

Balanced Diet in *Ayurveda* for Ideal Health in Present Era

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ABSTRACT

Ahara is considered as Mahabheshaja. Food is vital breath or sustainer of life, thus all the living being of universe rush towards food; Complexion, perspicuity, good voice, longevity, brilliancy, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment, strength, energy and intellect all are depend upon food. The worldly activities done to earn livelihood, Vedic recitations etc. done for attainment of heaven and those done for final beatitude or emancipation all depend upon food. In Upanishad, food is considered as Brahma. Food is a substance consumed other than water and drugs for maintenance of health, well being and vitality of the individual. Present paper highlights the importance of balanced diet in the form of Nitya Sheelaniya Dravya and critical analysis on the importance of it in present era.

Key words: Nitya Sheelaniya Dravya, Balanced diet, Malnutrition, Non-communicable diseases.

INTRODUCTION

Food is one among the three sub pillars - *Ahara*, *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya*, which support the body itself. Here *Ahara*, has been enumerated first, which shows its importance. ^[1,2] World Health Day is celebrated on 7 April every year, WHO highlights the challenges and opportunities associated with food safety under the slogan "From farm to plate, make food safe". Promotion of proper nutrition is one of the eight elements of the primary health care. ^[3] *Ayurveda* is not only a medical science but also a complete science of life, which deals with health promotion, prevention and management of disease. Daily consumptions of *Hita*, *Avirudha*, *Satmya* and *Nitya Sheelaniya Ahara* makes the person disease free condition, so one should plan diet according to the *Asta Ahara Vidhi Visesaayatana*. Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata explained the *Nitya sevaniya Dravyas* which is similar to the balance diet.

To bring global attention towards *Ayurvedic* system of medicine in concern to nutritional programmed in our system, a great interest has to be focused on the role of dietary factors in the promotion of health.

According to *Ayurveda* Acharyas, most of the disease occurs from malfunctioning *Agni* loosely translated as individual digestive capacity. It is not enough to eat proper food but is more important to digest what one has eaten. The chronic indigestion lies at the root of most of the disease. The properly digested food yields the nutrient fluid *Ahara Rasa* that is capable of nourishing the body constituents and thus ensures continuation of life process. When the digestion is not complete or improper the result is a highly contamination and toxic metabolite called *Ama*. Since it is produced in place of *Ahara Rasa* it has access to all the body constituents and thus it results in malnourishment. Depending upon the length

of time and severity of malnourishment various complex disease processes manifest in the body. It is absolutely essential that one consume food that is wholesome, at proper time, in adequate amount, in a sequence prescribed and not too fast or too slow.

Scope for Nutrition in Ayurveda-

Classification of *Ahara* has yet to be done on their nutritive value. The classification on the *dravyas* based on the functions such as *Jivaniya*, *Brumhaniya* etc. clearly indicating classification based on the values. Ayurveda, the life science, is having many references regarding the *Nityayogya* and *Swasthahita Dravyas*. Scholars of Ayurveda had a clear idea about the malnutrition and over nutrition and their effect which is explained mainly in the context of *Santarpana* and *Apatarpana Janya Vyadhi*. Ayurveda explain concept of *Astaahara vidhi Vishesayatana*, *Viruddha ahara*, *Satmya ahara*, *Nityasevaniya Dravyas*.

Balance diet in Ayurveda-

Ideal food is nothing but the food which is necessary for maintenance of health, proper body growth & development. It is also described as “Balance Diet”. Balance diet is defined as one which contains a variety of food in such quantities and proportions that the need for energy, amino acid, vitamins, minerals, fat, carbohydrate and nutrients is adequately met for maintaining health, vitality and general wellbeing and also makes a small provision for extra nutrients to with stand short duration of leanness. [4]

The concepts of balance diet are mentioned in Charaka Samhita, under things which are always conducive for health and should be consumed regularly for the maintenance of health. According to Acharya Charaka the list of foods those are advisable to consume daily are *Shashtika-shali* (rice grown in 60 days), *Godhuma* (wheat), *Yava* (barley), *Mudga* (green gram), *Saindhava* (rock salt), *Amalaki* (*Embllica officinalis*), *Antariksha-jala* or *Divyodaka* (rain water), *Ghrita* (ghee), cow milk, *Madhu* (honey), *Jangala-Mamsa* (meat of animals from arid land) can be correlated as balance diet in today’s era. [5,6]

