

**Aahar Vidhi: Diet Rules According To Ayurveda**Vd. Sneha A. Tayade<sup>1</sup>, Vd. Vaishali D. Bhosale<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>PG Scholar (Final Year) Dept. of Kriya Sharir, Sumatibhai Shah Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Hadapsar, Pune.E-Mail Id: [Snehatayade27@gmail.com](mailto:Snehatayade27@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>Reader, Dept. of Kriya Sharir, Sumatibhai Shah Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Hadapsar, Pune.E-Mail Id: [Drvaishali.bhosale@gmail.com](mailto:Drvaishali.bhosale@gmail.com)**Abstract**

Health depends on various factors. As *Aacharya* described that *Aahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* are *Trayoupastambha* which support body itself. *Aahara* has given first because it plays main role in development, sustenance, reproduction and termination of life. *Aahara* is not only needed for continuity of life, but also for *Bala*, *Varna*, *Upachaya* etc. Without knowing proper dietary guidelines one cannot gain optimum benefit from food consumed. There are many guidelines related to diet in modern aspect but the *Ayurvedic* approach has its unique importance.

**Keywords:** Aahara, Diet.**Introduction**

Lifestyle disorder is defined as the diseases we get due to the way we live. It encompasses such factors as the food we eat, our levels of physical activity, mental stress and tension as well as our social habits. Nowadays there is increase prevalence of such lifestyle disorder. From all the factors responsible for lifestyle disorders diet habits is one of the main factor. *Aacharya* described *Aahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya* as *Triupstambha* (three sub pillars) which support the body itself. Here *Aahara* has been placed first, which shows that it is most important to maintain and sustain the life. *Aacharya Charaka* mentioned *Aahara* as *Prana* or life of living being if taken properly but may cause death if taken in faulty manner.<sup>1</sup> *Ayurveda* has given detail disciplines and process to take *Aahara*. This disciplines are titled as *Aahara vidhi visheshayatane*.

Wholesome diet is a main cause for the growth and development of body.<sup>2</sup> But this wholesome diet does not mean only food items but it includes so many factors which are titled as *Aahara Vidhi Vidhan*, where the laws of do's and don'ts about diet are given. Modern trends have put the traditions and customs behind the screen which results in unhealthy individual. If we adopt and apply the principles described by *Aacharya* it will be beneficial.

**Aahara Vidhi Visheshayatane**

Eight factors described by *Aacharya* which should be considered before taking food are<sup>3</sup> –

1. *Prakriti*, 2. *Karana*, 3. *Samyoga*, 4. *Rashi*, 5. *Desha*, 6. *Kaala*, 7. *Upyoga Sanstha*, 8. *Upyokta*.

**1. *Prakriti*<sup>4</sup>**

It means natural quality of drug i.e. inherent attributed like *Guru*, *Laghu* etc. After the knowledge of *Prakriti* it can be confirmed that it will be beneficial or not. That is, by consuming whether it is *Guru* or *Laghu* for digestion, whether the potency is *Sheeta* or *Ushna*, the *Doshas* it may possibly diminish or aggravate etc. The individual having excessive *Vata*

in his body must try to avoid dry and cold food stuffs. Similarly, an individual with increased *Kapha* must avoid oily and fattening food. For the knowledge of same *Prikriti* is useful.

## 2. *Karana*<sup>5</sup>

*Karana* is also known as *Sanskara*. It means processing of substance which leads to alteration in inherent properties of substance. This modification is brought about by various procedures including *Jalasamyoga*, *Shaucha*, *Manthana*, *Desha*, *Kala*, *Bhavana*, *Kalapakarsha* and *Bhaajna*. For example, plain *Dadhi* is cause for *Shotha* but when the same churned with *Ghee*, and then it is an effective remedy for *Shotha*.

## 3. *Samyoga*<sup>6</sup>

*Samyoga* means combining together of two or more substances. Such combination exhibits special properties which none of the constituent ever possessed. For example, the combination of honey and *Ghee*. If Honey and *Ghee* taken alone is wholesome to the body but combined together in equal quantity, they become toxic.<sup>7</sup> Combination of milk and *Ghee* used regularly is the best *Rasayana*.<sup>8</sup> So it can be said that though *Samyoga* is very useful but it may be harmful too.

