



## UNIQUE JOURNAL OF AYURVEDIC AND HERBAL MEDICINES

Available online: [www.ujconline.net](http://www.ujconline.net)

Review Article

### CONCEPT OF DISTINCTIVE DIETICS – AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

Kamath Nagaraj<sup>1\*</sup>, Patel Yashesh<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Asst. Professor, Department of Shareera Kriya, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan, Karnataka, India

<sup>2</sup>Asst. Professor, Department of Kriya Shareera, Shree RMD Ayurvedic College & Hospital, Valsad, Karnataka, India

Received 26-04-2018; Revised 24-05-2018; Accepted 22-06-2018

\*Corresponding Author: **Dr. Nagaraj Kamath**

Assistant Professor, Department of Shareera Kriya, Sri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara College of Ayurveda & Hospital, Hassan-573201, Karnataka, India

#### ABSTRACT

Food plays an important role in healthy, diseased and convalescent states. It is more important than the medicine itself. The body can be nourished and maintained in good health, by adopting suitable diet and full benefits of life can be reaped by adherence to proper mental hygiene. There are some special conditions, which demand a diet with specific properties. This is because different people respond differently to same food. Ayurveda has given some guideline in this direction by dividing diet into twelve types. These are based on *Doshas*, constitution (*Prakriti*), disease conditions and state mind in the body. The food articles, which maintain the equilibrium of bodily *Dhatus* and help in eliminating the disturbance of their equilibrium, are to be regarded as *Hitakara Ahara* otherwise they are *Ahitakara* to body. *Hitakara* diet is the only cause of growth and development of body and *Ahitakara* diets is the only cause of disease.

**Keywords:** Diet, Rules, *Ayurveda*, *Aahara*.

#### INTRODUCTION

The main aim of *Ayurveda* is to preserve the health of a healthy person, and to treat the disease of a diseased one. Food (*Ahara*), Sleep (*Nidra*) and celibacy (*Brahmacharya*), the three pillars of life (*Trayopastambhas*) play an important role in the maintenance of health (*Swasthya*) of an individual<sup>1</sup>.

Food plays an important role in healthy, diseased and convalescent states. It is more important than the medicine itself. The body can be nourished and maintained in good health, by adopting suitable diet and full benefits of life can be reaped by adherence to proper mental hygiene. Wholesome diet is prime cause for the growth and development of the body, on the contrary unwholesome diet causes several diseases. The ideal diet is that, which rebuilds the worn out systems and nourishes the tissues (*Dhatu*) and maintains the equilibrium of the body constituents, the humors. Irrational diet acts otherwise, producing diseases<sup>2</sup>.

Living body is in a continuous state of activity. According to *Kshanabhanguravada* and *Swabhavoparamvad* tissues are continuously broken down. If this equilibrium is lost, destruction, disease or decay of the body ensues. It is the *Ahara* that maintains the metabolic equilibrium and nourishes the living body by the theory of *Parinamavad*. According to Ayurveda, the entire universe is derived out of the five elements (*Panchamahabhutas*). All the *Karya Dravyas*, *Ahara* and *Aushadha*, *Vinsati Samanya Gunas*, *Shadarasa*, *Sharira*

*Doshas*, *Dhatus* and *Malas* are all composed of the five elements (*Panchabhautika*)<sup>3</sup>. According to this concept, the body composed of the five elements should have foods that have six tastes (*Shadarasa*) and twenty properties (*Vinsati Gunayukta Aharadravyas*) for its growth, development and welfare<sup>4</sup>. Tri pillars (*Trayopastambhas*) i.e. food (*Ahara*), sleep (*Nidra*) and celibacy (*Brahmacharya*), states that these three factors are the supporters of<sup>5</sup>. Among the *Trayopastambhas*, much importance is given to food (*Ahara*) since it is primarily responsible for the growth, development and protection of the body, from decay and diseases. An ideal food not only nourishes the body, but also nourishes the mind. Hence the type of food consumed influences the qualities of mind too. *Satwika* food manifests in *Satwika* mental attributes and thereby sustains the morality of the individual. *Rajasika* or *Tamasika Ahara* contributes towards the growth of the same temperaments (*Bhavas*) in the mind, resulting in a weak personality.

Taste must not be the only principle governing a man's choice of food. He should look into the other qualities of food. The food should be eaten while it is hot and fresh. Such food tastes well and it also stimulates the digestive power (*Jatharagni*) by its warmth. Thus it gets digested quickly and does not cause the production of toxins (*Ama*). It should be remembered here that cold food being heated again is not considered as hot.

