

RESTORATION OF HEALTH THROUGH PROPHYLACTIC AND INTERVENTIONAL DIETETICS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of Ayurveda is to promote and preserve the health, strength and longevity of the healthy person (swastha) and to cure the disease in the ailing and the afflicted. The main purpose of preventive attributes prescribed in Ayurveda is to improve the immunity. The ancient medical science has considered that diet nourishes the body, and also restores balance of three body humors (Tridosha) essential for maintaining health by releasing the enzymes within our bodies to protect cells and rebuild damaged cells. Ayurveda has classified food articles in to different groups and also described qualities and effects of different food on human body. It has been considered equally essential to follow the dietetic rules and regulations for a successful treatment. In many instances food itself is used as a curative measure in Ayurveda and hence prescribes specific diet patterns in the diseased conditions. Besides prescribing the medicines, Ayurveda also recommends some prophylactic and interventional diet. So having a rich knowledge pertaining to the dietetics, Ayurveda can contribute promising attributes for the restoration of health through prophylactic and interventional dietetics.

Key words: Ayurveda, longevity, preventive, dietetics, pathya, apathya, prophylactic diet, interventional diet, immunity, restoration

INTRODUCTION

Man has evolved his habitual dietary pattern to maintain good health, after a good deal of trial and error. The culture and tradition developed thereafter also offered a number of combinations and preparations to promote health through nutrition. Ayurveda has considered diet that which nourishes the body, and also restores balance of three body humors (Tridosha) essential for maintaining Health.

Ayurveda has included the major food groups viz. Cereals, pulses, Vegetables, Fruits, Milk & Milk products considering the dietary needs of the human being while describing about the food. Man needs all the nutrients i.e. energy, protein, vitamins, minerals in different amounts to grow, live and thrive. Since man derives all the nutrients he needs through the diet he eats, his diet must be well balanced to provide all the nutrients in proper proportions. In planning a diet for the community, foods have to be chosen in proper amounts to provide all the nutrients in required amounts and also keeping in view the dietary habits and availability of foods. The ancient medical science, Ayurveda, has introduced a variety of condiments which have become a part of Indian traditional cooking. Condiments viz. Cumin seeds, Fenugreek seeds, asafetida, mustard seeds, black pepper & Herbs like ginger, garlic, onion are widely used in the Indian Kitchen. In healthy individuals, depending on the constitutional type (prakriti) of a person, the diet used to be planned on day to day basis. Ayurveda also offered a number of neutraceutical preparations. 28 yavagus (gruels) and 24 sneha kalpanas (oil combinations) and a variety of food preparations were mentioned in the classical texts considering the different needs of healthy and diseased. In view of these, holistic approach to medical and health care will have to be planned depending upon the cultural background, the family tradition and the community interest.

Fundamentals of Ayurvedic Dietetics (Pathya) - An Insight

Ayurveda lays stress on positive health, a blend of physical, mental, social, moral and spiritual welfare by natural means. Ayurveda not only cures the diseases but also gives advises for promotion, prolongation and maintenance of a healthy life. In this connection, it considers three important factors for health and disease, i.e. Oushadha (Drug and Therapies) 2. Aahara (diet) 3. Vihara (conducts). The diet has been advised based on the age, digestive power, constitution, habitat, season, disease and so on.

Ayurveda has minutely described qualities and effects of different food on human body. As per Ayurvedic principles the diet should contain all the pancha mahabhutas (Five Basic Elements) as the

body is made up of the five basic elements. Diet should also possess all the 6 rasas (sweet, sour, salt, astringent, bitter & pungent) as each Rasa promotes specific diversified effect of nourishment of the body. Diet deficient in any of the five basic elements/six tastes may lead to nutritional deficiency state and cause disease in due course of time.

Nutritional impact of different tastes

S. No.	Taste	Nutritional Impact
1.	Sweet (Madhura)	Dhatu vardhana (Tissue nourishing), Balya (Tonic), Kesya (Hair Tonic), Brimhaniya (Nourishing), Sandhana kara (wound healing property), Stanya janana (Galactagogue).
2.	Sour (Amla)	Brimhaniya (Nourishing/ bulk promoting), Hridya (cardiotonic)
3.	Astringent (Kashaya)	Sandhana kara (wound healing property)

Besides prescribing the medicines, Ayurveda also recommends some prophylactic and interventional diet which also plays a major role in the prevention and management of the disease. Food and regimen which is congenial (satmya), suitable (anukoola), protects the body tissues and controls their excess or vitiated conditions and also helps in growth and development is called 'Pathya'. On the contrary, any food or regimen that is not beneficial to health is called as 'Apathya'. Pathya, if followed properly, is competent of preventing many diseases.

