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Review Article

Ayurveda and Modern Perspective on Diseases Associated with *Ahara*: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Ahara (food) is considered as one of the most important factor in life and it is believe that the normal & abnormal physiological functioning mainly depends upon the quality of food consumed. Consumption of proper diet in appropriate manner may offer good health status while intake of unwholesome food stuffs can lead to disease condition. *Ahara* provides strength, complexion and *Oja* to the body, it play vital role towards longevity & boost mental strength also. The *Rasa, Guna, Virya* and *Vipaka* of *Ahara* considered responsible for the equilibrium of the *Dosha* and *Dhatu*. The consumption of proper diet not only offers nutritional value but also acts as preventive measure towards many diseases. The *Ahara* if not taken in proper manner then various ailments may be observed including consequences of *Virudha-Ahara*, present article described importance of *Ahara* and diseases originated from bad food habits.

Keywords: *Ayurveda, Ahara, Diseases, Virudha-Ahara.*

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Introduction

Ayurveda the science of traditional Indian medicine described various principles related to mental and physical well being of whole society, further it was extended that the dietary habits play important role to acquire healthy mental and physical status. Food (*Ahara*) provides energy for various biochemical processes, boost growth mechanism, enhances process of repairing and regeneration. The ayurveda literatures emphasize that intake of balanced diet help to fulfill need of body in all aspect. Ayurveda described

diet as a one of the “pillar” out of the “three pillars of life” (*Tri-Upastambha*).

Vata, Pitta & Kapha are *Tridosha* and considered responsible for normal and abnormal physiological functioning of body, it is believe that biochemical processes associated with digestion and assimilation of food articles influences this *Tridoshic* balance in terms of various means. If *Ahara* aggravates *Doshas* then diseases condition may be seen while pacification of *Dosha* contributes towards the normal physiology (healthy condition).

Table 1: Food recommended for *Dosha* balancing.

Food Pacify (balances) <i>Dosha</i>		
1	<i>Vata</i>	Butter, grains, nuts and vegetables.
2	<i>Pitta</i>	Cooked grains, salads, milk and seeds.
3	<i>Kapha</i>	Intense foods, millet, corn flour, buckwheat and quinoa.
Food Vitiates (Disturbed) <i>Dosha</i>		
1	<i>Vata</i>	Fruits, raw salads and beans.
2	<i>Pitta</i>	Sour, hot & spicy foods, fermented foods; yogurt and vinegar.
3	<i>Kapha</i>	Dairy products, cheese, meat, nuts and rice.

Guna, Rasa and *Swabhava* are the major qualities of *Ahara* which offers beneficial effect on body, however these qualities of *Ahara* also leads incompatibility (*Viruddha Ahara*) if food not consumed in proper manner.

The six *Rasa* indicates basic tastes of food and each *Rasa* refers specific elements of *Panchamahabhoota* and exerts specific effect on the *Tridoshas* & *Dhatus* accordingly:

Table 2: *Rasa* of *Ahara* & their Corresponding *Panchamahabhoota* Elements

S. No.	<i>Rasa</i>	Corresponding <i>Panchamahabhoota</i> Elements
1	<i>Madhura Rasa</i>	<i>Prithvi & Aap</i>
2	<i>Amla Rasa</i>	<i>Prithvi & Agni</i>
3	<i>Lavana Rasa</i>	<i>Aap & Agni</i>
4	<i>Katu Rasa</i>	<i>Agni & Vayu</i>
5	<i>Thikta Rasa</i>	<i>Vayu & Akash</i>
6	<i>Kashaya Rasa</i>	<i>Prithvi & Vayu</i>

Aahara (diet) should be taken by considering factors such as; *Desh, Kala, Prakriti* and *Vayah*. The concept of *Viruddha Ahara* help to avoid any chances of complication arises due to the consumption of incompatible foods. The intake of unwholesome food stuffs and avoidance of concept of *Viruddha Ahara* may leads various ailments and instances of such cases increasing day by day due to the complexity of

modern life style. Moreover industrialization, poor hygienic condition, pollution and huge availability of junk foods have increased the risk of contamination of food and water, thus lot of diseases reported currently in hospital originated from contaminated foods or *Viruddha Ahara*. Present article described importance of *Ahara* and diseases originated from wrong food habits.