According to Acharya Vagbhata-*Godhuma* (wheat), vegetables like *Sunishannaka*, *Jivanthi*, *Balamulaka*, *Pathya* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Mrudwika* (*Vitis vinefra*), *Patola* (*Trichosanthus doica*), *Sharkara* (sugar), *Dadima* can be consumed habitually. [7]

Good nutrition means “maintaining a nutritional status that enables us to grow well and enjoy good health. Those who take proper diet live a long life. Proper maintenance of the power of digestion is also depends upon the proper diet.

Nitya Sheelaniya Dravyas critical analysis:

1. ***Shashtika Shali* (rice)** is good source of energy and also contributing significant quantities of protein, minerals and vitamins of B group. It contributes 70 to 80% of total energy intake. Rice proteins are rich in lysine, which is an essential amino acid than other cereals protein. [8]

Table No 1: Showing Ayurvedic pharmacological properties of *Shashtika shali*.

Latin name	<i>Oryza sativum</i>
English name	Rice
Family	Graminaeae
Gana	<i>Stanyajanana, Shuka dhanya varga</i>
Guna	<i>Laghu</i> (light for digestion), <i>Snigdha</i>
Rasa (Taste)	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet)
Anurasa (Sub-Taste)	<i>Kashaya</i> (Astringent)
Virya (Active principle)	<i>Sheeta</i> (Cold)
Vipaka (Post digestive taste)	<i>Madhura</i>
Doshaghnata (Effect on Doshas)	<i>Tridosha</i>
Rogaghnata (Effects on Diseases)	Emaciation, <i>Raktapitta</i> (bleeding disorders), rheumatoid arthritis, <i>Arsha</i> (hemorrhoids), <i>Prameha</i> (diabetes) and <i>Twaka roga</i> (skin diseases)
Karma (Effects on body)	<i>Hridya</i> , <i>Ruchikara</i> , <i>Pittahara</i> , <i>Vrishya</i> (Aphrodisiac), <i>Vishaghna</i> , <i>Mutrala</i> , <i>Brimhana</i> , <i>Swarya</i> , <i>Baddhavarchskara</i>

2. **Mudga (green gram)**- *Mudga* is the best among *Shimbhi Dhanya*. It is main source of protein. But regards to quality, vegetables proteins are inferior to animal protein. It is also rich in minerals and vitamin B complex. [9]

Table No. 2: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Mudga.

Latin name	Phasenlus mudga Linn.
English name	Green gram
Guna	Laghu and Ruksha (dry)
Rasa	Madhura, Kashaya
Virya	Sheeta
Vipaka	Katu (pungent)
Doshaghnata	Kapha Pitta Dosha Shamaka
Rogaghnata	Jwara (fever), Medoroga (obesity), Kapha, Pitta and Rakta disorders.
Karma	Grahi, Chakshushya (good for eyes), Jvaraghna

3. **Saindhava Lavana (rock salt)** is pure natural salt with no release agents, free-flow agents, belching agents or any other additives. The color may be reddish white and clear. The red coloration is from the natural iron content. It increases appetite and adds taste to the food. It is considered superior to the normal cooking salt as it has less water retention capacity thus considered good for those suffering from cardiac diseases, hypertension and renal diseases.

Table No. 3: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Saindhava Lavana.

Latin name	Sodii chloridum
English name	Rock salt, Sodium chloride
Gana	Pancha lavana and Shad lavana
Guna	Visyandi, Sukshma, Ushna, Vyavayi, Snigdha, Tikshna and Laghu.
Rasa	Lavana, Madhura
Virya	Sheeta
Vipaka	Madhura
Doshaghnata	Tridoshamak
Rogaghnata	Adhmana, Shula, Vamana, Vrishya
Karma	Agnideepaka, Pachaka, Ruchikara (improves taste), Chakshushya, Lekhana, Vibandhahara (laxative), Hridya (good for heart), Shothahara, Vrana sodhaka and Ropana

