

**SIGNIFICANCE OF AHARA VIDHI VIDHANA IN PRESENT ERA
(DIETARY RULES AND REGULATIONS)**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The main aim of Ayurveda is to preserve health of healthy person, and to treat the disease of a diseased one. *Ahara* (Food), *Nidra* (Sleep), and *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy) are the *Trayopasthambas* (Three sub pillars) of life. Which plays an important role in the maintenance of health of an individual. *Ahara* is considered as life of all the living beings. In present era altered habits of diet and lifestyle may leads to various diseases. Some dietic rules and regulations explained in Ayurveda, which are considered as *Ahara vidhi vidhanas* (Rules for taking food). If *Ahara vidhi vidhanas* is followed properly, it helps to maintain the health and increase life span. *Acharya susruta* also explained role of food in prevention disease. The diet and Dietic rules are interrelated and inseparable. Rules of taking food is equally important as food. **Aim and Objectives:** 1) To understand the concept of *Ahara vidhi vidhana* in present era with reference to physiology. 2) To highlight the importance of *Ahara vidhi vidhana* in resent era. **Materials and Methods:** 1) Literature review: Review of literature regarding *Ahara vidhi vidhana* collected from *Brihatrayi* and available commentaries on it. 2) Related research articles searched from various websites. **Method:** Conceptual study. **Disscussion:** Dietic rules are considered as *Adravyabhuta Aushadhi* .So present study is taken to find out significance of *Ahara vidhi vidhanas* in Ayurveda. So proper food and proper intake of food will help to reduce the risk of some diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoporosis and reduces the blood pressure. **Result:** By studying *Ahara vidhi vidhana* and by following these rules we can maintain healthy life style in present era.

Keywords Ayurveda, Upasthamba, Health, Dietary habits, Life style disorders.

INTRODUCTION: Ayurveda is a holistic system of natural health care. As it deals with various aspects of life it is not merely the treatment but also maintains the health of healthy individual. *Ahara* is the most essential requirement of all the living beings¹. Now a days there is increased prevalence of life style disorder, in which faulty dietary habits plays an important role. To attain healthy life various rules and regulations of diet

(*Ahara vidhi vidhanas*) should be followed, *Charaka* has given some dietic rules and regulations in that he explained about do's and dont's of diet and drinks². Basically, Ayurveda has explained that both health and disease are products of food³. Ayurveda classics explained that *Ahara*(food), *Nidra*(sleep) and *Brahmacharya*(celibacy) are three sub pillars of life⁴ and these plays an important role in maintenance of health of individual.

In that Ahara is placed first and it shows that it is most important to maintain health and sustains the life. If the person is taking healthy food then he will leave for 36000 nights (100 years)⁵. Wholesome food is prime cause for growth and development of body on the contrary unwholesome food causes several diseases⁵. In Ayurveda diet and dietic code both have equal importance. *Acharya charaka*, while explaining the importance of food states that food sustains the life of all living beings. Complexion, clarity, good voice, generosity, happiness and satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intellect etc are maintained by food⁵. In modern life style, we do not take care of our health, and our altered food habits will cause various disorders. So we should follow proper diet and dietic rules and regulations.

AHARA VIDHI VIDHANA (Rules for taking food)

Ahara is food, *Vidhi* is method of accomplishing. A few rules should be methodically accomplished. Dietary rules are originally healthy, they should be religiously observed for better health. Rules of such kind, which should be observed for while taking food are one should eat hot, unctuous food, food stuff with opposite *veerya* (potency) should not be eaten together. One should eat in pleasant place, with pleasant utensils. One should not eat very fast or very slow. One should not laugh or talk while eating. One should eat whole mindedly. One should pay attention to himself while eating².

1) USHNAM ASHNIYAT (Food should be warm)

Ushnam Ashniyat means, One should eat warm food and freshly prepared food. The first requisite regarding prepared meal is that it should be *Ushna* (hot). This is because, such food is pleasant to eat means

it tastes good, it increases appetite and secretions of digestive juices, such food gets digested fast, it does proper functioning of *vata* and deceases the *Kapha Dosha*^{2,6}.

