

## AYURVEDIC VIEW OF LIFE-STYLE MODIFICATIONS IN PREVENTION AND CONTROL DISEASES

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**ABSTRACT**

The great doctor is one who treats not someone who is already ill but someone not yet ill. Since both prevention and treatment in importance, health precedes disease, so we have to consider first how health maybe preserved through make changes in lifestyle and then how one may get best cure disease. Lifestyle changes due to urbanization and modernization have caused unhealthy diet habits, lack of physical activity and increased stress leading to more of chronic metabolic disorders, mood disorders and anxiety disorders. India like developing countries are going through this scenario. Due to rapidly changing life-style in urban as well as in town cities of India, it is currently in the midst of NCD (non-communicable diseases) epidemic and burden of such diseases is increasing exponentially. Life-style is “The particular way of life of a person or group. it is the way one spends his entire day remaining active, his eating habits, use of tobacco or smoking habits and his attitude towards a particular situation. Thus, it determines his total physical and mental profile. This paper is to simply describe how to adapt various kinds of life-style modifications which already mentioned in *Ayurveda* in day-to-day life to prevent both physical and mental disorders.

**KEYWORDS:** Prevention, Lifestyle, NCD (non-communicable diseases), *Ayurveda*.**INTRODUCTION**

Reward of happy life is said to be superior most amongst all the religions, that is why *Ayurveda* is said to be most sacred. *Ayurveda*, the science of life dealing with all the aspects of life *ie.* beneficial/*hitayu*, nonbeneficial/*ahitayu*, happy/*sukha* and unhappy life/*duhkha* and its promoters and non-promoters.<sup>[1]</sup> The basic idea of *Ayurveda* is to protect/prevent and eliminate all miseries from living creation. Main aim of *Ayurveda* is to attain *Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha* by healthy life.<sup>[2]</sup> *Acharya Charaka* emphasizes on the importance of maintenance of health of healthy person (*swasthasy aswasthya rakshanam*).<sup>[3]</sup> Even while mentioning classification of drugs, he considers the group of drugs which helps in the maintenance of health (*swasthahitam kinchit*).<sup>[4]</sup>

*Acharya Sharngdhara* beautifully quoted that “no creature in the universe is immortal, it is impossible to prevent death, but it is possible to prevent diseases”.<sup>[5]</sup> So, one should try for that which is preventable. A wise person should perform such actions which are good for his body, by neglecting all bad habits because if body is not healthy then nothing is existing.

Word ‘*swastha*’ comprises of *swa* meaning one’s own and *stha* means staying *ie* being in one’s own natural state.<sup>[6]</sup> Healthy person is called as *swastha purusha*. The technology dependent (*sukumarata*), stressful environment with physical inactivity (*avyayama*) and excess of unhealthy food practices is offering a perfect pathogenic environment for both urban and rural segments of Indian population. This change in life-style adapted by common people is making them susceptible for getting NCDs like obesity, hypertension, diabetes etc., thus, it is essential to adapt healthy life-styles to keep ourselves healthy and prevent this modern epidemic of life-style diseases.

**Concept of health in *Ayurveda***

Health is a common theme in most cultures. An understanding of health is the basis of all health care. Health is not perceived the same way by all members of community.

Health is multi-dimensional. 3 specific dimensions are the physical, the mental and the social.<sup>[7]</sup>

The physical dimension of health is probably the easiest to understand. It implies the notion of “perfect functioning of the body”.

According to *Ayurveda*, health is defined as balanced state of *doshas* (*samadasha*), balanced state of *agni* (*samagni*), balanced state of *malakriya*, pleasant state of *Atma*, *Indriya* and *Manas*.<sup>[8]</sup>

*Kashyapa* elaborates the features of health in *khilasthana*<sup>[9]</sup>

- Desire for intake of food
- Proper and easy digestion of the ingested food
- Evacuation of natural urges properly
- Feeling of lightness in the body
- Pleasantness in sense organs
- Timely sleep and awakening, proper gaining of strength.
- Pleasant mind and normal *agni*.
- These are the features of health and opposite state is illness.

### Concept of mental health

Good mental health is the ability to respond to the many varied experiences of life with flexibility and sense of purpose. In *Ashtanga hrudaya*, very first *shloka* starts with *Ragadirogan*<sup>[10]</sup>. *Raga* is desire or liking towards something. This is mentioned as the important disease. The desire is the main cause of all diseases (both physical and mental). By the word *Adi* in *Ragadi* hatred, envy, greediness and other such qualities are to be covered. These diseases lead to passionate and anxious desire, ignorance and instability of mind. This salutary verse indicates by the word *Ragadirogan*, that *Ayurveda* gives equal importance to both physical and mental disorders and mind is also important in the treatment.

As said in *Bhagavadgita*, desire leads to anger (when desire is not fulfilled) and anger makes the man unable to decide good and bad.<sup>[11]</sup> The great physician is described as the destroyer of desire, ignorance, emotion and bad qualities.

WHO (2013) has defined normal mental health as a state of wellbeing in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make contribution to his or her community. *Ayurveda* lays down the hypothesis that physical life depends largely on the psychic life. Mind is organized all the physical structures and processes.<sup>[12]</sup>

### Relationship between body and mind in disease

A state of *Arogya* and *vyadhi* are described under 4 dimensions- *Sharira*, *Indriya*, *Satwa*, *Atma*. Proper combination of all these four is life (*ayu*), absence of even one of these, the life is not possible.<sup>[13]</sup>

The growing rate of urbanization and industrial development at the present time is badly influencing

human life by producing various types of stress, several abnormal bodily responses induced by these stress case reflected in a wide range of psychological, physiological, neurological, endocrinal and metabolic disorders. This bodily response against stress, if it is continuing beyond a certain limit, produces certain permanent abnormal changes in the body. They include conditions such as essential hypertension, peptic ulcer, bronchial asthma, some major mental illnesses such as depression and schizophrenia.

### What is life-style modification???

Life-style modification includes three primary components-*Ahara* (diet), *vihara* (daily activities) and behavior therapy (*sadvrutta*). The main challenge of treatment is to help patients maintain healthy behavior changes in the long term.

### Principles for prevention of diseases

The diet and regimes which are followed by a person after awakening from morning to night sleep routinely to maintain health are elaborated in *Ayurveda*. Man should always follow those principles which keep him healthy always, as health is always desired.

*Dinacharya* (daily regimen), *Ritucharya* (seasonal regimen), *Ratricharya* (night regimen) should be followed.

*Ahara* plays very important role in order to maintain healthy life. *Acharya Charaka* emphasizes on food which are wholesome to the body like rice (*shali*), green gram (*mudga*), rock salt (*saindhava*), goose berry (*amalaka*), barley (*yava*), rain water, milk (*dugdha*), ghee (*ghruta*), meat (*mamsa*), honey (*madhu*). These should be consumed regularly for maintenance of health and prevention of diseases.<sup>[14]</sup>

The above reference can be taken as definition of balanced diet in *Ayurveda*, rice and barley as carbohydrate sources, green gram, meat as source of protein, ghee as fat, honey as source of sugar, rock salt as source of mineral, milk and goose berries as vitamin and mineral sources which are the components of balanced diet.<sup>[15]</sup>

Next to balanced diet hygiene is more important. These all explained under daily regimen (*Dinacharya*).

Oral hygiene achieving through brushing teeth (*Dantadhavana*), gargling (*Kavala* and *Gandusha*) with medicated decoctions, meat soup, honey which are cleansing the debris from teeth, removing bad breath, increases taste perception etc.

Daily practice of *Abhyanga* with medicated oil, *Udwartana* (massage with medicated powders), *Snana* (bathing), cleanses the impurities from all over body.

