



Ahara Vidhi Vidhana W.S.R. To Sharir Kriya

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Date of Submission: 15 Mar 2022

Date of Acceptance: 23 Apr. 2022

ABSTRACT

Ayurveda has always endorsed wholesome health. Its 'objectives' are to preserve the health of the healthy and cure the ailment of the ailed. These objectives focus on enhancement of quality of life for all human beings. There are innumerable factors that have influence in attaining these objectives. One of them is 'the diet'. Now a day's most of the people are aware about 'what to eat' but least of them know about 'how to eat'. For this situation Ayurveda comes with a unique and outstanding solution of 'exclusive dietary rules' which are described as 'Ahara Vidhi Vidhana' in ayurvedic texts. These time-tested 'directions' of food intake positively influence the 'physiology' of human beings and help to serve the sole purpose of attaining the ultimate objectives of Ayurveda.

Keywords: Dietary Rules, Ahara Vidhi Vidhana, Directions, Physiology.

INTRODUCTION

Now a day's people are more conscious about their health, diet, and fitness. Many of them seek guidance regarding these factors to respective experts and also on internet and other social media. The diet and dietary habits play an important role to maintain a good health and fitness of both the body and the mind. Apart from the contemporary trends of diet Ayurveda has described distinctive methods of diet intake named "Aahara Vidhi Vidhana" intended not only for some diseases but also for healthy people including diet conscious persons. [1] This "Aahara Vidhi Vidhana" has definite influence on dosha, dhatu and whole physiology of our body. Many of the diseases which occur merely due to defective dietary habits can easily be prevented by just following these guidelines regarding diet.

Ahara Vidhi Vidhana

Ahara vidhi means the manner of consumption of diet and vidhana means directions, code, rules, etiquettes etc. So “Ahara Vidhi Vidhana” simply means the directions for proper intake of the diet mentioned by Charakacharya. [2]

Now we will see this “Ahara Vidhi Vidhana” one by one and their influence on our physiology.

Ushnamashniyat (Eating Warm Food)

Here the word ushna is used in the context of temperature of the food material and not the ushna guna of food material. Hot food obviously tastes good as Kapha in oral cavity i.e. bodhak kapha is secreted to acknowledge the proper taste of food. By consuming hot food Pitta gets aroused and secreted thereby increases the Jatharagni i.e. digestive power. With the above situation Jatharagni is activated and the digestion process is completed in stipulated time span. With the consumption of hot food Vata Anulomana is attained i. e. vata dosha is pacified. Kapha dosha is also pacified with hot food intake. All these benefits are achieved by timely intake of hot and fresh food. So it is highly recommended that one must always eat hot food as soon as possible.

Snigdhamashniyat (Diet Inclusive Of Fat)

Fat improves the taste of food, intensifies agni so that food gets easily digested, pacifies vata, enhances body growth, provides strength to senses, increases body strength, improves complexion and glow of the body. Here the sneha dravyas like ghrita, tail and other dravyas which contain snigdha guna are also advised to be included in the diet. Snigdha guna adds to the bodhaka kapha and helps to enhance the taste of food. Snigdha guna causes stimulus to jatharagni. Due to kledana property of snigdha padartha kledaka kapha is stimulated and madhura avasthapaak of food occurs. Due to snigdha guna the vata is alleviated and vatanulomana occurs. As snigdha padartha promotes the first avasthapaak i.e. madhura avastha paak all above benefits like increase in sharir and indriya bala, varna prasada, etc are achieved. [3]

‘Matra’vashniyat (Proper Quantity Of Food)

One must eat food in proper and required quantity only. This helps to maintain balance of tridosha in body and eventually it is beneficial for the longevity of life. Meals taken in right quantity gets easily digested without hampering agni within the body and reaches the rectum and expelled out of the body without any difficulty. So the proper amount of food intake is always appreciated.[4]

To determine the optimum quantity of food applicable for every person is quite difficult as Ayurveda believes every person is unique and different from others in various aspects. The hunger or the quantity of food needed also differs from person to person. Besides the prakriti of human beings, the nature of food items is also variable. Considering these

variances, Ayurveda contributes a unique view regarding the “Matra” of food. To determine appropriate quantity of food that is sufficient for a person’s good health, Charakacharya had given some recommendations in Charaka Vimana 2 i.e. “Trividha Kukshiya” adhyaya. As the name of the chapter itself indicates, the stomach should be divided in three equal parts and the food items should be taken accordingly. In the concept of “Matra” the total as well as individual food quantity is considered. The former is known as ‘sarvagraha’(total quantity) and the latter is known as ‘parigraha’(individual quantity). Charaksamhita and others have given the due importance with a lot of explanation regarding “Matra”.

The parameters for appropriate “Matra” are described as below:

1. There should be no undue pressure over the stomach due to food intake.
2. There should be no interference in normal functioning of heart.
3. There should be no feeling of pressure in the parshwa i.e. sides of the chest
4. There should be no excessive heaviness in the abdomen
5. Proper nourishment of senses
6. Relief from hunger and thirst
7. Comfortable functioning during standing, sleeping, walking, talking etc.
8. Food taken in the morning should digest by the evening and vice versa
9. Promotion of strength and complexion

Jeerneshniyaat (Allow Eating Only When Previous Meal Is Digested)

One should take next meal only after the previous meal is fully digested. Otherwise tridosha prakopa occurs. This is because the undigested previous aahar rasa gets mixed with the latter next meal aahar rasa and immediately causes vitiation of tridosha. So the key point is how to recognise the proper stage of complete digestion. Charakacharya has mentioned some signs and symptoms to evaluate proper time to consider next meal.

