurveda. However, the fact of diet induced changes in the drug activity and exacerbation of certain disease condition after consumption certain type of food is well known in modern medicine. Dr. Howard Hay introduced the modern concept of

food incompatibility in the 1930. His studies were based on the fact that proteins and carbohydrates are digested differently. He classified carbohydrate as alkaline forming foods and proteins as acid forming foods. Some of the topics in modern science which are having similarities with incompatible food are mentioned here-

1. Antagonism
2. Free radical formation
3. Allergic food
4. Food poisoning
5. Food additives

Etymology

It is derived from the root words *Vi*

The prefix 'vi' in *virodha* signifies opposition.

The word '*viruddha*' means to hinder, to obstruct, opposed, adverse.

The word *Viruddha* is originated from the Panini root *rudhira avarani* by applying the prefix "VI". This leads to two factors i.e. on combining two, or more things; the stronger one shades or overpowers the weaker ingredients. This has been accepted principally in Ayurveda also. It has been stated that in a combination of so many opposite qualities the majority of the power packed qualities over come the weaker qualities

Derivation

Those substances which causes ‘*utkleshya*’ of the doshas but unable to remove it from the body constitutes *viruddha*. It is also antagonistic to the *dhatu*s.

Those articles of food, which dislodge the morbid humors (*Doshas*) but do not eliminate them from the body are to be regarded as incompatible food articles

‘*Utkleshya*’ means accumulation, agitation and excitement of *doshas*.

According to Dalhana “*utkleshya*” means *prakopya*. *Prakopa* means wrath, great excitement or provoke.

Perspective of Incompatible food

There are eighteen types food incompatibilities described in Charak samhita as below

1. Place incompatibility (*Desha viruddha*)
The use of dry, hot and other food substances of pungent qualities in an arid region and the use of unctuous, cold and other food substances of similar qualities in a wet region are examples of incompatibility of diet with reference to place.
2. Time incompatibility (*Kala viruddha*)
The use of cold, dry and similar things in winter and the use of pungent, hot and similar things in summer season are called incompatibility of diet with reference to season
3. Digestion incompatibility (*Agni viruddha*)
One should take food after considering four types of Agni respectively. If food has not been taken in accordance to the respective thermal intensity (*Jatharagni bala*) then it will become *agniviruddha*.
4. Dose incompatibility (*Matra viruddha*)
Food taken in sufficient quantity is termed as *Matravat Ahara*. If one cannot take *Matravat Ahara*, then it is called *Matraviruddha*. Acharya Charaka has

given another definition, as intake of same quantity of Madhu and Ghee is *Matraviruddha*.

5. Habit incompatibility (*Satmya viruddha*)
Intake of sweet and cold food substances or articles by a person to whom only pungent and hot substances are homologous is an example of incompatibility of diet with reference to homologation
6. Humor incompatibility (*Dosha viruddha*)
The use of articles of diet (food), drugs and procedures, which are similar in quality to that of the respective body humors, is called humoral incompatibility.
7. Process incompatibility (*Samskara viruddha*)
The incompatibility of preparation is that where food/food substance is converted in to poison during the course of preparation. As for example, in the case of the peacock’s flesh roasted on a spit made of a stick of the castor plant.
8. Potency incompatibility (*Veerya viruddha*)
Virya is the power by which an action takes place. When substance having opposite *viryas* are used in combination, that it is known as *virya viruddha*.
9. Bowel incompatibility (*Kosta viruddha*)
If a person having *Krura Koshta* is administered a drug, which is small in dose, weak in potency, and poor in laxative quality or a person having soft gut (*Mrdu Koshta*) is given a drug which is heavy, cathartic and in large dose, then this is known as *Koshta viruddha* - bowel incompatibility.
10. Condition incompatibility (*Avasta viruddha*)

Incompatibility with reference to the state of the person is known as *avastha viruddha*. In other word when one person takes food substances similar to his own prakrti dominant dosha, then it is called Avastha viruddha.

11. Order incompatibility (*Krama viruddha*)
This is incompatibility of rules of eating. When person takes his meal without relieving himself of faeces and urine or eats without the feeling of hunger or does not eat in spite of severe hunger then it turns out to be *Krama viruddha*.
12. Regimen incompatibility (*Parihara viruddha*)
This is incompatibility of the rules of prohibition means that food substances which are to be avoided according to his condition. This condition may be healthy or unhealthy.
13. Exemption incompatibility (*Upachara viruddha*)
This is incompatibility of the rules of ingestion where a person eats cooling things after taking ghee and similar articles.
14. Cooking incompatibility (*Paka viruddha*)
If food substances / diet is prepared with bad and rotten fuel, or is undercooked or over cooked or burnt, then it is called *paka viruddha* or culinary incompatibility
15. Combination incompatibility (*Samyoga viruddha*)
This is an incompatibility of combination when sour things are taken with milk.
16. Mental incompatibility (*Hrut viruddha*)
This is incompatibility of palatability where an article or substances of food is unpleasant in taste.

