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 prakriti 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 kapha1. 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, dhatus and malas is the fundamental principle of ayurvedic healing and as stated by Acharya Sushruta dosha, dhatu, malamulam hi shareeram2 your prakriti 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 evening.

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 considerations:
- 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 considerations**:

- *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 midnight and at midday, 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 Considerations**:

- 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**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th><strong>VATA</strong></th>
<th><strong>PITTA</strong></th>
<th><strong>KAPHA</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>No. of meals</td>
<td>3 or 4 at regular times with a gap of at least 2 hours</td>
<td>3 meals at regular times with a gap of at least 4 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>heavy</td>
<td>Light and an early lunch</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Servings</td>
<td>5-6 servings of whole grain, 1-2 of high quality proteins, 1 fruit and drink plenty of water</td>
<td>4-5 servings of whole grains, 1+1/2 of high quality proteins, 3-4 of fresh vegetables, 1-1+1/2 fresh fruit and drink moderate amount</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
FOOD PRODUCTS FOR DIFFERENT DOSHAS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>FOOD PRODUCT</th>
<th>VATA&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>PITTA&lt;sup&gt;12&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>KAPHA&lt;sup&gt;13&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>GRAINS</td>
<td>Brown rice, sweet brown rice, basmati rice, wild rice, oats, amaranth, whole wheat cereals, pastas, udon noodles</td>
<td>Barley, white basmati rice, wheat, whole wheat tortillas, wheat pastas, rice cakes</td>
<td>Amaranth, barley, buckwheat, corn, millet, quinoa, basmati rice, rice cakes</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>LEGUMES</td>
<td>Split mung, red lentils, aduki, tofu, soy beverage</td>
<td>Any beans except red lentil, tempeh</td>
<td>Aduki, black beans, black eye peas, garbanzos, limas, navy beans, pinto, red lentil, split peas, white peas</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>ANIMAL PROD- UCTS</td>
<td>Eggs, chicken, turkey, fresh and salt water fish, shrimp</td>
<td>Chicken, turkey, egg whites, fresh water fish</td>
<td>Chicken, turkey (dark meat), eggs, wild game</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>VEGETABLES</td>
<td>Asparagus, acorn squash, artichokes, beets, butternut squash, carrots, cucumber, green beans, hot peppers, leeks, mustard greens, okra, olives, onions, parsley, pumpkins, radish, rutabaga, summer squashes, sweet potato</td>
<td>Asparagus, acorn squash, artichokes, bell pepper, Brussels sprout, burdock, butternut squash, black seed, cabbage, cilantro, corn, cauliflower, collard, celery, cucumber, green beans, jicama, kale, lettuce, mushroom, okra, onion, peas, parsley, summer squashes, turnips, watercress, zucchini</td>
<td>Asparagus, beets, bell pepper, broccoli, Brussels sprout, burdock, carrot, cabbage, corn, cauliflower, celery, daikon, green beans, jicama, kohlrabi, leafy greens, leeks, lettuce, mushroom, okra, onion, peas, parsley, summer squashes, turnips, watercress, zucchini</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td><strong>DAIRY</strong></td>
<td>Unhomogenised cow milk, goat milk, cheese, buttermilk, soft cheese, hard cheese, yoghurt, icecream, sour cream</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>cow milk, goat milk, unsalted butter, buttermilk, soft cheese, ghee, yoghurt, icecream</td>
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<td>Ghee, goat milk, lassi</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td><strong>FRUITS</strong></td>
<td>Apricots, avocado, bananas, berries, cherries, coconut, dates, figs, grapefruit, kiwi, lemon, limes, mangoes, melons, oranges, papaya, peaches, pineapple, plum, rhubarb, raisins</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Apples, Apricots, avocado, dates, figs, grapefruit, mangoes, melons, oranges, papaya, pear, peaches, pineapple, plum, pomegranate, prune, quince, raisin, strawberries</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td><strong>NUTS &amp; SEEDS</strong></td>
<td>Almonds, brazils, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio, pumpkin, sesame, sunflower, walnuts</td>
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<td>Pumpkin, coconut, sunflower</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Pumpkin, sunflower</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td><strong>SWEETENERS</strong></td>
<td>Barley malt, brown rice syrup, gur, jaggery, fruit juice concentrates, honey, maple syrup, molasses, sucanat, sugarcane juice</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Barley malt and brown rice syrup, fruit juice concentrates, maple, fructose, molasses, sucanat, sugarcane juice</td>
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<td>Raw honey, fruit juice concentrates</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td><strong>CONDIMENTS &amp; PICKLES</strong></td>
<td>Lemon juice, go-masio (sesame seed and salt mixture), ginger pickle, miso, mayonnaise, natural soy sauce, sweet pickles, sweet chutney, sea vegetables,</td>
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<td>Lemon juice, lime pickle, mayonnaise, soy sauce, mango pickle and chutney, sea vegetables, yoghurt</td>
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<td>Black pepper, chilli, coriander leaf, garlic, ginger, mustard, mint leaves</td>
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<td></td>
<td>OILS &amp; SPICES</td>
<td>DRINKS</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Asafoetida, ajwain, garlic, ginger, mustard oil, sesame oil</td>
<td>Aloe vera juice, fruits and vegetables juices, smoothies, coffee substitutes, herbal teas, vegetable broths</td>
<td>Aloe vera juice, fruits and vegetables juices, coconut milk and milk smoothies, herbal teas, vegetable broths</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avocado, coconut, olive, sunflower, soy, walnut, sesame oils and in spices coriander, cumin, dill, fennel, mint, neem, peppermint, rosewater, saffron, turmeric</td>
<td>Aloe vera juice, fruits and vegetables juices, grain coffee, coffee, black tea, spiced herbal teas</td>
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**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. 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 *tryaupsthambha* by Acharya Charak. 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 vritthikaranam*”. 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 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.” 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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