1. When all doshas are at their respective places
2. When jatharagni is kindled
3. When Hunger is felt
4. When all strotas are clear and have no obstruction
5. When there is clear and healthy belching
6. When vata gati is normal (vatanuloman)
7. When all natural urges like vata, mutra, pureesha vega are well attended.

The next meal taken after evaluating above conditions will serve the sole purpose of promoting health and eventually promotes one’s life. Otherwise adhyashan will occur leading to ama and further diseases formation .That’s why it’s very important to have meals only after digestion of previous meals.

Virya-aviruddham Ashniyat

Combination of food items which are opposite in nature in terms of their virya is known as 'virya viruddha ahara'. For example eating fish and milk together is virya viruddha ahar as fish is ushna virya padartha and milk has sheet virya. These types of combinations of food articles when consumed may cause disease formation such as impotency, blindness, raktavikara, grahani, amavisha, hypersensitivity, kushtha (skin disorders), shotha, fever etc and may cause death also.[5] So it's very important that one must eat virya aviruddha ahar to prevent such diseases.

Ishta deshe ishta sarvopakaranam ashniyat (proper place and instruments)

Meal should be taken in proper place and with proper utensils so that hygiene is maintained and no stress arises during meals. To eat in a congenial place provided with all the necessary appurtenances is needed for sound psychological condition during meals or else the unpleasant place and atmosphere can lead to the disturbed mind (manovighat). Here ishta term suggests favoured, beloved, liked, etc. Not only favoured but also beneficial is expected meaning of ishta. Though this is a relative term changing with every individual, generally a pleasant atmosphere is expected while eating. The place should be clean, hygienic, and should not produce disturbing emotions like kama, krodha, chinta, bhaya, vishad, ghrina etc. Likewise availability of all the needful utensils for having pleasant meal is also important. It will ofcourse add up some freshness of mind while eating. So to avoid any disturbance to the mind itself it's recommended to have meal at pleasant place and with all needful materials.

Naatidrutamashniyat (not to eat too fast)

Never eat food too hastily as it has some drawbacks like

1. Food may get into other pathways like respiratory tracks
2. Motion of food if paralyzed
3. Food cannot be placed properly at its expected place
4. One cannot recognize the correct taste of food as good or bad
5. Food may get ingested without removing any nonedible particles if any

So it's recommended to have meals at proper speed or else it may violate its normal route and rhythm. The Annaja Hikka is the best example of violation of route and rhythm of food. Due to haste during meals the vata gets stimulated which misleads the food producing the symptoms like hiccups.

Naativilambitamshniyat (not to eat too slowly)

Food should not be taken too leisurely, if taken so it can cause

1. Gratification cannot be achieved
2. Excessive food intake
3. Getting Food cold
4. Irregular digestion of food

The person, who eats too leisurely, obviously tends to eat more and still satiety is not achieved. The food gets cold due to relaxed eating. All these things hamper the jatharagni and the digestion is altered. So again its recommended to eat with proper and normal speed.

Ajalpan ahasan tanmana bhunjit(eat without taking, laughing and with stable mind)

It's very important to eat food without talking and laughing. We should concentrate our mind on food while eating. This simply means we should provide proper attention on food while eating. If not followed this it causes the same drawbacks as discussed in atishigrabhojan. Chrakacharya says that even pathyahar taken in proper amount does not get digested properly due to chinta (worry), shok (sorrow), bhaya (fear), krodh (anger), dukkha (sadness), improper bedding and sleep.[6] indriya also intake food through senses. So food must be of proper rupa, rasa, gandha and sparsha. We are able to sense these senses only when we concentrate on food while eating i.e. when we consume food in samanaska avastha. Eating while watching television, having conversations, walking to work is common now a day's. Due to this appropriate attention is not provided on the food. So these activities are to be best avoided to ensure the proper digestion and full benefit of food to the body and mind.

Atmanam abhisamikshya bhunjit samyak (eating after analyzing one's compatibility)

Every person should eat according to saatmya, prakriti, agni and bala. The appropriate diet should be selected only after considering individual compatibility, capacity, strength, needs, advantages and disadvantages by every person. By thinking over these points we can confirm the diet which is useful and suitable for our body and mind. Desh, bala, kala, agni, koshttha, sharir prakriti, saatmya, asaamyatmya, manas prakriti are some factors which influence the need for specific diet for each person. So after thinking over all these factors we should decide our diet and follow it avoid undesired health problems.

CONCLUSION

By viewing above points it can be concluded that ahara should be consumed according to ahara vidhi vidhana (the dietary guidelines) which are truly scientific as described by our ancient acharyas. These rules influence individual's physiology in a positive way. A good dietary habit can be adopted by following above guidelines. These guidelines will definitely help to maintain health of mind and body of every single individual which is the prime objective Ayurveda i.e. 'swasthasya swasthya rakshanam'. It will also surely serve the very next objective of Ayurveda i.e. 'aaturasya vikar prashamanam ch'. Well-mannered healthier eating habits according to above directions will help to lower risks for today's most common health problems like type-2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, cancer, infertility and many more.

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