

ASHTAVIDHA AAHAR VIDHIVISHESH AAYATANANI AND BALANCED DIET

Rupali S Mane¹

¹Associate professor, Dept.of Shareer kriya, Acharya Deshabhushan Ayurvedic Medical College, Bedkihal, Karnataka, India

Email: manerupali31@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The main aim of Ayurveda is to maintain the healthy status of healthy person and then curing the diseases of diseased person. So in order to maintain healthy status food, sleep and controlled sex are the important factor as per Ayurved. Again out of these three factors, food is first and foremost and it acts as main pillar only when it is properly cultivated, stored, selected, prepared and consumed according to proper guidelines mentioned in Ayurveda. Furthermore selection, preparation and consumption of food is directly related to each and every individual. So knowledge about these in Ayurveda and modern perspective is very important.

Keywords: *Trayoupasthamba, ashtavidha aahar vidhivishesh aayatanani, Prakriti, Karana etc.*

INTRODUCTION

In Ayurveda, food, sleep and controlled sex are regarded as the *Trayo upasthamba*¹ (three pillars or tripods) of healthy living. It is important for our body to be adjusted to timely intake of good quality and proper food, regular sleeping habits and controlled sex. In Ayurvedic view, the food and its utilization represent a fundamental parameter and the entire concept of health and disease revolves round this doctrine.

Charak say's the human body is product of food (*aaharsambhav*)², even so diseases arise on account of unwholesome food. The difference be-

tween ease and disease is correlated to the wholesome and unwholesome diet.

Also *agni* is equated to life. *Bala, aarogya, aayu* etc is dependent on *agni*. And the proper functioning of *agni* is dependent on food. *Charak* proceeds to observe that *agni* in its turn waxes being fed with *indhan* i.e. fuel in the form of foods and drinks and that it wanes in its absence.

Food in turn depends on *agni* for its utilization as *rasadidhatus* cannot be formed from a food that has not been digested and metabolized. Food is of no use to the body if it is not properly

digested and assimilated. *Agni* is directly concerned with the process of digestion and there are other supporting factors also.³

For improved digestion, other factors like when to eat, how much to eat etc. keep their own importance and rules are mentioned for these as *ashtavidha aahar vidhivishesh aayatanani*.

Aahar is food, *vidhi* is method, *vishesh* is peculiar, *aayatanani* is abode.

So these are eight types of directions for ingestion of food. These points should be considered while planning one's diet.

Prakriti-swabhava

Prakriti is first factor. It means the original or natural qualities of food in terms of *Gurvadi guna*. This refers to the qualities without any processing. E.g *maasha* is heavy and *mudga* is light to digest.

Karana- swabhavikanam dravyanaamabhisankar

Karan is the second factor. It causes alteration in the original qualities (*Gurvadi guna*) through *sanskar* like *toyagnisannikarsha*, *manthan*, *kal*, *desh*, *bhavana* etc. It means the various methods of processing and preparing food. E.g Curd obstructs the conveying channels, yet if churned, buttermilk enhances *agni*.

Sanyog-sanhtibhava

It means combination of two or more food items together. A combination may show properties which are not exhibited by the food items taken singularly. Food items should be combined judiciously, else may prove harmful. e.g milk and fish are good for health if taken separately, It's *sanyog* is worst for health. Similarly consumption of fruits with milk like milk shakes etc.

Rashi-sarvagrahaparigrahau matramatraphalavinischayatha

It is described to emphasize the importance of amount of food ingested.

Two methods-

1. To calculate the total amount of food eaten.
 2. To calculate each entity of food item eaten.
- If fewer amounts than required is consumed, it will not fulfill the body's needs. If consumed in excess it will cause health disorders. However amount of food differs from individual to individual.

Desh-punhasthana

dravyanamutpattipracharau deshsatyam.

It means place of origin of food stuff. Also denotes the body which consumes it. It means habit of body to eat certain type of food. The place of origin determines the qualities of food stuff. For eg the plants growing in Himalayas have good medicinal properties.

Kala- nityag and avasthik

Nityag means according to *ritu* (season). *Avasthik* means condition of the body. Food should be consumed according to the season and also as per the diseased state of the body. Eg *langhan* for *navajwar* as here once digestive fire (*Agni*) diminishes, so one should consume less quantity of food that too easily digestible.

Upyogsanstha-tuupyognyamah.Sa jeernalakshanapeksha.

- Indicates when to eat and when not to eat. It is expected that one should eat only when previous diet is digested.

Upyokta-yadayattam oaksatmyam.

