



Research Paper

A Classical Review on Aahar Dravyas and Its Roll in Nutritious Diet

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, often termed the "science of life," emphasizes three fundamental pillars for maintaining a healthy and long life: Aahar (diet), Nidra (sleep), and Brahmacharya (balanced lifestyle). In modern times, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cancer, heart diseases, and stroke is increasing due to lifestyle factors such as unhealthy dietary habits, sedentary behavior, disrupted sleep patterns, and stress. Ayurveda categorizes lifestyle-related disorders as *santarpanjanya vyadhis*, which are ailments caused by over-nourishment and sedentary habits. These can be linked to the lifestyle disorders prevalent today. Factors contributing to *santarpanjanya vyadhis* include the consumption of heavy, oily, sweet, and fatty foods, excessive intake of milk and dairy products, lack of physical activity, and daytime sleeping. Among the three pillars of health, Aahar (diet) holds significant importance in preventing lifestyle disorders and promoting overall well-being. Ayurveda emphasizes the concept of *nitya sevaniya aahar*, which refers to complete, balanced foods that fulfill the nutritional requirements of the body and can be consumed regularly by everyone. These foods are nourishing, easily digestible, and provide essential nutrients to maintain optimal health. By adhering to the principles of *nitya sevaniya aahar* and adopting a balanced lifestyle, individuals can mitigate the risk of lifestyle-related diseases and enhance their overall health and longevity. Ayurveda offers valuable insights into dietary patterns and lifestyle practices that can help individuals lead healthier lives and prevent the onset of chronic ailments.

KEYWORDS: *Nitya sevaniya Aahar, Diet, Non-communicable diseases, Lifestyle disorders.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Aahar, the first of the three *traya-upsthambha* in Ayurveda, encompasses a wide range of qualities in different foods, including their types, quantities, and medicinal uses.[1] In modern times, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus, cancer, heart diseases, and stroke is increasing, accounting for a significant portion of global mortality.[2] Lifestyle disorders, often stemming from errors in daily habits and inappropriate interactions with the environment, are major contributors to NCDs. Faulty dietary habits, unhealthy food choices, wrong behavioral patterns, disrupted circadian rhythms, and stress are among the causes of lifestyle disorders. Ayurveda explains the concept of *santarpanjanya vyadhi*, which correlates with lifestyle disorders and is caused by factors like consuming heavy, oily, sweet, and fatty foods, excessive milk and dairy consumption, reduced physical activity, and daytime sleeping.[3] Preventing NCDs involves correcting errors in dietary habits, adopting healthier behaviors, and restoring circadian rhythms. Encouraging healthy dietary habits through widespread awareness of nutritious, simple, and locally available foods like *nitya sevaniya aahar* is crucial. *Nitya sevaniya aahar* comprises complete, balanced food materials recommended for regular consumption by everyone, as they provide essential nutrients and are readily accessible in local geographical regions. By promoting the consumption of *nitya sevaniya aahar* and encouraging healthier lifestyle choices, individuals can mitigate the risk of lifestyle disorders and improve their overall health and well-being.

Review of nitya sevniya aahar Nitya sevniya aahar

Aahar enlisted by Charaka[4] and Ashtanghridaya[5] under the title of nitya sevniya aahar and sevniya aahar respectively, have been tabulated as below.

Charaka	Ashtanghridaya
Shastika shali (Oryza sativa)	Shalidhanya (Oryza sativa)
Godhuma (Wheat, Triticum aestivum)	Godhuma (Wheat, Triticum aestivum)
Yava (Barley, Hordeum vulgare)	Yava (Barley, Hordeum Vulgare)
Mudga (Green gram, Vigna radiata)	Shashtika (Variety of rice)
Jangala mamsa (Meat of animals found in arid regions)	Jangala maas (Meat of animals found in arid regions)
Godugdha (Cow's milk)	Jivanti (Leptadenia Reticulata)
Ghrita (ghee)	Bala mulak (New Radish)
Antariksha jala (rain water)	Vasthukam (Indian goosefoot, Bathua)
Saindhava (rock salt from the Sindh)	Haritaki (Terminalia chebula)
Madhu (honey)	Amalaki (Indian gooseberry)
Amla (Indian gooseberry)	Mrudvika (Draksha)(Vitis Vinifera)
	Patol (Pointed gourd) (Trichosanthes dioica)
	Moong (Green gram) (Vigna radiata)
	Sharkara (Sugar) (Sucrose) (Saccharum officinarum)
	Ghrita (Ghee)
	Divyodhak
	Godugdha (Cow's Milk)
	Madhu (Honey) (Apis mellifera)
	Dadima (Pomegranate) (Punica granatum)
	Saindhav (Rock salt)

The modern concept of superfoods and whole foods emphasizes the importance of consuming natural, less processed foods that are rich in nutrients and offer numerous health benefits. While various dietary trends may come and go, whole foods remain essential for maintaining good health due to several key reasons:

1. **Greater nutrition:** Whole foods are complex and contain a variety of micronutrients that the body needs for optimal functioning. By consuming a diverse range of whole foods, individuals can ensure they obtain a broad spectrum of essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.
2. **Essential fiber:** Whole foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes are excellent sources of dietary fiber. Fiber plays a crucial role in supporting digestive health and can help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, colorectal cancer, stroke, and heart disease.
3. **Protective substances:** Many whole foods contain beneficial compounds such as antioxidants, which help protect cells and tissues from damage caused by free radicals. Antioxidants are known for their anti-inflammatory and disease-fighting properties, making them important components of a healthy diet.

The main aspects of dietary guidelines emphasize the importance of consuming a balanced diet consisting of foods from various food groups to ensure adequate nutrient intake. Some key points include:[6]

1. Including foods from several food groups to obtain a wide range of nutrients in appropriate amounts.
2. Prioritizing cereals, millets, and pulses as major sources of essential nutrients.
3. Incorporating milk, which provides high-quality proteins and calcium, into the diet, especially for infants, children, and women.
4. Utilizing oils and nuts to increase the energy density and quality of food.
5. Enhancing the diet's quality by including eggs, flesh foods, and fish, although vegetarians can obtain essential nutrients from plant-based sources such as cereals, pulses, vegetables, fruits, and milk-based products.
6. Consuming plenty of vegetables and fruits to benefit from their protective substances, including vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, which support overall health and well-being.

By following these dietary guidelines and prioritizing the consumption of whole, natural foods, individuals can support their health and reduce the risk of chronic diseases while ensuring they meet their nutritional needs.

II. DISCUSSION

Ayurveda is founded upon two fundamental principles: preventive healthcare and interventions for various diseases through practices like Shodhana (purification), Nidan Parivarjan (elimination of causative factors), Shamana (pacification), Rasayana (rejuvenation), Pathya vyavastha (regulation of diet and lifestyle), and Satvajaya (psychological therapies). Central to maintaining health is the principle of proper nutrition, as outlined in the first pillar of Aahar. Consuming nutritious food is essential for ensuring good health, as it provides the body with the necessary nutrients for optimal functioning. Dietary guidelines also stress the importance of consuming a complete and balanced diet regularly to support overall health and well-being. Nitya sevniya aahar encompasses all the components recommended by dietary guidelines, providing both essential and non-essential nutrients essential for maintaining a balanced and complete diet. This includes macronutrients such as carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, as well as micronutrients like vitamins and minerals. By adhering to

the principles of nitya sevniya aahar and consuming a diverse range of nutrient-rich foods, individuals can ensure they meet their nutritional needs and support their overall health and vitality.

Components of balanced diet	Nitya sevniya aahar
Carbohydrates	Shastik shali, Yava, Godhum, Shalidhanya
Proteins	Green gram, jangala mams
Fats	Ghrita
Vitamins	Amalaki, draksha
Minerals	Saindhav, Madhu
Water	Antariksha jala

III. CONCLUSION

Food of appropriate quality and quantity serves as the foundation of life and vitality for all living beings. A complete and balanced diet acts as fuel for maintaining the body's digestive fire (agni), invigorating the mind, ensuring proper distribution of bodily elements, promoting vitality, enhancing complexion, and sharpening the senses. Conversely, an unhealthy diet and lifestyle can disrupt the balance of doshas (physiological factors), dhatus (tissues), and rasas (bodily fluids), leading to the onset of diseases.[7] Food is the primary source of life for all living beings, and it plays a crucial role in determining various aspects of health and well-being, including complexion, clarity, voice quality, longevity, strength, and intelligence.[8] Nitya Sevaniya Aahar, a complete and balanced diet recommended by Ayurveda, fulfills the body's requirements for both macro and micronutrients. It encompasses all the essential nutrients necessary for sustaining good health and vitality. Therefore, there is no need to rely on fancy supplements or diets, as Nitya Sevaniya Aahar provides everything needed for a healthy and fulfilling life.

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