4. **Amalaki (Emblica officinalis)** is the most concentrated source of vitamin C in the plant kingdom. The active ingredients in *Amalaki* are Phyllembin, Gallic acid, tannins, pectin and ascorbic acid (Vitamin C). Vitamin C has a special form that makes it very easy for the human body to assimilate. Vitamin C in *Amalaki* fruit is precisely bonded with tannins that protect it from degradation from heat and light. It is well known for its ability to boost bio-availability and absorption of calcium for yielding healthier bones, teeth, hair and nails. It also improves assimilation of iron for healthy blood. It is especially nourishing for the eyes, heart and digestion. *Amalaki* is also extremely effective for balancing stomach acids. *Amalaki* has a special action to promote strength and lean muscle mass when used with a diet rich in protein and quality nutrients.

Table No. 4: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Amalaki.

Latin name	Emblica officinalis
Family	Gramineae
Part used	Phala (fruit)
Guna	Laghu, Ruksha, Sheeta, Guru
Rasa	Pancharasa (Amlapradhana)
Virya	Sheeta
Vipaka	Madhura
Doshaghnata	Tridosha shamaka mainly Pittashamaka
Rogaghnata	Kandu, Kamala, Ajirna, Yakritroga, Prameha, Shotha, Hridroga, Jvara, Raktapitta, Amlapitta, Shosha, Trushna
Karma	Chakshushya, Keshya, Rechana, Deepana, Vrishya, Kusthaghna, Anulomana, Rasayana, Balya, Kaphaghna, Krimighna, Vayasthapana, Ruchya, Medhya, Daha prashamana, Bhagna sandhana kara

5. **Yava (barley)** - it is used in a wide range in Ayurveda and described under *Shukadhanya varga*. The use of *Yava* both as *Pathya* and *Aushadha* is established in ancient texts and modern research experiments. [10]

Table No. 5: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Yava.

Latin name	Hordeum vulgare Linn.
Family	Graminae
Guna	Laghu (light), Ruksha (dry), Pichilla (slimy), Mridu (soft), Sara (flows easily)
Rasa	Madhura, Tikta (bitter), Kashaya
Virya	Sheeta
Vipaka	Katu (pungent)
Doshagnata	Kapha Pitta shamaka and vatakara
Karma	Kapha shamaka, Mutrala, Lekhana (scraping effect), Medohara (eliminates excess fat), Vrishya (aphrodisiac), Balya, Varnya (increases complexion), Swarya (helps to gain good voice), Agnideepana (increases appetite and metabolism)

6. **Antariksha jala (rain water)**- it is the prime source of all the water and purest water in the nature. *Antariksha jala* (water from the sky) is tasteless and having properties like nectar, vital for life, satiating, maintains the body, invigorating and allays tiredness, lethargy, thirst, intoxication, fainting, drowsiness, sleep and burning sensation and is always highly beneficial.

Table No. 6: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Antariksha jala.

Guna	Laghu, Sheeta
Rasa	Avyakta rasa
Virya	Sheeta
Vipaka	Madhura
Doshagnata	Kapha Pitta shamaka and Vatakara
Karma	Jeevana, Tarpana, Hridya, Buddhivardhaka

7. **Go-Ghrita (Cow's Ghee)**- It is easier to get absorbed. It can bond with lipid soluble nutrients and herbs to penetrate the lipid based cell walls of the body. It is also *Pitta-Vata hara*, good for *Shukra*, *Oja*, *Swara*, *Varna*, *Nirvapanam*, *Sanskaraanuvartanam* in nature. *Ghrita* removes toxic substances from the body and works as a *Vrana sodhaka* and *Vrana ropaka*. It improves memory, *Buddhi* (intelligence) and personal beauty of the body. The individuals which are affected from heat and injured by weapons and poison are also recommended for the administration of *Ghrita*. [11]

Table No. 7: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Ghrita.

