

# Holistic health promoting food preparations from ayurveda

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■ **Abstract** : Ayurveda the science of life is serving the mankind since more than 5000 years. It has two main objectives, maintaining the health of healthy and alleviating the disease of diseased one. To maintain and promote the health food plays a central role. It is not just the ingredients but the the methods of preparation of food is crucial to provide optimum nutrition. Ayurvedic seers have though in depth and described in detail about how to make food most assimilable to the system. For this the food preparations have been categorized in twelve main groups and each group has its own advantages and specific health benefits. With the increasing prevalence of fast food culture and unhealthy food practices, the incidence of several life threatening diseases such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension are goes on increasing, not only that but our psychological status is also closely associated with our food habits. Unhealthy food habits are known cause for anxiety, depression etc. and food modification is one of the important part of treatment in all such diseases. In this scenario, it becomes more important to know and search the solution from our ancient wisdom. The description from Ayurveda classics may be helpful for us to know the appropriate food practices which are suitable for our physical and psychological health. The presentation will discuss in detail about the various categories of food (Ahara varga) and its preparation methods along with the impact on our health

■ **Key words** : Ayurveda, Ahara varga, Food

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**A**yurveda the science of life is serving the mankind since more than 5000 years. It has two main objectives, maintaining the health of healthy and alleviating the disease of diseased one (Sharma and Das, 2018). To maintain and promote the health, food plays a central role. It is not just the ingredients, but the the methods of preparation of food is crucial to provide optimum nutrition and other health benefits. With the increasing prevalence of fast food culture and unhealthy food practices, the incidence of several life threatening diseases such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension goes on increasing, not only that but our psychological status is

also closely associated with our food habits. Unhealthy food habits are known cause for anxiety, depression etc. and food modification is one of the important part of treatment in all such diseases (Farhud, 2015). In this scenario, it becomes more important to know and search the solution from our ancient wisdom. The description from Ayurveda classics may be helpful for us to know the appropriate food practices which are suitable for our physical and psychological health. Ayurvedic seers with their indepth knowledge have described in detail about how to make food most assimilable to the system. For this the types of foods have been categorized in twelve

main groups (Ahara varga) and each group has its own advantages and specific health benefits. Out of this the 11th group deals with different food preparations (Kritanna Varga). Here in this paper the methods of various food preparations along-with there impact on our health will be dealt in detail.

### **Ayurvedic concept of nourishment :**

Human system receives energy from different sources of environment. This consumption of energy from environment happens through three (sub-pillar triad) routes (Sharma and Das, 2018) *i.e.*

- Aahaar (Diet)
- Nidra (Sleep)
- Brahmacharya (Disciplined life, celibacy).

Aahaar is broadly the food which we intake. Aahaar is the main source of energy. There are certain food which we can intake in its original form and certain food required to be transformed into assimilable form before intake.

### **Definition of Aahaar in Ayurveda :**

*Aahriyate annanalikaya yat tad aahaarh....*  
(Shastry and Chaturvedi, 2005)

*Annam vritti karanaam* (Sharma and Das, 2018)  
*Anna=aahaar...*

*Vritti* = each and every activity either mental or physical performed by human being.

Most of the energy that we require to fulfill our day to day activities comes from the food. The food is converted by our digestive and metabolic processes to certain forms, so that can be used by our system, it means there are two steps to achieve energy from food. First the food which we are taking should have some energy and second our digestive and metabolic fire should be in healthy state to transform those foods into assimilable form.

In Ayurveda the sources of food are divided into 12 major groups (Sharma and Das, 2018).

- Sukadhanya (monocotyledoneae-bristle grains-*Dhaan*)
- Samidhanya (dicotyledoneae-pulses-*Daal*)
- Mansha (Meat)
- Saka (Vegetables)
- Phala (Fruits)
- Harita (Greensalads)
- Madya (Wines)

- Ambu(Water)
- Gorasa (Milk and milk products)
- Ikshuvikar (product of sugar and sugar cane)
- Kritanna (cooked food preparations)
- Ahaaryogi (accessory food articles)

### **Kritanna varga-cooked food preparations :**

Kritanna varga (Food Preparations) :

It mainly includes dietary food preparations either eatable, beverages, linctus and masticable (Sharma and Das, 2018).

*Peya (Thin gruel) kaithila local Chattisgarh(1:14):*  
Method of preparation:

One part of grain and fourteen parts of water, boiled into watery consistency. If it become thicker then it is called Yusha.