Ayurveda also recommends that one should drink warm water, as cold water can weaken our *agni*. Benefits of *Ushnoddhaka* (warm water) – warm water stimulates hunger and digestive fire, helps in digestion, soothes throat, cleanses the bladder, reduces hiccups, and alleviates the increased *Vata* and *Kapha*, it removes *Ama* (the metabolic toxin) of body. Warm water is best in winter and for those food which are difficult to digested⁷.

Ayurveda also explained that one should not take *sheeta anna*. The prepared food left for long time if taken causes *Aruchi* (loss of taste), *Agnimandhya* (weak digestive power), *vistamba*, *Romaharsha* (Horripilation), *Stambana* (stiffness) etc. Extreme hot (*Atiushna*) is also not advisable. If consumed it causes *Mada* (Intoxication), *Daha* (Burning sensation), *Trishna* (Thirst), *Balanasha* (Loss of strength), *Bhrama* (Giddiness) and *Rakta pitta*. So one should eat freshly prepared warm food and drink warm water to maintain proper health.

2) SNIGDHAM ASHNIYAT (Food should be unctuous)

Second rule is to eat *snigdha ahara*. It enhances the weak *Agni*. For *Agnideepana*, *Sneha* is required as it is seen practically in the outer world as well as in body. It digests the food quickly. It also helps for *vatanulomana*, it replenishes or nourishes the body. It strengthens the special senses. It increases the body strength⁶. This is the reason why one should eat *snigdha ahara*. *Snigdha dravya* promotes the first *avasthapaka* and increases *bala* and which rejuvenate the body by decreasing the

speed of ageing process (*jara*). Here *snigdha* term does not only *sneha* dravyas like oil or ghee etc, but also *Godhum* (Wheat), *shali* (Rice) etc. are advised as *snigdha*. Extreme *snigdhata* (*atisnigdha*) or *Asnigdha* (*ruksha*) both inhibit the process of digestion.

3) MATRAVAT ASHNIYAT (Food in proper quantity)

It means one should eat adequate amount. For proper maintenance of positive health one should eat in proper quantity. The quantity of food to be taken again depends upon the power of digestion². The amount of food which, without disturbing the equilibrium of *doshas* and *dhatus* of the body, gets digested as well as metabolized in proper time, is to be regarded as the proper time². It should not be eaten in excess or in less amounts. Such food maintains physiological level of *dosha vata*, *pitta*, and *kapha*. It passes excreta smoothly, and digestion will be perfect². The symptoms of appropriate *Matra*(quantity) are there should no undue pressure on stomach, no pressure in the flanks and no interference in the proper functioning of heart and no excessive heaviness of abdomen. It does proper nourishments of the senses, relief from hunger and thirst, feel of comfort in all the functions like standing, sleeping, walking and talking.

4) JIRNE ASHNIYAT (Intake after digestion of previous meal)

One should eat only when previous meal is digested. If food is taken before the digestion of previous meal, food to be digested gets mixed with food which is half digested. This leads to instant vitiation of three *doshas*. If eaten when previous food is digested, all the three *doshas* remain in physiological limits, *agni* is enhanced, belching is without smell, no

pressure on heart is realized ,excreta is smoothly expelled all body tissues are well maintained and there by lifespan is increased. This happens only due to eating on empty stomach or when previous food is digested⁸.

5) VIRYA AVIRUDDHA ASHNIYAT (Intake of food having no contradictory potencies)

Virya (Potency) is the power of substance by which action takes place. The opposite strong qualities should be avoided to eat together. Eat those food which are not antagonist in *virya* .Such opposite quality of food generate various diseases⁸.

6) ISHTA DESHE / ISTHA SARVOPAKARANAMASHNIYAT (Intake in proper place and with all accessories)

One should not eat where one does not like to eat. One should not eat in unhygienic place, which is not appreciated by consumer. The place should be hygienic, and should not produce disturbing emotions like *Kama* (Desire), *Krodha* (Anger), *Cinta* (Stress), *Bhaya* (Fear), *Vishada* (Depression) etc⁸. The place of eating should be pleasant which can provide healthy state of mind needed for good concentration towards food. Some contraindicated places told by *Acharyas* are; below any tree, not on the bed, not in the sunlight or in dark place. All these factors influence the psyche as well as hygiene of the place. So it is very obvious that for healthy food healthy surrounding is required.

7) NAATIDRUTAM ASHNIYAT (Intake, not in hurry)

One should not eat very fast. If food is taken very fastly it enters into wrong pathway and will not be placed properly. If one eats very fast, he chokes, vomits, insults food and develops disliking

towards food⁸. This is the reason why one should not eat fast.

8)NAATIVILAMBITASHNIYAT(Intake, not too slow)

One should not eat very slowly. If one eats very slowly, does not get satiety hence eats more and food gets cold. All these factors hamper *Agni* and the food is not digested properly⁸. So one should not eat very slowly.

9) AJALPAN, AHASAN, TANMANABHUNJITAM (Intake with concentration)

One should not talk or laugh while eating. This vitiates the *doshas*. If one talks or laughs while eating is liable to suffer from the same disorders as the one who eats too fast. In this most important is that food is eaten with full of concentration⁸. This is the reason one should not talk or laugh while eating.

10) AATMANAMABHISAMIKSHYA BHUNJITAM (Eating after analyzing one's needs)

One should eat for self with appropriate manner. One should think while eating which is suitable for self and which is not suitable for self⁸. This makes oneself to eat properly.

DISCUSSION

Ahara, Nidra and *Brahmacharya* are three sub pillars of life. *Ahara* plays an important role in the promotion of health and prevention of disease. Along with the quality and quantity if we concentrate on the right way of taking food and the regimens related to *ahara* described in *Ayurveda*, we can achieve positive health easily. Improper diet habit (Frozen, canned and processed) is primary reason for increasing the health disorders. In today's life we are more interested in eating tasty, and eat more of junk foods and we will not concentrate on healthy food. Nobody is

concentrating on rules of dieting and right way of eating. So there is a need to aware the people about the importance of food and methods of intake. At present many newer food processing methods are in practice, these methods brings chemical as well as physical changes. They definitely improve the appearance, taste, flavor, shelf life and preservation of food but not good for health.

In present era due to lack of knowledge, negligence, lack of time and also people are not following the prescribed rules for preparing, preserving, and eating food, suffering from various life style disorders. These life style disorders are avoided by following various regimens described in our *Ayurvedic samhita*. By seeing the above points, it can be concluded that *Ahara* should be taken according to *Ahara vidhi vidhana* and which are truly scientific by our *acharyas*. *Ahara vidhi vidhanas* are very beneficial in present lifestyle.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has explained so many valuable thoughts. Food is the most essential part of life. Diet and method of food intake has an important role in maintaining of health and prevention of diseases. In today's fast life we are more interested in eating tasty food materials and we are not following proper dietary habits and following wrong food habits which all are the primary causes for health disorders. *Ahara vidhi vidhanas* are method of eating which is equally important as food. Health is mainly depend upon food and right way of taking food. Proper food will maintain health and treat the various health disorders and that's why food is called as *Mahabhaishajya*. An ideal food not only nourishes the body, but also nourishes the mind. Hence the type of food we consume influences qualities of

mind too. Food is responsible for the satiation (*Preenana*) of the body. It produces the instant strength, increases the life span, luster, happiness as well as intellect. Many diseases can be prevented by proper food and method of taking food. So these above said *Ahara vidhi vidhanas* will help to lead healthy life, prevent many life style disorders and also increases the life span.

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