It has been considered equally essential to follow the dietetic rules and regulations for a successful treatment. The significance of pathya has been quoted as, "there is no need of any medicine if an ailing individual follows the dietetic rules (Pathya), because pathya itself makes the patient healthy". In other words, it also reveals that there is no use of the medicine when a person does not follow dietetic rules (Pathya), because medicine alone is not sufficient for complete recovery from the disease.

Prophylactic nutrition

The aim of Ayurveda is to promote and preserve the health, strength and longevity in the healthy person (swastha) – 'the preventive aspect' and to cure of the disease in the ailing and the afflicted – 'the Curative aspect'.

The Main purpose of preventive attributes prescribed in Ayurveda is to improve the immunity. In Ayurvedic pediatrics various rituals (sanskara) have been mentioned for the recognition of milestones

and to extend the required nutrition and immunity during the process of growth and development.

These rituals improve intelligence, digestive fire and physical power. It gives rejuvenate effects and tones up the skin. These rituals

improve immunity so that child is prevented by bacterial and viral infections.

Prophylactic nutritional interventions in paediatrics

S. No.	Prophylactic nutritional interventions	Age	Rationale
1.	Jata karma – Chanting the mixture honey and ghee	Immediately after birth	To alarm the immunity mechanism
2.	Swarna prashana – Oral consumption of fine paste of gold	Immediately after birth	For establishing and promoting longevity, immunity, intelligence, complexion, energy
3.	Gold with herbs viz. Brahmi (<i>Centella asiatica</i>), Vacha (<i>Acorus calamus</i>), Sankhpushpi(<i>Convolvulus pluricaulis</i>), Bala (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>), Kustha (<i>Saussurea lappa</i>), Satavari (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>) etc.	Immediately after birth	For establishing and promoting longevity, immunity, intelligence, complexion, energy
4.	Honey and ghee mixed with herbs like Ananta (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>)/ Durva (<i>Cynadon dactylon</i>)/Gold	1 st day	To potentiate C.N.S. as well as immune system
5.	Ghee medicated with Lakshmanpanji	2 nd day	To potentiate C.N.S. as well as immune system
6.	Colostrum of breast milk mixed with ghee and honey	3 rd day	To potentiate C.N.S. as well as immune system
7.	Surya Chandra Darshana (Exposure to external environment)	During 1 st month or 3 rd month	To promote macular fixation and allowing exposure to U.V. Rays helpful for the formation of Vit. D3 in the skin thus preventing rickets.
8.	Phalaprashana	6 th month	To introduce different fruits in the diet of the child gradually
9.	Annaprashana	10 th month	To introduce different cereals and pulses in the diet of the child gradually

Interventional nutrition

A detailed description regarding qualities and medicinal use of each and every food article which come under various food groups is available in the classical texts of Ayurveda. In many instances food

itself is used as a curative measure in Ayurveda. Ayurveda mentions congenial and non-congenial diet in respect of particular disease and stresses that by the non-observance of those rules, the disease may not be cured easily even with effective medication.

Nutritional interventions in some major diseases

S. No.	Diseases	Nutritional causes (Apathya- Diet restricted)	Possible nutritional correction (Pathya- Diet advised)
1.	Diseases related to nervous system (Vata vyadhi)	Dry, cold, scanty food, fasting/ starvation, excessive intake of honey, peas, green gram	food containing sufficient fat content, easily digestible, warm food, wheat, horse gram, black gram, brinjal, milk & milk products, garlic, dry grapes, berries
2.	Diabetes Type – II (Madhumeha)	Excessive use of milk & milk products, fresh grains, Food articles made of Jaggery/ sugar/ sugar cane	Barley, old wheat, horse gram, green gram, red gram, sesame seeds, peas, bitter gourd, garlic, ginger, piper longum, unripe banana, takra (butter milk), dates, Water melon, lotus root, drum stick
3.	Skin diseases (Kushta)	Use of uncooked food, over eating, Excessive use of fresh grains, sour and salty substances, black gram, radish, sesame seeds, milk and milk products, jaggery	Old barley, wheat, green gram, red gram, Old ghee, honey, pointed gourd, garlic, oil of sesame, mustard
4.	Oedema (Sopha)	Consumption of excessive sour, hot or alkaline food, foods hard to digest, curd, uncooked food, leafy vegetables, incompatible recipes, stale and adulterated (poisoned) food, consumption of alcohol, jaggery, sesame oil	Barley, horse gram, green gram, fish, old ghee, butter milk, bitter gourd, drum stick, mango, carrot, pointed gourd, brinjal, radish, turmeric, harad, milk
5.	Abdominal disorders (Udara roga)	Consumption of adulterated and uncooked food, stale food items, leafy vegetables, incompatible food, and foods causing indigestion & constipation	Old horse gram, green gram, barley, honey, butter milk, garlic, ginger, castor oil, pointed gourd (parval), bitter gourd, drum stick, cow's & goat's milk
6.	Haemorrhoids (Arsha)	Consumption of dry food articles causing constipation, Fish, paste of sesame seeds, black gram, ripe mango, soft gourd	Barley, wheat, horse gram, Red variety of rice, buttermilk, butter, goose berry, Black pepper, pointed gourd, Cow's milk, Goat's milk, rice gruel, Garlic, ginger, haritaki, mustard oil etc
7.	Fistula – in – ano (Bhagandara)	Consumption of dry food articles causing constipation	Red variety of rice, green gram, pointed gourd, drum stick, radish, sesame and mustard oil, ghee, honey etc
8.	Urinary calculus (Asmari)	Consumption of Sour and dry food articles causing constipation, incompatible food	Barley, horse gram, old rice, madya, ginger etc