## 4. *Rashi*<sup>9</sup>

*Rashi* is the measure of the total mass and of each constituent in order to determine the effect of the right and wrong doses. In this context of *Rashi* the *Sarvagraha* and *Parigraha* have been explained. *Sarvagraha* means one must consume the various *Aahara Dravyas* in combined form where as *Parigraha* means selecting one type of food at a time. *Ayurveda* mentioned about the importance of *Matra* in the *Aahara* and its effect on the digestion. One must eat only according to *Agribala*.<sup>10</sup> As per *Aacharya Vagbhata* half of the stomach is to be filled with solid food, one quarter with liquids, another should be kept vacant for the free movements of *Vata*.<sup>11</sup> The absence of measure is laid down under two heads<sup>12</sup>-

a. *Heena Matra*

b. *Ati Matra*

The diet which is deficient in measure i.e. *Heena Matra* results in impairment of strength, complexion, impairment of body functions and vitality. It may give rise to *Vata* disorders. The diet which is excessive in measure i.e. *Ati Matra* is cause of *Sarvadoshha Prakop* means it aggravates all the *Doshas*.

## 5. *Desha*<sup>13</sup>

*Desha* means Habitat or geographic region. It indicates variation in the quantities of substances, due to difference in soil, difference in climate etc. one can acclimatized to the different type of localities by using opposite qualities substance. Here *Desha* may be referred to *Bhumi Desha* and *Deha Desha*. As the *Deharoopa Desha* is considered, the *Doshas* are distributed in three different regions of body. As per classics, first region of body which extends from *Hridaya* to complete upper portion is place of *Kapha Doshha*, the second region extending between the *Hridaya* and *Nabhi* is place of *Pitta Doshha* while third region extends from *Nabhi* to extreme down have *Vata Doshha*.

*Bhumi Desha* is also grouped in three classes as *Jangal*, *Aanup* and *Sadharan Desha*. *Aacharya Charaka* mentioned that in *Jangal Desha* the *Vata* and *Pitta* are predominant where as in *Aanup Desha* there is predominance of *Vata* and *Kapha*.<sup>14</sup>

Wholesomeness of Diet also depends on the *Desha*, Because if a person is in Rajasthan, he can easily digest a higher amount of *Ghrta* and other *Guru Dravyas* but when the same person have been in south India, he cannot digest the same type of food items.<sup>15</sup>

#### 6. *Kaala*<sup>16</sup> -

Before the intake of food one must also know about the time factor (*Kaala*). *Kaala* in relation to disease(stage of disease) is called as *Avasthika Kaala* in which intake of *Aahara* is considered according to condition of *Roga*. *Kaala* in relation to season is called *Nityaga Kaala*(in form of day and night) in which *Aahara* is consumed according to *Rutusatmya*. It helps the body functions to acclimatize with the external environment.

#### 7. *Upyoga Sanstha*<sup>17</sup> -

It simply means the diet rules. It contains everything related to diet, how to eat, when to eat, what to eat etc. All these rules have been mentioned in classics by *Aacharya*.

#### 8. *Upyokta*<sup>18</sup> -

*Upyokta* is one who uses *Aaharadravya*. He is one who must take into consideration all the facts about *Aahara* and consume food accordingly. As the *Prikriti* of *Aahara Dravyas* is considerable factor, the *Prakriti* of *Upyokta* ia also considered foe wholesomeness of diet.

These are the factors described in classics which are the foundation of Dietetics. In addition to this *Aacharya* also described detail diet rules under the heading *Aahara Vidhi Vidhana*.<sup>19</sup> These rules can be considered under *Upyoga Sanstha*. It includes following factors-

- *Ushnamashniyat*<sup>20</sup> -

The meal taken should be *Ushna* (warm). If it is taken warm, it tastes proper, stimulates *Jatharagni* and easily digested as food has to come to body temperature for digestion.<sup>21</sup> Warm food is also useful to pacify *Vata* and *Kapha*. Besides heating also kills microbes and on eating cold food more energy will be used for digestion which may lead lethargy. So always warm food should be consumed.