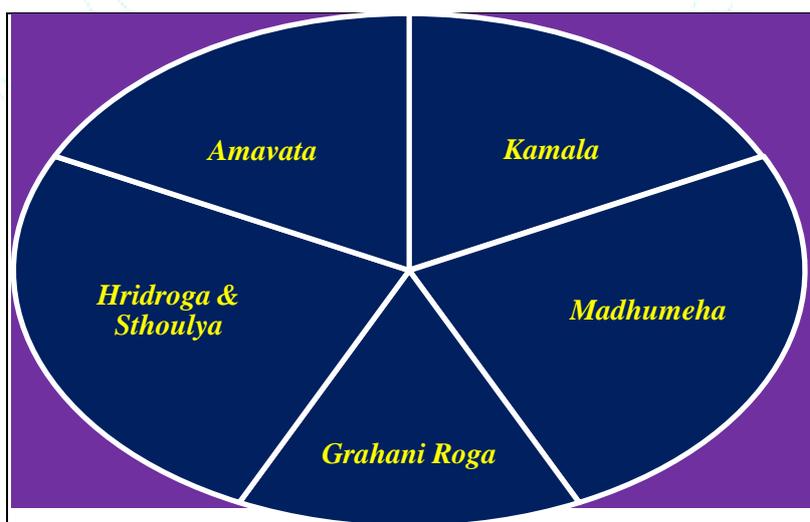


Figure 1: Diseases their pathogenesis mainly depends upon *Ahara*.

Aahara & Diseases:

Acharya Charaka has mentioned that incompatible *Ahara* can lead number of disorders. Immune system, endocrine system, digestive system, nervous system and circulatory system affected by consumption of incompatible *Aahara*. The some of them are as follows:

- *Indriyopghatakara: Andhya, Shandhya, Bhagandara, Jwara* and *Pinasa*.
- *Dhatu Parinamkar: Dakodara, Visarpa, Pandu, Aamvisha, Kushtha, Santandosha, Visphota, Galagraha, Grahani* and *Amlapitta*.
- *Manasa Vyadhi: Unmada* and *Mada*.

Diet Specific Diseases:

- Extreme hot food may causes disease such as; *Mada, Daha, Trushna* and *Bhrama* etc.

- *Atisnidha* food inhibits the process of digestion since it is '*Guru*' in nature and therefore causes *Praseka, Hridayagaurava* and *Alasya, Aruchi*, etc.
- *Asnidha* or *ruksha Ahara* decreases *Bala* and *Varna*, producing dryness of skin and constipation.
- Similarly malnutrition and excessive consumption of sour and hot food stuffs may leads *Shukra Dhatu Dushti*.
- Eating too fast may creates *Vimargagamanam* which further leads *Annaja Hikka*.
- *Abhojana, Ajeerna, Atibhojana, Asatmya Bhojana* and *Vishamashana* may induces symptoms of *Grahani dosha*.
- *Snehavibramat, RutuVaishamyam, Kala Vaishamyam, Vega Vidharanat* and *Swapna Viparyaya* may produces symptoms of *Agnidosha*.

- Excessive exercise just after *Snigdha Ahara* may precipitate symptoms of *Amavata*.

Modern Concept of Diseases and Food:

The modern medical science also mentioned that consumption of certain food stuffs may enhances chances of specific pathological conditions including; diarrhea, constipation, gastric burn and food poisoning. These all conditions may occurs for shorter period of time thus considered as acute pathological conditions related to food consumption, however disease like; obesity and diabetes may considered as chronic conditions related to bad food habits. Consumption of unwholesome food stuffs along with stress or anxiety accumulates symptoms of heart diseases and blood pressure. Food allergies is one of the another aspect of modern science, certain food stuffs may produces adverse reactions and this adversity vary person to person means some person are allergic to specific food while other not. The foods containing intense essence or odour may be considered allergic for individuals in the population. Food poisoning is type of illness occur due to the consumption of contaminated food, the chances of microbial contamination (bacteria, viruses and environmental toxins) more with non-vegetarian foods than vegetarian food stuffs. Mushrooms, seafood and food preservative also produces specific adverse reaction depending upon demographical classification.

Ayurveda recommended some combinations to prevent food originated diseases:

- ❖ *Go-Ghee, takra, navaneet.*
- ❖ *Mudaga, masura, adhaki* as digestible protein.
- ❖ *Manda, vilepi, peya, yusha*
- ❖ *Rakta-shali, Shashtika, Shali, Godhuma* and *yava* as carbohydrates and fiber.
- ❖ *Saindhav* salt daily.
- ❖ *Dadima, amalaki, haritaki* as *Tridosha Shamaka*.

Combinations to be avoid:

- ❖ *Dadhi, Avi dugdha, Kurchika* and *Avi grita*.

- ❖ *Curd, Kurchika & fish.*
- ❖ Uncooked *Moolaka* & germinated grains
- ❖ *Mansa* and *Madira Sevana*, etc.

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