17. Maturity incompatibility (*Sampat viruddha*)

Intakes of substances that are not matured, over matured or putrefied are *sampat viruddha*.

18. Regulation incompatibility (*Vidhi viruddha*)

There are certain procedures which should be followed while performing some *kriyas* like rules for taking food .E.g. Taking meals in public.

Terms related to incompatible food

1. Improper Diet (*Mithya Ahara*):

Mithya Ahara means improper diet. Acharya Charaka has described eight factors determining the utility of food called as “*Astavidha Aharavidhi Viseshayatanani*”. They are *Prakrti, Karana, Samyoga, Rasi, Desa, Kala, Upayoga Samsthana and Upayokta* (Ch. Ci. 1/21).

These eight factors give rise to beneficial effects. Habitual intake of things in proper way may be more useful but in improper way they are always harmful. So they should be avoided.

2. Frequent food (*Adhyashana*):

Taking food just after completing a previous meal is called *Adhyashana*. If proper time is not given for previous food to get digested and stomach is still occupied with a previous food and more food is taken in such condition then there is a disturbance in the rate of production of secretion from the stomach and other organs related with digestion of food. Further peristalsis movement in the stomach and intestine get disturbed. Due to decrease in secretion of digestive enzymes, the food is partially digested thus producing *Ama*. As the peristaltic movement is hampered, the food stays in the stomach for longer time and gets decomposed producing toxins (*Amavisa*). These factors are the root cause of several diseases, which are

produced due to different permutations and combinations of *dosha* and *dushya* involvements.

3. Irregular consumption of food (*Vishamashana*):

Taking food at irregular time is called *Vishama Asana*. *Vishama asana* is best known to produce *vishamagni*. In present day life, Hurry, Worry and Curry have become universal phenomenon; no one has time to even eat properly. *Vishama asana* is becoming a common practice now a day.

4. Admixture of Wholesome and Unwholesome food (*Samashana*):

Intake of wholesome diet and unwholesome diet at same time in one meal is called *Samashana*.

5. Over eating (*Atyashana*):

Taking excessive amount of diet is known as *Atyasana*. *Atimatra* diet is best known to produce vitiation of *Agni* and *Ama*. *Ahita bhojana* when taken in *atimatra* and at improper time (*akala*) leads to *dushti* in *annavaha srotasa* and also disturbs the *paka prakriya* (process of food digestion).

Common diseases of incompatible food

The continuous use of incompatible food causes impotence, blindness, erysipelas, ascites, pustules, insanity, and fistula in ano, fainting, narcosis, tympanitis, and spasm in throat, anaemia, amavisha, lecoderma, leprosy, g ranthiro-ga, oedema, acidgastritis, fever, rhinitis, genetic disorders and even death.

Pathogenesis of incompatible food

Delayed effect:-

Intake of incompatible food → *agnimandya* → *ama* → *srotodusti* → *vyadhi*.

Usually viruddhahara gets digested and absorbed in to the body. It causes dosha dhatu dusti. But the degree of dusti is so subtle that the natural reaction of the body is not able to

push it out and cleanse the body of all impurities. Dooshi visha and gara visha are the result of delayed effect of viruddhahara.

Sudden effect: Intake of incompatible food → *srotovaigunya (abhisyanda guna)* → *vyadhi or marana*. Viruddhahara which is *agneya* in nature leads to *raktha dusti* like *visha* and causes diseases or death suddenly.

Factors pacifying ill effects incompatible food

There are certain groups of people who are not affected by incompatible diet. They are able to negate the actions of incompatible diet in the body. This ability depends on certain specific conditions. They are:

- Person who do regular proper Exercise
- Person who follows proper oleation procedures (*snehpana*)
- Person with excellent digestion (*Agni-deepthi*)
- People who are in prime youth
- People who possess a good natural (*Sahaja*) and aquired (*Yuktikrita*) strength (*balam*)
- Accustomed food, even if it is incompatible
- Incompatibility in reduced quantity.

Treatment for diseases caused by incompatible food

Diseases caused by incompatible food can be cured by emesis (*vamana*), purgation (*virechana*), pacifying methods (*shaman*) and prophylaxis (*hita sevana*). Since the *doshas* are not removed from the body, it is very essential to remove the *doshas* by proper (purification) *shodana*. After *Shodana*, *Shamana oushadies* to the respective diseases should be given. One should be advised to give up the habit of consuming incompat-

ible food and adopting *hitakara ahara* & intake of *rasayana* at regular basis.

Bad effects of incompatible food will be reduced by gradual discontinuation of unwholesome foods and good effects will increase by gradual intake of wholesome foods. In course of time, both become stable and do not revert back to their original state. Discarding unwholesome diet suddenly and adopting unaccustomed wholesome diet spontaneously also causes diseases due to habituation and non-habituation of such substances.

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CORERESPONDING AUTHOR

Dr . Gupta Bijay Kumar

Reader, SBLD Ayurved Vishwabharati,
Gandhi Vidya Mandir, Sardarshahar, Churu
Rajasthan, India

Email: aapkavj@gmail.com

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