- *Snigdhamashniyat*<sup>22</sup> -

The meal taken should be *Snigdha*. *Snigdha Aahara* improves taste of food, causes *Agnideepana*, facilitates early digestion, enhances body growth, provides strength to senses, and improves body strength as well as complexion. In opposite to this *Ruksha Aahara* may cause obstruction on *Srotas*. *Ghrta* is best *Vata-Pitta Shamak* and *Taila* is best *Vata-Kapha Shamak* means they are useful for *Tridosh Shaman*.<sup>23</sup>

- *Matravatashniyat*<sup>24</sup> -

It means eat in adequate amount. In *Ayurveda Aacharya* described *Matra* are of two types, *Sarvagraha*(whole amount) and *Parigraha*(amount of individual ingredient). So the diet must consist of variety of food items in proper amount so that it contains all micro and macro nutrients. Balance diet does not disturb *Dosha* status in body, enhances longevity, gets easily digested. Amount of diet should be according to *Agni* and *Bala* of body.<sup>25</sup>

- *Jirneashniyat*<sup>26</sup> -

Next meal should be taken after digestion of previous meal. This prevents *Adhyashan* which leads to *Ama* formation which is the root cause of Majority of diseases. On taking meal in *Ajeernavastha*, *Grahanidosha* and vitiation of all

*Doshas* occurs. So the diet should be taken after digestion of previous diet as *Aacharya Charaka* described *Kaalbhajnam Aarogyakaranam*.<sup>27</sup>

- ***Virya-aviruddhamashniyat***<sup>28</sup> -

*Virya* is the power of substance by which action takes place; nothing can be done in absence of *Virya*. It is essential to take *Virya-Aviruddha Aahara* to prevent problems arising due to *Viruddha-Virya Aahara* such as impotency, blindness, *Raktavikar*, *Grahani*, *Aamavisha*, hypersensitivity, *Kustha*(Skin disorders), *Shotha*, etc and may even cause death.<sup>29</sup>

- ***Ishtadeshe Ishtasarvopakarnam Ashniyat***<sup>30</sup> -

Meal should be taken in proper place and with proper utensil so that hygiene is maintained and no stress arise during meal. Stressful conditions give rise to negative mood which results in greater food consumption. *Aacharya Sushruta* described specific guidelines about *Desha* for *Bhojana*, the place where food to be prepared and where should be stored before serving.<sup>31</sup>

- ***Na Atidrutam Ashniyat***<sup>32</sup> -

Do not eat hurriedly. It may enter wrong way as respiratory tract as well as it doesn't properly mix with enzymatic juices which gives rise to indigestion. It also affects digestion by promoting *Vata*. Eating in proper speed can manage food consumption preventing overeating, promote better absorption of nutrients, better appetite, regulation and better satiety.

- ***Na Ativilambitam Ashniyat***<sup>33</sup> -

Do not eat too leisurely. It will not give feeling of satisfaction even after eating too much. The food would become cold and there will be irregularity in digestion.

- ***Ajalpana, Ahasan, Tanmana Bhunjita***<sup>34</sup> -

There should not be talking or laughing during meal but should be taken with full concentration. *Aacharya Charaka* mentioned that even *Pathyahara* taken in proper amount does not get digested due to worry, sorrow, fear, anger, sadness and improper sleep.<sup>35</sup> *Indriyas* also intake food through senses, so food must be of good *Rupa*, *Rasa*, *Gandha*, and *Sparsha*. It can be only sensed when it is eaten with full concentration. Eating food without concentration results in poor digestion and nutrition.

- ***Atmanamabhisamikshya Bhunjita***<sup>36</sup> -

Diet should be taken according to *Satmya*, *Prakriti*, *Agni* and *Bala*. It should be taken according to self energy and nutritional requirements.

These are the diet rules for both healthy and unhealthy person for the good digestion.

## Discussion

Diet is considered as the basic most cause of life. Not only diet but also method of diet intake has important role in continuity of healthy life. The rules and methods of diet intake are mentioned by *Aacharya Charaka* as *Ashta Aahara Visheshaytane* and *Aahara Vidhi Vidhan*. The application of these rules is effective in maintenance of health as well as in the curative aspect for many diseases. In today's lifestyle, because of lack of time we are neglecting capacity of *Jatharagni* and using meal irrespective of digestive capacity etc. all of which lead to the manifestation of disease. So to avoid such diseases or digestive issue, we should follow the rules mentioned by *Aacharya*.

## Conclusion

Only *Aahara* is not important for healthy life but to receive the total benefits of *Aahara* it should be in proper quantity, quality as well as according to rules mentioned by *Aacharya*.

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