- Denotes one who eats. One should think of own constitution and eat accordingly. *Oaksatmya* resides with the consumer. This directs towards the eating habits of the person which are developed according to ones likes and dislikes, constant consumption of any food item etc.

These factors are stated so an individual can enjoy health out of eating food (*pathyakara*). If not properly consumed, food can vitiate *dosha*

and can generate disease (*apathyakara*). One should always try to know these factors because they lead to pleasant or unpleasant results and consume only *hitkar* food.⁴

MODERN CONCEPT

The process of alimentation means the process of nourishing the body and includes ingestion digestion and ejection.

Ingestion is the process of taking material (particularly food) into GIT or the process by which a cell takes in foreign particles. It relates to the trapping of fuel either through cell surfaces or absorption through structures like GIT.

For optimum nutrition the diet should be a balanced one means it should include proportionate quantities of food items selected from the different basic food groups so as to supply the essential nutrients in complete fulfillment of requirement of body.

Basic food groups

- 1) Milk group including dairy product.
- 2) Meat group including meat, fish, eggs, pulses/beans /nuts etc.
- 3) Green leafy vegetables and fruits group.
- 4) Cereal group including rice, wheat etc.

A balanced diet should be planned according to

1. Age, sex, calorie requirement-look for age, sex, physical activity involved and special nutritional needs eg. Growing child, a pregnant lady.
2. Selection of nutrients from basic food groups- the required quantity of food items is to be selected from four basic food groups in such a way that the total nutritive value satisfies the estimated need.
3. Should be within economic means of people.

4. Should fit local food habits and contain locally available foods..
5. Diet should be easily digestible and palatable.
6. Should contain enough roughage material.
7. High cost and low cost diet- for a person of low income group cheaper item have to be selected and at the same time care should be taken that nutrient and calories required are fulfilled.⁵

In the food proximate principles are carbohydrates, lipids and proteins. Also required amounts of vitamins and minerals are necessary. Regarding the nutritional importance of above certain points need to be remembered.

Carbohydrates-dietary carbohydrates provide a major fraction of body's energy needs, ideally 60-65% of total calories. It is of 2 types- Available carbohydrates- which can be utilized by the body, includes starch and sugars.

Unavailable carbohydrates- which can't be utilized by the body, includes dietary fiber.

Cereals pulses and tubers are the major sources of starch in diet. The process of cooking makes the starch more soluble and accessible to digestive enzymes.

Eating parboiled rice preserves the thiamine content. Germination of legumes leads to partial breakdown of starch present in them.

Lipids- provide concentrated source of energy. A minimum intake of lipids is essential since the requirements of fat soluble vitamins and essential fatty acids are to be met. Ideal intake is 15-20% of total calories. Moreover the fat content should be such that SFA MUFA PUFA should be in 1:1:1 ratio.

Two types- visible fat-fat consumed as such eg butter oil etc.

Invisible fat -fat present as part of other food items, example: eggs, meat, nuts etc,

Fat increases the taste and palatability of food and is the favoured cooking medium. For this combination of vegetable oils is best which will provide all three- SFA MUFA PUFA.

Proteins- Only 10-15% of total energy is derived from proteins. They are the only source of essential amino acids. For the synthesis of body proteins, all the essential amino acids should be supplied in adequate quantity at the same time. It is now known that quality of proteins consumed is also of equal rather more important than the quantity.

Quality is assessed by following points-

Biological value of proteins-animal proteins is generally of higher quality or completes proteins as compared to vegetable proteins (incomplete proteins).

Various methods of processing or cooking of food stuffs may adversely or beneficially affect the nutritional availability and hence the biological value of proteins.

Amino acid composition of dietary proteins-to be a complete protein and of high biological value the protein must have all essential amino acids and they must be available to the organism together and simultaneously. If one of the amino acid is lacking and there is an interval of two hours or more, the amino acids are not utilized for protein synthesis. The biological value of proteins is also related to the proportionality relationship of its essential amino acids.

Availability of amino acids from food- process of cooking e.g. heating during cooking affects the digestibility of proteins and release of amino acids.

Eg cooking of meat results in breakdown of connective fibers, makes meat easier to masticate and thus assists digestion.

Supplementary relationship of amino acids and time factor- a protein lacking a particular amino

acid if supplemented by another protein containing that amino acid and taken simultaneously, the biological value is enhanced and it is used for protein synthesis. Time factor is important because these proteins should be taken together. Otherwise as stated above they are not utilized for tissue protein synthesis.eg pulses are deficient in methionine but rich in lysine. Cereals are deficient in lysine but rich in methionine. So combination of pulses and cereal like dal and roti will cancel each other's deficiency and become first class protein.⁶

DISCUSSION

Ahar being prime importance for existence of human beings, proper guidelines have been mentioned in *Ayurveda* for ingestion of food. Diet should be planned according to these patients. First and foremost one should know the *prakruti* of *ahardrvya* i.e. natural qualities because these qualities affect on body. We are what we eat. Certain foods are raw but majority items are cooked. So we should know about processing and preparations that food item has to undergo. This is mentioned in *Karan*. Due to this qualities of food are affected, enhanced, destroyed or changed.