Clinical nutrition (Pathya kalpana)

Ayurveda prescribes specific diet patterns in the diseased conditions. According to the principles of Ayurveda, derangement of the

digestive power occurs in many diseases and hence it is important to restore normalcy of the digestive power

S. No.	Varieties of clinical nutrition	Uses
1.	Manda (The filtered liquid portion obtained after boiling one part of rice and fourteen parts of water)	Carminative, Digestive
2.	Peya (One part of rice and fourteen parts of water, boiled into watery consistency)	Quickly digestible, Stops loose motions, Nourishes the tissues.
3.	Vilepi (One part of rice and four parts of water, cooked into thick paste)	Strengthening, Nourishing, Good for heart, Delicious, Diuretic.
4.	Yavagu (One part of grain – rice etc. and six parts of water, cooked into thick paste)	Strengthening, Nourishing

Gruel or Yavagu is prepared by boiling the rice in specific amount of water and reducing to make a liquid /semisolid form. A number of gruels prepared with various drugs for alleviation of various disorders are mentioned.

- Gruel prepared with Dashamoola alleviates cough, hiccup and dyspnoea
- Gruel prepared with long pepper (*Piper longum*), root of long pepper (*Piper longum*), chavya (*Piper chaba*), Chitraka (*Plumbago zeylanica*) and dry ginger promotes appetites and relieves colic pains.
- Gruel prepared with gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris*) and kantakari (*Solanum surattense*) and mixed with phanita should be given in dysuria.
- Gruel prepared with Vidanga (*Embelia ribes*), root of long pepper, sigru (*Moringa olifera*), maricha (*Piper nigrum*), whey and suvarchika lavana is used as an anthelmintic and vermifuge.
- Gruel prepared with Mridwika (*Vitis vinifera*), sariva (*Hemidesmus indicus*), fried paddy, long pepper, honey and dry ginger allays thirst.

Scientific evidences

Taking cinnamon could be useful for lowering serum HbA1C in type 2 diabetics with HbA1C >7.0 in addition to usual care (Paul Crawford et al, Journal of American Board of Family Medicine, Year: 2009, Volume: 22, Issue: 5, Page: 507-512).

Ginger is an effective herbal remedy for decreasing nausea and vomiting during pregnancy (Giti Ozgoli et al, Journal of Alternative and Clinical Medicine, Year : 2009 March, Volume : 15, Issue : 3, Page : 243-6).

Daily consumption of pomegranate juice may improve stress-induced myocardial ischemia in patients who have CHD (Michael D. Sumner et al, American Journal of Cardiology, Year : 2005, Volume : 96, Issue : 6, Page : 810-4).

Ginger is as effective as indomethacin in relieving symptoms of osteoarthritis with negligible side effects. Therefore in patients with intolerance to indomethacin, ginger may be substituted (Anousheh Haghghia et al, Indian Journal of Rheumatology| Year 2006 (June)|Volume 1| Issue 1| Page 3-7).

Study revealed that the recipe (medicated Laja Manda) may be the best option to treat acute diarrhoea in infants, especially in rural area (B.M. Singh et al, Journal of Ayurveda, Year : 2007, Volume : 1, Issue : 1, Page : 20-25).

CONCLUSION

The traditional food preparations are more balanced and provide all the nutrients which help in allaying the diseases. Moreover the condiments used in Indian foods have been described as curative of various diseases. Hence one can consume various preparations according to the need. The whole world is turning to the nature for promotion of health as well as prevention & cure of the diseases. Ayurveda having a rich knowledge pertaining to the dietetics can contribute promising attributes for the restoration of health through prophylactic and interventional dietetics.

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