Every diet should contain foods like clarified butter that are unctuous. This will make it delicious which in turn stimulate

the *Jatharagni*, as a result of which the body is strengthened. Too *rooksha* food on the other hand will cause *Vatakopa* and diseases caused by increase of *Vata*.

There are some special conditions, which demand a diet with specific properties. This is because different people respond differently to same food. Ayurveda has given some guidelines in this direction by dividing diet into twelve types. These are based on *Doshas*, constitution (*Prakriti*), disease conditions and state mind in the body<sup>6</sup>

- 1) **Sheeta:** - People who have an aggravated level of pitta should take cold food items. This includes diseases like *Trishna*, *Madatyayam*, *Daham*, *Visham*, *Raktapittam* and *Moorcha*. People fatigued or exhausted by excessive heat or work can also take such food. The *SheetaGuna* of these foods will pacify the aggravated pitta and thus provide relief. The food items that may be advised here include fruit juices, milk etc.
- 2) **Ushna:** - In conditions of aggravated *Kapha* and *Vata* hot foods are recommended. Hot water is prescribed after *Snehapanaso* that the large amount of *Sneha* gets digested. After (cleansing measures) *Sodhana Karmas* also there will be *Agnimandyam* therefore hot foods are to be used in the post *Sodhana* period.  
In Conditions like fresh onset of fever (*Navajwara*) hot water has got various advantages such as causing promotion of appetite (*Agni Deepthi*), cleansing of channels (*Srothosodhanam*), removing the discomfort associated with toxins (*Ama*) and generally revitalizing the body. Using cold water in this condition will be countered productive leading to further *Dosha* aggravation.
- 3) **Snigdha:**- *Snigdha* or Unctuous foods are needed in larger proportion in those afflicted with *Vata* complaints and those who are fatigued by excessive sexual activity or exercises. Here the *Snigdha* food will act against increased *Vata*.
- 4) **Rooksha:** - Obesity, *Prameham* and other diseases which are conditions of aggravated *Kapha* and characterised by an increase of fat tissue (*Medovridhi*) need the fasting (*Langhana*) form of treatment and therefore their diet should be *Rooksha* in nature. This will remove the extra *Medas* and redeem the *Doshas* to their normal state.
- 5) **Drava:** - *Drava* or liquid foods are indicated in conditions of excessive thirst and fatigue. Diseases like diarrhea and vomiting, which cause dehydration, also need fluid supplements.
- 6) **Shushka:** - Foods, which are less fluid in nature, are to be used in humid body (*Klinnadeham*), *Prameham* and abscess (*Vranam*). In these conditions moisture (*Kleda*) in the body already increased. So the diet should be dry (*Sushkam*) to counter this increased *Kleda*.
- 7) **Ekakalam:** - Food should be given once a day to persons suffering from decreased appetite (*Agnimandyam*) in order to strengthen their *Agni*.
- 8) **Dwikala:** - Food can be given twice a day in person with normal digestive capacity to maintain their *Agni* in balanced state (*Samavastha*).
- 9) **Oushadha yuktam:** - Food can be used as a vehicle to administer medicine in people who find it totally

unpalatable. In this way the qualities of food and medicines are utilized for treatment.

- 10) **Matraheenam:**- A proper amount of food has been prescribed for each and every individual. Food taken more than this or less than this does not serve its purpose. But in certain conditions it is therapeutically wise to give food in reduced quantity. These include diseases caused by *Agnimandyam*. Here the right quantity (*Matra*) will be a comparatively lower one so that the *Agni* can be slowly brought to its normal state.
- 11) **Dosha shamanam:** - The diet, which is followed according to *Dosha* vitiation in the six seasons, is called *DoshaSamanadiet*.
- 12) **Vrityartham:** -The diet of the healthy person is called *Vrityartham*. This will help to maintain the balanced *Dosha* (*Samadosha*), balanced tissues (*Samadhātu*) and normal appetite (*Samagni*) state of the body<sup>7</sup>.

