

RELATION OF PRAKRUTI AND AHARA W.S.R TO DIETARY ROUTINE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda “the mother of all medicines” focuses on causes rather than symptoms. It is governed by the principle of individuality in treating diseases. The concept of *prakruti* plays a major role in this principle. Deciding the *prakruti* plays a major role in deciding individual’s *ahara* and *vihara*, *achara* and *parihara* following which an individual can lead a healthy and prosperous life. This concept also helps the physician in the *chikitsa* of patients.

Keywords: *prakruti, ahara, vihara, achara, parihara, chikitsa*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda “the mother of all medicines” focuses on causes rather than symptoms. So this science is person than disorder specific. This approach has proven effective over the centuries. Traditional *ayurveda* fits quite well into modern models of holistic medicine concerned with a broad view of the total health of the individual: physically, emotionally and spiritually.

CONCEPT OF PRAKRUTI:

To understand the concept of *prakruti* we should know how *ayurveda* views the body. Individuals are considered to take form as a result of three life giving forces and these forces are called “*doshas*” namely *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*¹. They are considered simply as the inherent intelligence of the body, thus shaping how we look, how our metabolic processes function, how we respond to different surroundings, even how we think and feel. Bringing balance and health to the whole system of *dohas*, *dhatu*s and *malas* is the fundamental prin-

ciple of *ayurvedic* healing and as stated by *Acharya Sushruta dosha, dhatu, mal-amulam hi shareeram*² your *prakruti* does not change; it remains constant throughout life. The state of the *doshas* can change. This changed pattern is called *vikruti* or conditional state, as it does not match the original pattern and thus causes disruptions that eventually result in some kind of disorder.

The attributes given to *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha* exist all around us. They manifest in living conditions, emotional atmosphere and in the foods we eat. These qualities from our environment act on our bodies, bringing to it their qualities. The outer elements are directly changing the balance of inner elements. This is known as the principle of like increasing like³. By the same logic, influences of opposite qualities to the *dosha* will help to maintain balance. These are fundamental principles of healing in *ayurveda* and the key to making cor-

rect choices to support the health and beauty of the body. This study is presenting the effort of collection of dietary sources which are favourable for three *doshic prakriti* to be followed by the individuals will result in a healthy mind as well as body.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF FOOD:

When the *rishis* wrote about *ahara*, they were living in a simpler, less polluted world. Times have changed and many issues need consideration when addressing diet. The suggestions that follow are not necessarily traditional, but are keeping in spirit of *ayurveda*.

- 1) Select organic foods when possible because these are richer in nutrients, especially trace elements.
- 2) Eat foods that grow in the area in which you live or within a 400 mile radius because they form a similar climate zone and flourish in your local area, so will you.
- 3) Eat foods that are in season so they are freshest and naturally most suited to the climate in the particular time that you are in. .
- 4) Select foods appropriate to your *dosha* depending upon the season, time of the day when a particular *dosha* is naturally higher for example *vata* is higher in autumn and winter and daily in the afternoon. *Pitta* is higher in summer and daily at midday. *Kapha* is higher in the spring and daily in the early morning and evening⁴.

DIET ACCORDING TO DOSHA:

An *ayurvedic* diet is based more on the intuitive sense of what is attractive to the individual by color, smell, temperature, taste, and texture; trusting that when the body is in balance, it will be attracted to foods by its own innate intelligence. Foods for a particular *dosha* are there not to enhance or make the *dosha* more that way, but to balance its tendencies with opposite

qualities and resultant tendencies. *Ayurveda* honours what has basically worked as the most life sustaining foods and food proportions for humans over the course of history; a diet of 40-60% whole cereal grains, 30-50% fresh fruits and vegetables and 10-20% high Quality proteins.

VATA:

General considerations⁵:

- *Vata* predominant people have both unpredictable appetites and an inherent loathing of routine, eating quality food in sufficient quantity by eating more frequently is useful, as long as there is hunger.
- Key qualities of *vata* diet are warm, heavy, moistening, nourishing, nurturing, soothing, satisfying and grounding. Warm foods are best, especially stews and simple one dish meals. Avoid a great variety at one meal.
- Use mild salts and a little salt to help prime digestion.
- Fast foods are not preferable as compared to home foods.
- Beware of allergies as *vata* people do not tolerate nightshades like potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant etc.
- Eating should be avoided when nervous, anxious, afraid, deep in thought or worried.
- Eating should be avoided when watching T.V, listening to radio, reading etc.
- Eat with people who take pleasure in eating in a calm, tidy, clean and spacious feeling atmosphere
- Skipping meals is not good but over-eating is worse.
- *Vata* is increased by age, autumn season, afternoon time, travel, loud, noise, cold and wind so particular about diet at these times.
- Sweet, sour, heavy, salty, oily and warm foods are most balancing.

- Pungent, bitter, astringent, light, dry, cold are *vata* aggravating.

PITTA

General considerations⁶:

- *Pitta* dominant *dosha* usually have a strong appetite that needs to be satisfied regularly. Unsatisfied appetite leads to intense hunger and to outbursts of irritation, even hunger.
- Key qualities for *pitta* diet are cool, slightly dry and a little heavy. Avoid salt.
- Late night eating should be avoided. Fresh fruit or vegetables are the best evening snack if appetite demands.
- Eating should be done with calm and gratitude.
- **Avoid eating when angry, irritated or in competitive situations.**
- Avoid salty, greasy, overly cooked, excessively rich, heavily spiced or sour foods as well as caffeine, red meat eggs, alcohol and sugar.
- *Pitta* is increased by summer, at mid-day and midnight, intense heat, excessive sunlight.
- ***Pitta* balancing substances are sweet, astringent, bitter, cool, heavy and dry.**
- Pungent, hot, sour, light, salty, oily are *pitta* aggravating.

KAPHA

General Considerations⁷:

- Changing old patterns to eat less in quantity and frequency but maintaining a high quality of foods is key for balancing *kapha dosha*.
- Take low salt, low fat, high fiber, lightly cooked foods.
- *Kapha* people are the only ones who can happily skip breakfast. Eating between 10AM and 6PM is best.
- Take a gentle walk after eating. Avoid sleeping after meals as this adds to heaviness in the body.
- Fast one day a week.
- Be mindful not to use food for emotional support because it will cause weight gain.
- *Kapha* increases in early morning, later in the evening and in the spring. Be most careful at these times avoiding heavy breakfasts or late night kitchen raids.
- *Kapha* balancing foods are pungent, light, dry, astringent, bitter and hot.
- *Kapha* increasing foods are sweet, heavy, sour, oily salty and cold.

DAILY EATING ROUTINE FOR THREE DOSHIC PRAKRITI:

S.No		<i>VATA</i> ⁸	<i>PITTA</i> ⁹	<i>KAPHA</i> ¹⁰
1.	No.of meals	3 or 4 at regular times with a gap of at least 2 hours	3 meals at regular times with a gap of at least 4 hours	2 meals at midday and early evening with a gap of at least 5-6 hours
2.	Breakfast	heavy	Light and an early lunch	Only juice or tea
3.	Servings	5-6 servings of whole grain,1-2 of high quality proteins,1 fruit and drink plenty of water	4-5 servings of whole grains,1+1/2of high quality proteins,3-4 of fresh vegetables ,1-1+1/2 fresh fruit and drink moderate amount	3-4 servings of whole grains,2 of high quality low fat and protein rich foods,4-5 of fresh vegetables ,1 fresh fruit and drink

			of water	moderate amount of water. Drink only when thirsty and eat only when hungry.
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FOOD PRODUCTS FOR DIFFERENT DOSHAS:

S.No	FOOD PRODUCT	VATA ¹¹	PITTA ¹²	KAPHA ¹³
1.	GRAINS	Brown rice, sweet brown rice, basmati rice, wild rice, oats, amaranth, whole wheat cereals, pastas, udon noodles	Barley, white basmati rice, wheat, whole wheat tortillas, wheat pastas, rice cakes	Amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, quinoa, basmati rice, rice cakes
2.	LEGUMES	Split mung, red lentils, aduki, tofu, soy beverage	Any beans except red lentil, tempeh	Aduki, black beans, black eye peas, garbanozos, limas, navy beans, pinto, red lentil, split peas, white peas.
3.	ANIMAL PRODUCTS	Eggs, chicken, turkey, fresh and salt water fish, shrimp	Chicken, turkey, egg whites, fresh water fish	Chicken, turkey(dark meat),eggs, wild game
4.	VEGETABLES	Asparagus, acorn squash, artichokes, beets, butternut squash, carrots, cucumber, green beans, hot peppers, leeks, mustard greens, okra,olives,onions, parsnips,pumpkins,radi sh,rutabaga,summersquashes,sweet potato	Asparagus, acorn squash, artichokes, bell pepper, Brussels sprout, burdock, butternut squash, blackol-olives,cabbage,cilantro,corn,cauliflower,collardcelery,cucumber,greenbeans,jicama,kale,lettuce,mushroomokra,peas,parsley,parsnips,potato,rutabaga,summersquashes,sweetpotato,wa	Asparagus,beets,bellpepper ,broccoli,Brusselsprout,burdock,carrot, cabbage,corn,cauliflower,celery,daikon,greenbeans,jicama,kohlrabi,leafy greens, leeks, lettuce, mushroom, okra, onion, peas, parsley, summer squashes, turnips, watercress, zucchini

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5.	DAIRY	Unhomogenised cow milk, goat milk, cheese, buttermilk, soft cheese, hard cheese, yoghurt, icecream, sour cream	cow milk, goat milk, unsalted butter, buttermilk, soft cheese, ghee, yoghurt, icecream	Ghee, goat milk, lassi
6.	FRUITS	Apricots, avocado, bananas, berries, cherries, coconut, dates, figs, grapefruit, kiwi, lemon, limes, mangoes, melons, oranges, papaya, peaches, pineapple, plum, rhubarb, raisins	Apples, Apricots, avocado, berries, coconut, dates, figs, grape, mangoes, melons, oranges, papaya, pear, peach, pineapple, plum, pomegranate, prune, raisin, watermelons	Apples, Apricots, berries, cherries, cranberries, dryfigs, mangoes, pear, peaches, persimom, pomegranate, prune, quince, raisin, strawberries
7.	NUTS & SEEDS	Almonds, brazils, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pinenuts, pistachio, pumpkin, sesame, sunflower, walnuts	Pumpkin, coconut, sunflower	Pumpkin, sunflower
8.	SWEETENERS	Barley malt, brown rice syrup, ghur, jaggery, fruit juice concentrates, honey, maple syrup, molasses, sucanat, sugarcane juice	Barley malt and brown rice syrup, fruit juice concentrates, maple, fructose, molasses, sucanat, sugarcane juice	Raw honey, fruit juice concentrates
9.	CONDIMENTS & PICKLES	Lemon juice, gomasio (sesame seed and salt mixture), ginger pickle, miso, mayonnaise, natural soy sauce, sweet pickles, sweet chutney, sea vegetables,	Lemon juice, lime pickle, mayonnaise, soy sauce, mango pickle and chutney, sea vegetables, yoghurt.	Black pepper, chilli, coriander leaf, garlic, ginger, mustard, mint leaves

		sesame seeds.		
10.	OILS & SPICES	Asafoetida, ajwain, garlic, ginger, mustard oil, sesame oil	Avocado, coconut, olive, sunflower, soy, walnut, sesame oils and in spices coriander, cumin, dill, fenel, mint, neem, peppermint, rosewater, saffron, turmeric	Mustard seed, almond, corn, sunflower oil and all spices generally with the exception of tamarind
11.	DRINKS	Aloe vera juice, fruits and vegetables juices, smoothies, coffee substitutes, herbal teas, vegetable broths	Aloe vera juice, fruits and vegetables juices, coconut milk and milk smoothies, herbal teas, vegetable broths	Aloe vera juice, fruits and vegetables juices, grain coffee, coffee, black tea, spiced herbal teas

DISCUSSION

Ayurveda covers a massive concept on *ahara vihara* and *dincharya*. It purely emphasizes *ahara* as a vital aspect for promoting healthy and curing the diseased as according to the famous *prayojan* of *ayurveda* mentioned by *Acharya charaka*¹⁴ *Ayurveda* says body's inner aspect i.e mind and outer aspect i.e body are soulfully interconnected. Derangement in one disturbs the aspect. Human body is necessarily composed of three *doshas vata, pitta, kapha* unlike modern anatomy which comprises of various levels cells, tissues, organs and organ systems in a human body, *ayurveda* summarizes every constituent of the body in these three *doshas* so called *tryaupstambha* by *Acharya Charak*¹⁵ When the body is balanced it demands for foods which are good for it but when either of the aspect i.e mind or body is disturbed, outer body's connection to inner intelligence goes awry and we craves for food which are opposite to our *doshas* or we can say that like attracts like

according to the principle of "*samanyam vridhikaranam*". For instance if *pitta* increases in the body we will have the tendency to crave for more *pitta* vitiating food resulting in more accumulation of *pitta*. Foods that decrease a *dosha* are said to pacify that *dosha*, and foods that increase it aggravate it. Sweet, sour, and salty foods pacify *vata*. Sweet, pungent, and bitter foods decrease *pitta*. Pungent, bitter, and astringent foods pacify *kapha*.

Vata types need foods that calm their tendency toward anxiety and over activity. Heavy, cooked foods served warm are the most soothing. Dairy products, sweeteners, and foods cooked or served with fats and oils pacify *vata*. Steam veggies and drizzle with a little ghee (clarified butter) or olive oil, or stir-fry them in oil or ghee. Rice and wheat are excellent grains for *vata* types. Juicy fruits and vegetables, heavy fruits (such as avocados and bananas), risotto, sweet and sour veggies, and warm berry cobbler with whipped cream all help pacify *vata*. Avoid hot, spicy foods. *Vatas* can

healthfully cook with more salt than *pittas* and *kaphas*.

Fiery *pitta* needs to be cooled down. Serve foods at cool temperatures, but not ice cold which inhibits digestion. *Pittas* thrive on reduced amounts of fats, oils, and salt. Sweet, completely ripe fruits and all vegetables except garlic, tomatoes, radishes, and chilies are *pitta*-pacifying. Moderate portions of dairy products are fine, but minimize sour-cultured ones. Coriander and mint have cooling effects. Coconuts, pomegranates, grilled vegetable salad, and rice pudding all reduce *pitta*.

Sluggish, cool *kapha* needs to be stimulated and warmed up. Light, dry, warm foods reduce *kapha*. Use minimal amounts of fats and oils. Sweeten foods with honey, but never cook or bake with it. Grains such as barley, buckwheat, and rye are the best for *kapha* types, as are light, dry fruits, such as apples and cranberries. Low or no fat milk is good, but minimize cultured dairy products. *Kapha* types can eat all spices and herbs but need to be cautious with salt. Pumpkin and sunflower seeds and all beans, with the exception of the oilier soybean, are excellent.

CONCLUSION:

The ancient *Ayurvedic* text *Sushruta Samhita* states, "He whose *doshas* are in balance, whose appetite is good...whose body, mind, and senses remain full of bliss, is called a healthy person."¹⁶ By following these simple, time-tested *Ayurvedic* dietary principles in your daily life, you can enhance your health, increase your happiness, and uplift your spirit.

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