One should maintain general hygiene by cleaning excretory orifices and feet frequently, should cut hair, mustache, body hair and nails thrice in fifteen days, wear clean good cloth every day, comb the hair, apply oil to head, ear, nose and feet every day.

Applying collyrium (*Anjanam*), *Nasya* (nasal drops) and *Dhoomapana* can enhance the power of *Indriyas* (*Suprasannaindriyata*).

To keep mind at peace and harmony (*Soumanasyata*) through *Sadvrutta* (ethical regimen) like who always balanced towards all beings, forgives, speaks truth and who follows words of *Apta* (elderly persons) does not develop any disease.

Social wellbeing implies harmony and integration within the individual, between each individual and other members of society and the world in which they live. *Sadvritta* not only includes mental faculties, but also rules related with general hygiene, food consumption, sexual intercourse, which leads to prevention of psychological, physical and psycho-somatic disorders. Similar principles are mentioned in *Achara Rasayana* and *Dharaniyavegas*. *Ayurveda* believes that mind, soul and body are the three pillars (*Tridanda*) of life. The combination of these three are responsible for *Purusha* as well as the world.

<b>Dinacharya (daily regimen)</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
1. <i>Brahma muhurta uttishtheth</i> <sup>[16]</sup> (awakening early in the morning)-	Usually during this time environment is clean without much of pollutants. Along with the clean air, pleasant atmosphere, absence of noise, the morning rays of the rising sun is very beneficial.
2. <i>Danta dhavana</i> (brushing of teeth) <sup>[17]</sup>	It brings freshness to the mouth, takes away bad odor and coating on teeth. It produces alleviation of <i>Kapha</i> , clearness in mouth and desire for food.
3. <i>Jihwa nirlekhana</i> (tongue cleaning) <sup>[18]</sup>	It removes bad taste, odor of mouth, cures edema, stiffness of tongue, enhances taste perception.
4. <i>Gandusha</i> (holding fluid inside the mouth) and <i>Kavala</i> (gargling) <sup>[19]</sup>	Enhances the strength of mandible, resonance of voice, nourishment of facial muscles, taste sensation. It prevents dryness of throat, cracking of lips, decay of teeth, makes the teeth strong.
5. <i>Anjana</i> (application of collyrium) <sup>[20]</sup>	It cleans the human eyes which makes them shine like the bright moon in the clear sky.
6. <i>Dhoomapana</i> <sup>[21]</sup>	It cures heaviness of head, rhinitis, pain in the eyes, ear, cough, dyspnea, obstruction of throat, weakness of teeth, discharge from ear, nose and eyes, bad odor from nose and mouth, toothache etc., it prevents strong vata-kaphaja disorders occurring above the shoulders.
7. <i>Nasya</i> (nasal drops) <sup>[22]</sup>	It prevents diseases of eyes, nose and ears. There will be no grey hair, hair fall, instead they grow well. It cures stiffness of neck and jaw, tremors of head. The person will not be afflicted with diseases of head and neck easily.
8. <i>Vyayama</i> <sup>[23]</sup> (physical exercise)	Lightness of the body, ability to work, stability, increased endurance power, alleviation of <i>dosha</i> , increased <i>agni</i> .
9. <i>Abhyanga</i> <sup>[24]</sup>	It delays ageing, cures tiredness and <i>vatajanya vyadhi</i> , improves vision, complexion, sleep, good lustrous skin and strength. <i>Vayu</i> resides in skin and is abode of touch sense. <i>Abhyanga</i> is good for skin and one should do it every day.
10. <i>Udwartana</i> <sup>[25]</sup>	It cleans the body, massage with powder of herbs without oil is <i>Udgharshana</i> . By this blood vessels get dilated & <i>Agni</i> in skin ( <i>Bhrajaka pitta</i> ) gets enhanced. massage with the paste of herbs along with oil is <i>Utsadana</i> . It enhances complexion, clearness and lightness in the body.
11. <i>Snana</i> (taking bath) <sup>[26]</sup>	After doing massage, if one takes bath, person will be cured of bad odor, heaviness of body, drowsiness, itching, impurities, unpleasantness due to sweat.