## DISCUSSION

A drug or diet not causing harmful effects to any channel of body and which is comfortable to mind is granted as *Pathya*. Although pungent and bitter cause discomfort at a time to mind but it is ultimately comfortable for body, so it is taken as *Pathya*. *Pathya* in fact changes its qualities, depending on the *Matra* (dose), *Kala* (time), *Kriya* (method of preparation), *Bhumi* (habitate), *Deha* (body) and *Dosha* (*Vatadi* body component). The food items that we consume are a mixture of different tastes and preparations etc. Care should be taken that this combinations do not become antagonistic to each other as this may lead to several diseases. The choice of food is as important as its time and amount. It is not only the improper time or amount alone that can upset digestion. The food articles, which maintain the equilibrium of bodily *dhatus* and help in eliminating the disturbance of their equilibrium, are to be regarded as *Hitakara Ahara* otherwise they are *Ahitakara* to body. *Hitakara* diet is the only cause of growth and development of body and *Ahitakaradiets* is the only cause of disease.

Consumption of too hot, too cold, unclean, overcooked or under cooked foods is also to be avoided. Too dry or *Rooksha* foods leads to the loss of strength and color, dryness of the skin and obstruction to bowel movements and constipation by causing *Vatakopa*. Too unctuous (*Snigdha*) foods on the other hand cause the aggravation of *Kapha* and a variety of *Kaphaja* diseases like salivation (*Praseka*), heaviness (*Gourava*) etc. It also leads to loss of appetite. Too hot foods cause vitiation of pitta and a host of paitika diseases like hemorrhagic disorders (*Raktapita*), burning sensation (*Daha*), thirst (*Trishna*) etc. Too cold foods cause dampening of digestive fire and there by loss of appetite. Too hard or uncooked foods cause difficulty in evacuation of faeces and urine. It does not provide satisfaction to the mind. Too liquid foods cause diseases like rhinitis (*Peenasa*), cough (*Kasa*) and diabetes (*Prameham*). Too sweet foods lead to decreased metabolism (*Agnimandyam*). Too salty foods are not good for the eyes and hair and too sour foods cause faster ageing.

It is possible for all to select the right kind of diet from this depending on their condition. It should be remembered that these are just guidelines and cannot be blindly applied to everybody, but

these can be adopted to rectify the wrongs in diet habits. Both plant and animal products are part of the diet. Some special factors to be considered regarding animal products. These include habitat, organ, nature, dhatus, activity, sex, size, quantity and processing.

### CONCLUSION

The food articles, which maintain the equilibrium of bodily *Dhatus* and help in eliminating the disturbance of their equilibrium, are to be regarded as *Hitakara Ahara* otherwise they are *Ahitakara* to body. *Hitakara* diet is the only cause of growth and development of body and *Ahitakara* diets is the only cause of disease. A drug or diet not causing harmful effects to any channel of body and which is comfortable to mind is granted as *Pathya*. Although pungent and bitter cause discomfort at a time to mind but it is ultimately comfortable for body, so it is taken as *Pathya*. *Pathya* in fact changes its qualities, depending on the *Matra* (dose), *Kala* (time), *Kriya* (method of preparation), *Bhumi*(habitat), *Deha*(body) and *Dosha* (*Vatadi* body component). There are some special conditions, which demand a diet with specific properties. This is because different people respond differently to same food. Ayurveda has given some guideline in this direction by dividing diet into twelve types. These are based on *Doshas*, constitution (*Prakriti*), disease conditions and state mind in the body.

### REFERENCES

1. Paradara HSS. Ashtanga Hrudaya with Sarvangasundara commentary of Arunadatta and

- Ayurveda rasayana commentary of Hemadri. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Varanasi (India): Chaukambha Orientalia; 2005. p.205.
2. Acharya JT. Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Dipika commentary of Chakrapani Datta. Reprint ed. Varanasi (India): Chaukambha Orientalia; 2007. p. 129.
3. Acharya JT. Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Dipika commentary of ChakrapaniDatta. Reprint ed. Varanasi (India): Chaukambha Orientalia; 2007. p. 138.
4. Acharya JT. Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Dipika commentary of ChakrapaniDatta. Reprint ed. Varanasi (India): Chaukambha Orientalia; 2007. p. 139.
5. Acharya JT. Charaka Samhita with Ayurveda Dipika commentary of Chakrapani Datta. Reprint ed. Varanasi (India): Chaukambha Orientalia; 2007. p. 69.
6. Acharya JT. Susrutha Samhita with Nibandhasangraha commentary of Dalhana. Reprint ed. Varanasi (India): Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2009. p.151.
7. Acharya JT. Susrutha Samhita with Nibandhasangraha commentary of Dalhana. Reprint ed. Varanasi (India): Chaukambha Sanskrit Sansthan; 2009. p. 387152.

Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared