

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN ASPECTS ON BENEFICIAL EFFECTS OF DIETARY MATERIALS IN SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Ahara is one of the important pillars of life and as per ayurveda it contributes significantly towards the health and happiness of an individual. Ayurveda emphasizes on consumption of proper diet to maintain normal health status and to remain free from disease conditions. The balance dietary pattern not only makes help to restore health status but it also offers various nutrients to combat against different diseases. However it is believes that diet consumed as per internal constitution (Prakriti) of an individual offers more beneficial effects therefore one should consume diet as per his/her internal constitution. The food offers different beneficial effects such as; growth promotion, initiation of repair mechanism, development of natural immunity and physiological functionality. The nutritional value of various dietary materials enhances importance of food diversity. Present article describe nutritional and health benefits of various dietary materials.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Ahara, Diet, Nutrition.

INTRODUCTION

The modern as well as traditional science of medicine quoted importance of nutritional diet. The consumption of proper nutritional diet affects quality of the mind, balances *Doshas* and boosts functioning of *Dhatus*. As per ayurveda improper diet pattern aggravates *Dosha's* which further initiates diseases pathogenesis. Therefore it is very important to understand the effect of various food materials on the *Doshas* and considering this aspect one should follow specific dietary pattern to maintain *Doshaic* balances and restore normal physiological

functioning of the body. The three humors namely *Vayu*, *Agni* and *Jala* control *Doshaic* balances which should be nourished properly by taking balance diet. Proper balanced diet not only helps to correct imbalances of *Doshas* but it also nourishing the weak *Dhatus*. On other hands consumption of unwholesome diet exerted deleterious effect on body including excessive production of *Ama* (toxins), depletion of *Dhatus*, decrease capability of immune systems, disturb metabolic process, heaviness and pathological initiations.

Table 1: Ahara and their Gunas.

| S. No. | Types of foods | Effects | Examples |
|--------|----------------------|--|---|
| 1 | <i>Sattvic</i> Foods | Nourish the body and mind. Produce calmness and improves physical health. | Milk, fruits, <i>ghee</i> , grains, wheat, almonds and vegetables, etc. |
| 2 | <i>Rajasic</i> Foods | Amplify <i>rajas</i> . Increase heat and activity level. Acts as stimulant. Make mind restless | Onion, tomatoes, chillies, spices, corn and eggs. |
| 3 | <i>Tamasic</i> food | Produces heaviness, mental dullness and induce lethargy. | Cheese, mushrooms, alcohol, meat and fermented foods. |

The modern as well as traditional medical science described various dietary materials in each category especially Indian foods which consume world widely for various health effects.

The general food items recommended in each category are as follows

Spices

Turmeric, fennel, cardamom, coriander, cinnamon, mint and black pepper, etc.

Fermented foods

Yogurt and *amasi*.

Vegetables

Asparagus, cabbage, carrots, green beans, parsnips, pumpkin, radish, spaghetti squash and spinach.

Fruits

Apples, dates, grapes, oranges, plums, mango, pomegranate, pears and tangerines.

Meats

Fresh chicken, deer, goat meat, pig, rabbit and fish. However hygienic and fresh meat recommended in growing stages.

Nuts and seeds

Almonds, macadamia nuts, pecans, pistachios, pine nuts and walnuts.

Fats & Oils

Ghee, buttermilk, cream, olive oil, coconut oil and others edible oils.

The major benefits associated with diets are as follows

- Diet provides building blocks of body.
- Dietary materials boost growth and repair mechanism.
- Develop inherent immune response.
- The nutritional components improved digestive and metabolic processes.

- Maintain normal physical and mental status.
- Enhanced detoxification.
- Improved fertility and sexual health.
- Contributes towards physiological functioning of body.

Benefits of Diet; Specific To Three Doshas

Benefits of *Vata* pacifying diet

Such type of diet enhances creativity & energy level, *Vata* pacifying diet help to perform functions like; circulation and breathing. Balances of *Vatas* through diet help to control pathogenesis of diseases like; insomnia, arthritis and heart disease. The foods suits for *Vata* includes coconut oil, olive oil, ghee, cooked grains, spiced milks, root vegetables, nuts and seeds. Frozen or very cold foods and eating just prior to bed time should be avoided.

Benefits of *Pitta* pacifying diet

Pitta pacifying diet boosts muscle strength, improves physical compatibility, make person aggressive, enhance metabolic functions, generate heat and increase energy level. *Pittas* control is very essential to restrict pathogenesis of diseases such as; hypertension, infections and digestive problems. The foods which pacify *Pitta* included fruits, veggies, beans, barley, oats, almonds, coriander and *ghee*. Hot, spicy, sour foods, vinegar, alcoholic drinks, very oily foods and raw foods should be avoided.

Benefits of *Kapha* pacifying diet

Diet which balances *Kapha* enhances lubrication of body, maintain fluid balance, control reproductive strength and boots immunity. *Kapha* pacifying diet may be helpful in disease conditions such as; diabetes, infections and respiratory illnesses. Light dairy products, fruits, honey, beans, grains, seasonal veggies and spices helps to pacify *Kapha*. One should avoid sweet or very fatty meals.

The medical science also recommended specific diet to pacify psychological problems; which is as follows:

Table 2: Diet for psychological or neurological problems.

| S. No. | Psychological or neurological problems | Recommended diet |
|--------|--|---|
| 1 | Nervousness, mental fatigue and acute depression | Carbohydrates, fats and energy drinks |
| 2 | Excessive anger, aggression and lust. | Light food materials, fruits, cold stuffs and sweets. |
| 3 | Negative thoughts, mental restlessness and confusions. | Sour, bitter and salty dietary stuffs. |

Diet specific to seasonal diversity also recommended by ancient researchers; *Kapha* pacifying diet need to be incorporated in winter season, *Vata* balancing diet help in summer season similarly *Pitta* need to be taken care in rainy season, following diet may be recommended in specific season:

Table 3: Season specific diet.

| S. No. | Season | Diet specific to season |
|--------|--------|---|
| 1 | Winter | Raw veggies, fats, cooked grains, soups, stews, <i>Ghee</i> , spices and honey. |
| 2 | Spring | Bitter, astringent and pungent foods which is light, dry and warm. Fruit and green vegetables. |
| 3 | Summer | Cool & moist foods, light food items (less in fat) & easy to digest. Fruits and vegetable juices, yogurt and fluid rich products. |
| 4 | Rainy | Sweet, slightly bitter and astringent foods, soups, spices, seasonal fruits and vegetables. |

Health benefits of dietary nutrients

- ❖ Vegetables are sources of nutrients like; potassium, folate, fiber and vitamins. Potassium help to maintain blood pressure, dietary fibers helps to reduces blood cholesterol levels and risk of heart disease. Fiber also reduces chances of constipation.
- ❖ Folate (folic acid) is another important nutritional component of traditional diet which helps in the production of red blood cells.
- ❖ Vitamin A boosts functioning of eyes and restore skin health.
- ❖ Vitamin C enhances healing of cuts and wounds, it strengthen teeth and increases absorption of iron.
- ❖ Zinc and minerals contributes towards the physiological activity and provide hardness to body.
- ❖ Milk and other dairy products rich in calcium which provide strength to bone and teeth.
- ❖ Iron and vitamin K help to prevent diseases like; cancer.
- ❖ Amino acids containing diet promotes growth and repair mechanism. The diet is only source of essential amino acid require as building block of body.
- ❖ Diet rich in carbohydrates provides energy and maintains sugar balance.

General dietary guidelines

- Harmful foods such as; excessive cold or hot foods items, unhygienic animal products, uncooked foods, incompatible diets, junk food, fermented & deteriorated foods items, food stored for longer time and heavy dietary materials should be avoided.
- One should eat nourishing foods specific to his/her *Doshas* predominance & *Prakriti*.
- Diet suits to gastrointestinal system which should not produce hyperacidity, irritable bowel syndrome, diarrhea, constipation and heartburn should be consumed.
- Organic foods as per seasonal diversity and foods grown locally offer major advantages.

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