12. <i>Anulepana</i> (applying medicated anointments) <sup>[27]</sup>	It gives complexion and beautiful look. It enhances ojas and strength, removes sweat, discoloration & tiredness.
13. <i>Pada prakshalana</i> <sup>[28]</sup>	It is good for eyes, enhances virility, kills the <i>rakshasa</i> (germs) & pleasantness.

### Yoga and health in Ayurveda

Aims of *Ayurveda* and *Yoga* are same *ie.* attainment of salvation. Health is main route through which, one can achieve salvation.

*Asana* is third part of yoga, which includes different yogic postures, it helps to attain further steps of *Yoga*. One can control his mind efficiently, only when he controls his body properly.

It should be adopted as a regular habit. It is an ancient discipline designed to bring balance and health to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions in an individual. Studies have shown that *Asana* decreases level of blood glucose, salivary cortisol, plasma renin levels and 24-hour urine nor-epinephrine and epinephrine levels. *Yoga* significantly decreases heart rate, systolic and diastolic blood pressures.<sup>[29]</sup> One should observe regular yogic practice at least 1 hour/day.

Controlling the inspiration and expiration is known as *Pranayama*. It helps to establish control over the mind, if *Pranayama* practiced in proper way, it is capable of curing all the diseases.<sup>[30]</sup>

### DISCUSSION

A few small changes in daily habits can make a big difference. Healthy habits do not have to be monotonous. Rapid decline in physical activity has occurred in both rural and urban India, because of easy availability of motorized transport, prolonged sitting with computers (especially IT workers), watching television associated with consumption of calories rich food and beverages increased the risk of obesity like conditions in both adult and children. Obesity is a predisposing factor for various complication like diabetes mellitus, atherosclerosis, high blood pressure. These non-communicable diseases are indirectly welcoming infectious diseases.

In this covid19 global pandemic time, 80% risk factors of morbidity and mortality are who having hypertension, diabetes, cancer. Because in NCDs immune system will be impaired. Patients will not develop any resistance against infections.<sup>[31]</sup>

But increasing immunity is not a one-day thing. It will get improvise by adopting changes in day to day life.

In *Prameha nidana*, *Acharya Charaka* quoted that, birds fly towards tree, where they have made their nest to lay eggs even if it is more far. Likewise, the diseases easily attack those persons who are greed for food(over-eating), have aversion of bathing (poor hygiene) and aversion of physical activity (lazy persons). What we could

understand from this is the person whoever consumes balanced diet, follows daily regime which maintains equilibrium of dhatus and practices various physical activities always enjoys happy and healthy life.

By the year of 2000, WHO's "health for all" is the social goal of all governments. "health for all" is a holistic concept, that health is to be brought within the reach of every one in given community. Long ago, Henry sigerist, the medical historian stated that "the people's health ought to be the concern of the people themselves. They must struggle for it and plan for it".

### CONCLUSION

Health requires the promotion of healthy lifestyle. There is an association between health and lifestyle of individuals. Many current-day health problems, especially in India, where traditional lifestyles still persist, risk of illness and death are connected with lack of sanitation, poor nutrition, personal hygiene, elementary human habits, customs and cultural patterns. In short, the achievement of optimum health demands adoption of healthy lifestyles.

Whoever wants to be healthy and prevent diseases, ought to maintain a healthy weight, cessation of smoking habits, maintain daily physical exercises, diet should be rich in fruits and vegetables, limit consumption of sugar and sugar-based beverages, limit sodium intake, limiting the auto-mobiles, promoting walking and bicycle riding. These aforementioned steps are the basis of implement for prevention of various lifestyle diseases.

The war against disease and for health cannot be fought by physicians alone. It is a people's war in which the entire population must mobilized permanently.

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