

A REVIEW ARTICLE ON VIRUDDHA AHARA: TRADITIONAL PRINCIPLES AND  
CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVESDr. Neelanjana Sen\*<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Ritu Kapoor<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Manoj Adlakha<sup>3</sup> and Dr. Praveen Kumar<sup>4</sup><sup>1</sup>MD Scholar, PG Department of Agad Tantra, PGIA, DSRRAU Jodhpur.<sup>2</sup>Head of Department & Associate Professor, PG Department of Agad Tantra, PGIA, DSRRAU Jodhpur.<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor, PG Department of Dravya Guna, PGIA, DSRRAU Jodhpur.<sup>4</sup>Assistant Professor, PG Department of Agad Tantra, PGIA, DSRRAU Jodhpur.

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Neelanjana Sen

MD Scholar, PG Department of Agad Tantra, PGIA, DSRRAU Jodhpur.

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## ABSTRACT

Viruddha Ahara, a concept unique to Ayurveda, refers to dietary practices that disrupt the balance among the body's elements. According to Acharya Charaka, consumption of Viruddha Ahara predisposes individuals to imbalances in doshas, leading to various disorders. This article critically reviews Viruddha Ahara in terms of food-food interactions and food processing interactions. Ayurveda clearly outlines that certain dietary combinations, processing methods, doses, timing, and seasonal considerations can interfere with tissue metabolism and inhibit tissue formation, leading to incompatible diet or Viruddha Anna. This distinction between wholesome and unwholesome diet is fundamental to maintaining proper health and preventing disease. The article explores modern perspectives on various types of Viruddha Ahara and enumerates a variety of incompatible dietary practices prevalent in contemporary daily life, along with their adverse effects on health.

**KEYWORDS:** Food-Food interactions, incompatible diet, processing, Treatment, Viruddha Ahara, Ayurveda.

## INTRODUCTION

Viruddha Anna, or incompatible diet, stands as a significant concern according to ancient Ayurvedic teachings. It's regarded as a root cause of many systemic disorders, as elucidated in Ayurvedic literature. Individuals who regularly consume Viruddha Ahara are believed to be predisposed to various health issues. Therefore, it's crucial to understand the mechanisms through which Viruddha Ahara contributes to metabolic disorders and how specific food combinations interact to induce disease.

Charaka defines Viruddha Anna as certain diets and their combinations that disrupt tissue metabolism, inhibit tissue formation, and possess properties contrary to those of the tissues. This concept encompasses various food interactions, such as

- Eatable items with opposing properties (Virya Viruddha)
- Actions on tissues that oppose their natural functions
- Consumption at inappropriate times (Kaal Viruddha)
- Undesirable effects resulting from specific combinations (Sanyoga Viruddha)
- Adverse effects caused by particular processing methods (Sanskar Viruddha)

Understanding and recognizing these principles of Viruddha Anna are essential for maintaining optimal health and preventing disease according to Ayurvedic wisdom.

Ayurveda literature has described various types of *Viruddha Ahara*, which can be summarized as follows *Desha Viruddha*, *Kala Viruddha*, *Agni Viruddha*, *Matra Viruddha*, *Satmya Viruddha*, *Dosha Viruddha*, *Sanskar Viruddha*, *Veerya Viruddha*, *Koshtha Viruddha*, *Avastha Viruddha*, *Kram Viruddha*, *Parihar Viruddha*, *Upachar Viruddha*, *Paak Viruddha*, *Samyoga Viruddha*, *Hriday Viruddha*, *Sampad Viruddha*, *Vidhi Viruddha*.

**Examples as per mentioned in the samhita's**

SN	Type of Viruddha Ahara	Examples
1.	<i>Desha Viruddha</i> (place incompatibility)	<i>Ruksha, Teekshna Dravyas in Jangala Desha</i> (dry region)
2.	<i>Kala Viruddha</i> (time incompatibility)	Consuming curd at night
3.	<i>AgniViruddha</i> (digestive incompatibility)	Overeating when there is <i>Agnimandya</i> (low digesting power)
4.	<i>Matra Viruddha</i> (dose incompatibility)	Honey & Goghrita (ghee obtained from cow)
5.	<i>Satmya Viruddha</i> (suitable incompatibility)	Person habit of hot, pungent substances consuming sweet, cold
6.	<i>Dosha Viruddha</i> (dosha incompatibility)	Vata Rogi taking <i>Vatakara Ahara</i> (food which aggravates <i>vata dosha</i> )
7.	<i>Sanskar Viruddha</i> (preparation incompatibility)	Heated honey
8.	<i>Veerya Viruddha</i> (potency incompatibility)	Fish & milk
9.	<i>Koshtha Viruddha</i> (gut incompatibility)	Mild laxative in chronic constipation
10.	<i>Avastha Viruddha</i> (health incompatibility)	<i>Kaphavardhaka Ahara</i> to sleepy, lazy individual
11.	<i>Krama Viruddha</i> (sequence incompatibility)	Hot water after taking honey
12.	<i>Parihar Viruddha</i> (contraindication incompatibility)	Cold water after hot tea
13.	<i>Upachar Viruddha</i> (indication incompatibility)	Cold water after consuming ghee
14.	<i>Paak Viruddha</i> (cooking incompatibility)	Over roasted rice
15.	<i>Samyoga Viruddha</i> (combination incompatibility)	Milk + banana
16.	<i>Hridya Virudda</i> (palatable incompatibility)	Phobia towards objects/ things
17.	<i>Sampad Viruddha</i> (property incompatibility)	Sweet with samosa
18.	<i>Vidhi Viruddha</i> (rules incompatibility)	Laugh, speak while eating

**Mode of Action of Viruddha Ahara- Ancient view**

Regular consumption of incompatible food leads to the generation of toxins within the alimentary tract. These toxins provoke all three Doshas and disrupt the Rasa Dhatu (plasma) initially, eventually spreading from one bodily tissue (Dhatu) to the next. As a result, the doshas begin to disseminate from the Koshtha (gut) to the Shakha (tissues and skin). During their journey throughout the body, these doshas lodge themselves wherever there is inherent deformity (Khavaigunya), thereby manifesting symptoms of various diseases.

The effects of incompatible food can be categorized into two types: Aashukari (acute) and Chirakari (chronic). These effects may manifest in the form of modified symptoms or diseases, depending on the individual's constitution and the severity of the dietary indiscretion.

**Chikitsa-Siddhant of Viruddha-Ahara**

The treatment is either purifying therapies i.e. *shodhana* like emesis, purgation etc or palliative therapies i.e. *shamana*, opposite of nature (specific for nature).

- *Shodhana* therapies including *Vamana* and *Virechana* that helps to eliminate toxins accumulated due to consumption of *Viruddha Ahara*.
- *Shamana therapy* help to pacify imbalance of dosha associated with consumption of *Viruddha- Ahara*.
- Drugs possess *Deepana & Pachana* properties boost *Agni* and offer improvement in disease symptoms.

**Diseases due to Viruddha Ahara**

The following are conditions such as impotence, erysipelas (skin infection), loss of vision, ascites (abdominal swelling due to fluid accumulation), boils, mental illness, fistula in the anus, unconsciousness or

fainting, poisoning, different skin disorders, intestinal ailments, swelling, inflammation of the stomach lining, fever, rhinitis (nasal inflammation), and inability to conceive. Also included are abdominal bloating, neck stiffness, different types of anemia, and digestive issues, among others. The aforementioned list illustrates that consuming incompatible food can result in disorders extending to impotency and infertility, thereby impacting the Shukra Dhatu (reproductive tissue). This underscores the potential for Viruddha Anna to lead to Shukra Dhatu Dushti, or disturbances in the reproductive tissue. When categorizing the list of diseases according to the body systems affected, it becomes evident that continuous consumption of incompatible food affects various bodily systems. These include the immune system, endocrine system, digestive system, nervous system, and circulatory system.

**Food incompatibilities in today's perspective**

Ancient Ayurvedic texts such as the Charaka and Sushruta Samhitas outline various food combinations that are considered incompatible, but many of these are not commonly encountered in modern diets. Therefore, there is a growing interest in identifying and evaluating the compatibility of contemporary food combinations from an Ayurvedic standpoint. This involves categorizing modern food incompatibilities into groups like Sanskara Viruddha, Krama Viruddha, and Veerya Viruddha, each potentially affecting different aspects of health such as the immune system, cellular metabolism, and hormone regulation.

A new field called topography is emerging, which specifically examines food combinations. According to this discipline, certain combinations—such as mixing

proteins with starches and carbohydrates—should be avoided. This is because starches require an alkaline environment for digestion, and combining them with proteins can delay their absorption. Similarly, mixing sugars with acidic fruits can interfere with digestive enzymes, leading to reduced saliva secretion and hindering digestion. Incompatible food combinations not only affect the gastrointestinal tract but also have broader impacts on the body's major systems. For example, consuming fats alongside meals can hinder the secretion of digestive juices, thereby compromising digestion efficiency. Therefore, understanding and adhering to proper food combinations are seen as crucial for maintaining optimal health and well-being according to Ayurvedic principles.