Latin name	Butyrum departum
Gana	Madhura Skandha
Source	Animal
English name	Clarified butter
Synonyms	Ajya, Havi, Sarpi, Ghrita
Guna	Snigdha, Mridu, Sheeta, Guru, Yogavahi
Rasa	Madhura
Virya	Sheeta
Vipaka	Madhura
Doshagnata	Vata Pitta shamaka, Kaphavidhikara
Rogagnata	Udavarta, Jvara, Unmada, Shula, Anaha, Vrana, Daha, Shosha, Visarpa, Rakta Vikara and Agnimandya etc.
Karma	Deepaniya, Vayasthapana, Rasayana, Medhya, Chakshushya, Vrishya, Lavanya, Rakshoghna, Vayasthapana, Rochaka, Kantivardhaka, Vishahara, Agnivardhaka, Oja-Teja-Bala-Ayusha vridhikara, balavardhaka, Smriti Vardhaka.

8. **Jangala Mamsa (Animal meat)**- it is *Ruchya*, best among meat. Animal meat has 20% protein and 3-5% of fat, 100gm of meat if used will yield 194 calories of energy. *Jangala Mamsa* is a rich source of protein of a high biological value and also has all the amino acids and vitamin B complex group, iron and phosphorous

are present in the adequate quantity in such meat.

Table No. 8: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Jangala Mamsa.

Guna	Guru
Rasa	Madhura
Virya	Sheeta
Doshagnata	Pitta-Kapha dosha Vardhaka
Karma	Mamsa rasa is indicated in Shosyata (dehydration), Krushyata

9. **Madhu (Honey)**- it is composed of 38% of fructose, 31% of glucose, 1% of sucrose, and 9% of other sugars, along with water and small amounts of vitamins, minerals and acids. Honey has also been used topically as an antiseptic

therapeutic agent for the treatment of ulcers, burns and wounds. It is a best food that reduces cholesterol and thus prevents the diseases like coronary artery diseases and also prevents obesity. [12]

Table No. 9: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Madhu.

English name	Honey
Guna	Ruksha, Laghu, Sukshma
Rasa	Madhura, Kashaya
Anurasa	Kashaya
Virya	Sheeta
Vipaka	Madhura
Doshagnata	Tridoshasamaka
Rogagnata	Kustha, Arsa, Kasa, Swasa, Hikka, Atisara, Vibandha, Daha, Kshata, Kshaya, Trishna, Visha, Raktapitta, Prameha, Krimi, Chardi.
Karma	Langhana, Sangrahi, Sodhana, Swarya, Chakshushaya, Mehaghna, Deepana, Vranasodhana, Srotosodhana, Varnya, Medhya, Vrishya, Sangrahi, Lekhanam, Sandhana, Ropana, Chedana, Prasadanaam. Yogavahi.

10. **Dugdha (Cow's Milk)**- it is one of best rejuvenate food according to Charaka. It has a fine blend of all nutrients. It is a good source of protein, fat, sugar, vitamins and minerals. Milk protein contains all the essential amino acids. It is also a rich source of calcium. Milk of cow's which roam in *Jangala*, *Anupa* and hilly places is heavy for digestion in successive order; and its unctuousness depends upon the nature of food which animal takes.

Madhura, *Amla*, *Lavana*, *Katu*, *Tikta*, *Kashaya* are six *rasas*. intake of all six *rasas* is the best among strength enhancing factors and wholesome to the body. [13]

Table No. 10: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of Dugdha.

Synonyms	<i>Dugdha</i> , <i>Ksheera</i> , <i>Paya</i>
Guna	<i>Sheeta</i> (cold), <i>Mridu</i> (soft), <i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous), <i>Bahala</i> (thick), <i>Guru</i> (heavy) and <i>Manda</i> (mild)
Rasa	<i>Madhura</i>
Virya	<i>Sheeta</i>
Vipaka	<i>Madhura</i>
Prabhava	<i>Manaskara</i> (pleasing to mind)
Doshagnata	<i>Kapha Pitta Shamaka</i> and <i>Vatakara</i>
Rogagnata	<i>Raktapitta</i> disorders, <i>Karshya</i> , <i>Kshaya</i> , in <i>Vata</i> and <i>Pitta</i> disorders, relieves fatigue and thirst
Karma	<i>Tarpana</i> , <i>Hridya</i> , <i>Buddhivardhaka</i> , <i>Jivaniya</i> , <i>Rasayana</i> , <i>Brimhaniya</i>

Disease due to over Nourishment:

Diseases due to over nourishment (*santarpana janya vyadhi*) are – *Prameha*, *Pidika*, *Kotha*, *Kandu*, *Pandu*, *Jvara*, *Kustha*, *Ama Pradosha* (*Alasaka*, *Visuchika*), *Mutra kruchchha*, *Arochaka*, *Tandra*, *Klabya*, *Ati Sthulya*, *Alasya*, heaviness of body, *Moha*, *Shopha* etc. [14]

Disease due to nutritional deficiency:

Deha-Agni- Bala- Varna- Oja- Kshaya, Emaciation of body, *Jvara*, *Kasa*, back pain, *Arochaka*, *Shrota Daurbalya*, *Unmada*, *Mala-Mutra Vibandha*, pain in calf thigh, joints and *Vata janya Vyadhis*. [15]

Table No 11 : CLASSIFICATION BASED ON DIETIC FACTORS OF BALANCED DIET :

Carbohydrates	<i>Shal</i> , <i>Shasthikashali</i> , <i>Godhuma</i> , <i>Yava</i>
Proteins	<i>Mudga</i> , <i>Shali</i> , <i>Shasthikashali</i> , <i>Godhuma</i> , <i>Jangala mamsa</i>
Fat	<i>Ghrita</i> , <i>Milk</i>
Vitamins	<i>Amalaki</i> , <i>Draksha</i> , <i>Dadima</i> , <i>Patola</i>
Minerals	<i>Triphala</i> , <i>Pathya</i>
Water	<i>Antariksha jala</i>

BALANCED DIET VS NITYA SHEELANIYA DRAVYA:

According to modern science balance diet measured in calories, which is easily digestible for every person. Ayurveda gave

us a beautiful gift which is elaborated in detailed mannered as *Agni, Vaya, Avastha, Kala, Desha, Prakriti* and *Koshtha*. *Ex-Mandagni* person should have to consume *Mridu* and *Laghu Bhojana* while *Tikshangni* person Guru and *Snigdha* food. *Nitya Sheelaniya Ahara Dravyas* are completely full of *Shadrasa*, which is very essential for our perfect health. These *Dravyas* fit for day to day food habit in proper quantity.

DISCUSSION

Modern science states that a proper amount of carbohydrate, fat, proteins, vitamins and minerals are required for well balanced diet. According to Ayurveda in every food there are certain factors developing the mental faculties and certain other factors developing the physical built of the body. The modern scientists are still ignorant of even the fundamental principles guiding this classification. Certain factors in diet excise the mental faculties and certain other retards these faculties. According to Ayurveda, the diet which nourishes both the mental and physical built is called balanced diet.

Charaka Samhita mentioned in nutshell all the constituents of a well balanced diet determined by modern experts. based on his version good and fine rice like *Shasti* and *Shali, Mudga* (green gram), *Lavana* (salt), *Amalaki* (goose berry), *Yava* (barley), rain water, milk, ghee, flesh of animals living in forests and honey should by habit be adapted in diet generally.

In Ayurveda the concept of *Nitya Sheelaniya Dravyas* mentioned by Acharya Charaka and Vagbhata clearly indicates the importance of nutrition in day to day life. The definition of balance diet indicates the role of carbohydrates, proteins, fat, minerals and vitamins intake in daily food. The nutritive value of *Nitya Sheelaniya Dravyas* fulfils the balance diet criteria hence when we critically analyses the nutritive value which are told by WHO. By daily consumption of *Nitya Sheelaniya Dravyas* does the promotion of health of healthy individual and prevent the disease condition.

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda stands no less behind in explaining the nutritional aspect and therapeutic nutritional concept. Daily consumption of *Nitya Sheelaniya Dravyas* does the promotion of health of healthy individuals and prevent the disease condition i.e. *Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam. Swasthahita* and *Nitya Sheelaniya Dravyas* show solid evidences of the concept of the nutrition. Effort should be made to put Ayurvedic menu of nutritional supplements into the National nutritive programmes. Ayurvedic method of understanding and analyzing *Kuposhanajanya Vikaras* (nutritional disorders) is necessary to adopt Ayurvedic nutritional management. *Nitya Sheelaniya Dravya* plays important role in maintaining healthy life and prevents the forthcoming disease.

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