Now when food is prepared we don't consume a single entity .So next come *Samyog*, means how to combines food items to make a wholesome diet. Such diet should be taken in proper amount to avoid digestive problems. This is told as *Rashi* of food.

Now when selecting food items, it is best to take local food items. *Ahar drvya* and human body both are affected by environmental conditions. So it is best to take a food grown in similar conditions. Also local foods are easily accessible and because less time period spent between fields to plate, it is more nutritious. So *Desh*

vichar is important. Mother Nature provides us different food items according to different seasons. So fresh seasonal items should be consumed. And while consumption the nutritional status and condition of body should be kept in mind. This is *Kaal*. It is advised to eat food only when previously eaten food is digested. Such instructions are included in *Upyogsanstha*. A person (*upyokta*) should make a judicious choice about food by considering personal factors like habit, lifestyle etc.

Correlation with modern nutrition concept

Balanced diet also stresses similar points. For e.g. type of protein or lipids directs to the *prakruti* of *ahardrvya*. Animal proteins are considered as higher quality proteins. The methods of cooking (*Karan*) should be such that minimum loss of nutrients occurs. Also cooking causes alteration in the properties e.g. cooking meat makes it easier to masticate by breaking down connective fibers and helps indigestion. Supplementary action of amino acids (dal and roti) and combination of cooking oils which provides all types of fatty acids gives a good example of *Samyog*. The required amount (*Rashi*) of various items is mentioned. For eg out of the total calorie requirement carbohydrates provide 60-65%, lipids provide 15-20%, proteins provide 10-15%. Also daily required amounts of other factors like vitamins and minerals are mentioned. Local (*Desh*) food items are preferred while planning a diet. (*Kaal*) Various diets are planned according to sickness or nutritional state of the body e.g. pregnancy, growing child or special diets for diseases like diabetes, kidney disorders obesity etc. Time factor is also important for supplementary action of proteins. Rules for eating like having proper meals i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner are mentioned that gives a clue about *Upyogsanstha*.

Upyokta or the consumer is given due importance by considering his health status, food habits and economic condition. For this balanced diet should be based on local food habits. Also according to economic condition. A low cost or high cost diet can be planned. Further it should be easy for the person to follow.

CONCLUSION

Consumption of only highly nutritious food is not beneficial for maintenance of health. But it should be properly digested, assimilated, absorbed and metabolized. And for all these processes food should be properly cultivated, stored, selected, prepared and consumed according to proper guidelines mentioned in Ayurveda. These guidelines are the above mentioned eight fold factors on which it depends whether the food is going to be *pathyakara* or *apathyakara*. So while preparing and consuming food one should pay attention to these factors and take *hitkara aahar* and avoid *ahitkar aahar*.

REFERENCES

1. Vagbhata. "Astanga Hrudayam" with Sarvanga Sundara Commentary of Arunadatta and Ayurveda Rasayana Commentary of Hemadri, Choukhamba Orientalia-Varanasi; Reprint 2005.
2. Agnivesh "CharakaSamhita", Revised by Charaka and Dridhabala with the Ayurveda Dipika commentary of Chakrapanidatta, Choukhambha Samskrit Samsthana, Varanasi; Reprint 2004
3. Dwarkanath C "Digestion and metabolism in Ayurveda", Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy, Varanasi; Reprint 2010
4. D Dhargalkar N D "Sarir Kriya Vidhana" 1st Edition Choukhambha Samskrit Series Office, Varanasi; 2008

5. Vasudevan DM and Sreekumari S “Text-book of Biochemistry” 4th Edition, Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers, New Delhi;2005
 6. Chatterjea MN and Shinde R, “Textbook of Medical Biochemistry” 4th Edition, Jaypee Brothers Medical Publishers, New Delhi;2000
-

Source of Support: Nil

Conflict Of Interest: None Declared

How to cite this URL: Rupali S Mane & Devarushi Praveen Vasantryo: Ashtavidha Aahar Vidhivishesh Aayatanani And Balanced Diet. International Ayurvedic Medical Journal {online} 2017 {cited December, 2017} Available from:

http://www.iamj.in/posts/images/upload/4426_4431.pdf