#### **Some of examples of incompatible food in today's perspective**

When milk is added to green or black tea, it diminishes the concentration of heart-healthy catechins due to an interaction with milk proteins called caseins. Combining milk with yogurt may cause milk to coagulate in the stomach, potentially leading to irritation and vomiting. Mixing tea, which contains anticoagulant compounds called coumarins, with garlic, which also has anticlotting properties, may increase the risk of bleeding. Combining pomegranate juice and grapefruit juice, both of which inhibit the cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme system in the intestines, can elevate blood levels of certain medications. Eating unripe tomatoes or potatoes alongside alcohol may cause sedation due to the interaction between solanine in unripe tomatoes and alcohol. Deep frying potatoes can generate toxic substances like acrylamide, a potential carcinogen. Mixing milk with salt may interfere with the curdling process and result in a reaction with calcium ions

#### **.Mode of action of Viruddha Ahara- Contemporary view**

Regular consumption of incompatible foods can trigger inflammation at the molecular level, disrupting the eicosanoid pathway and causing an increase in the production of arachidonic acid, prostaglandin 2, and thromboxane. This inflammatory response is significant as it contributes to conditions such as impaired digestion (Agni Mandya), accumulation of toxins (Ama), and various metabolic disorders.

According to Ayurvedic teachings, reheating or reusing oils and foods should be avoided due to the risk of increased oxidation and the formation of harmful free radicals. Oxidative rancidity occurs when the fatty acids in oils react with oxygen, resulting in the formation of hydroperoxide compounds, which can further convert into toxic aldehyde molecules. Recent studies have identified 4-hydroxy-trans-2-nonenal (HNE) as a toxic substance formed during the processing of oils like corn, soybean, and sunflower oil. Consumption of foods containing HNE has been linked to elevated risks of heart disease, stroke, neurodegenerative disorders, liver ailments, and cancer.

Furthermore, certain cooking methods, such as high-temperature cooking of meat, can lead to the production of harmful bacteria and advanced glycation end-products (AGEs). AGEs are formed when proteins react with sugars in the absence of water, and they have been associated with conditions like atherosclerosis, kidney damage, insulin resistance, and other age-related ailments.

Incompatible food combinations can release unwanted substances in the body, affecting the immune system. For instance, consuming milk along with certain fruits like bananas, which contain allergens and prolactin, can trigger asthma. Consumption of eggs, milk, excessive sugar, and saturated fats can also lead to immune dysfunction. Additionally, certain dietary practices, such as consuming tofu or sour foods in the evening, have been observed to accelerate antigen-antibody reactions and impact white blood cells, potentially leading to conditions like rheumatoid arthritis.

The accumulation of toxins (Ama) resulting from the consumption of incompatible foods can contribute to the formation of Dushi Visha, which further exacerbates metabolic disorders and skin conditions. During pregnancy, these toxins can cause gene mutations in the fetus, leading to congenital anomalies, cerebral palsy, allergic reactions, and other complications. The emerging field of toxicogenomics aims to explore these gene mutations and develop strategies for their prevention and treatment.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The ancient sages of Ayurveda emphasized the significance of Viruddha Ahara, highlighting its relevance to today's improper dietary habits. Consuming incompatible foods can unknowingly lead to various hazardous diseases, as outlined in Ayurvedic texts, which provide detailed etiological and therapeutic profiles of wholesome (Hita) and unwholesome (Ahita) foods and drugs.

The purpose of consuming a wholesome diet or drug is to maintain normal health and alleviate various disorders. Hence, it is essential to make sensible dietary choices and utilize suitable Rasayana Dravya (rejuvenating substances) to maintain good health. Special care should be taken to avoid Viruddha Ahara, as its effects can manifest from the Rasa Dhatu to the Sukra Dhatu, impacting all bodily tissues and leading to systemic disorders.

Continuous consumption of incompatible foods contributes to the accumulation of toxins (Ama) in the body, which in turn leads to the development of various diseases such as obesity, arthritis, diabetes mellitus, and atherosclerosis. Furthermore, it can cause genetic mutations, resulting in congenital anomalies in children. Studies indicate that many diseases of unknown etiology

and carcinogenesis can also be attributed to the consumption of Viruddha Ahara.

To prevent such deadly disorders, the primary step is to avoid the intake of incompatible foods in daily life, as prevention is better than cure. Additionally, Ayurvedic therapies such as shodhana (purification) and shamana (pacification) can aid in prevention and treatment, emphasizing the holistic approach of Ayurveda towards maintaining health and wellness.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding discussion, it becomes evident that Viruddha Ahara poses a significant threat to our health. Therefore, it is imperative to take immediate steps to eradicate such incompatible foods from our daily diet. Instead, we should adhere to the dietary guidelines prescribed by the ancient sages, as outlined in the Ayurvedic texts, and follow the principles of ritucharya, which emphasize dietary adjustments according to different seasons.

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