It alleviates hunger, thirst, depressions, weakness, abdominal diseases and fever. It promotes sweating. It improves digestion and metabolism and is conducive to downward movement of the flatus as well as feces. Yusha is good for throat, and strengthening to the body.

*Vilepi (Thick gruel) (1:4)*

Method of preparation:

pudding prepared with one part of grain and four parts of water cooked into a thick paste.

It is nourishing, astringent, easily digestible and cardio tonic.

*Manda (Gruel water) pej/pashiya,local Chattisgarhi (1:14) :*

Method of preparation:

One part of rice and fourteen parts of water boiled together. Rice is then separated, the fluid (without grains) emerging thereby is called manda.

It stimulates the power of digestion and facilitates the downward movement of the flatus as well as feces. It softens the channels of circulations and produces sweating.

*Lajapeya(puffed husked rice) lai/lowa, local chattisgarhi (1:14) :*

Method of preparation :

Same as peya, in place of rice, puffed husked rice is used.

It removes fatigue of person whose voice is

weakened.

*Lajamanda(puffed husked rice gruel) (1:14) :*

Method of preparation:

Same as manda.

It alleviates thirst and loose motion, maintains the normalcy of tissue elements, improves digestion and metabolism, it cures burning sensation and fainting. The person of tender health, elderly, women, children, suffering from indigestion and irregularities in digestion should take this with some additive like coriander, piper longum etc.

*Rice (odan) bhaat,(1:5) :*

Method of preparation:

The *pre boiled (Usna)* rice should be washed well and allowed to swell for a while and then boiled in 5 times water (Bulusu, 2015). After the rice is softened it should be filtered.

It should always be taken when warm. It is appetizer, wholesome, satisfying, palatable and light to digest. The rice prepared of un-boiled (*Arwa*) paddy, not cleaned as well as filtered is not easily digestible, especially when taken after it has become cold.

*Roasted rice (khichadi,tahri) (1:5) :*

Method of preparations :

Before preparing the rice the grains are roasted.

It is administered in toxic and Sleshmic disorders.

*Method of preparations:*

Rice prepared with meat,vegetable,muscle fat, oil, ghee, marrow and fruits (biryani,pulao-*baghare bhaat*).

It is strengthening, saturating, cardio-tonic, bulk promoting and difficult to digest.

*Method of preparations :*

Rice prepared with black gram, sesame, green gram and milk.

It has similar properties as above.

*Kulmasha- (ghugni) :*

Method of preparations :

Half boiled wheat, barley and pulses

Its digestibility depends upon the properties of the material used. It is dry, vata provoking and laxative.

*Yusha-soup :*

Method of preparations:

Prepared with grains, pulses and vegetables .it may be consumed after seasoning it with fat and spices (chaul) or without seasoning.

Unseasoned is easily digestible in comparison to seasoned one.

*Mansha rasa (meat soup) :*

Method of preparations:

It can be prepared as mildly spiced and heavy spiced.

Mildly spiced is easily digestible as compared to other one.

Supya-soup prepared with pulses :

It can be prepared with sour additive (*amtaha daal*) and without it. Un-soured one is easily digestible than the others.

*Sakttu :*

– Method of preparation: Flour of roasted grains.

It aggravates vata, is dry, increases the fecal matter, is laxative, when drunk it immediately nourishes the person and strength him at once.

– Sakttu prepared by Shaali rice (*Oryza sativa-bagri, pashar*).

Sweat, easily digestible, cooling, bowl binding, alleviator of bleeding disorders, excessive thirst and fever.

– Puffed husked rice flour-astringent, sweet, cold and easily digestible.

*Dhana(Murra) - Roasted barley :*

It is depletive due to its dryness, refreshing and get digested with difficulty due to its distending nature.

*Virud dhana (jariyahe)-germinated or sprouted fried barley :*

Shaskuli (*Chaushela*,-)paste of Shaali (*Oryza sativa, Bagri,pashar*) rice fried with sesame oil

Madhukroda- sugar syrup

Pindika (*apchi*, mithee gujiha, gulabjamun, launglatta)-flour bolus dipped in madhukroda

Pupa(*Malpua,Bobra, khurmi*)-type of cake

Ksheera-Ikshuras Pupa(*Malpua,Bobra, khurmi*)- it is prepared with milk and sugarcane juice is refreshing and aphrodisiac

Pupalika (mithi pudi, *Mitha sohari*)-sweet cake

fried in ghee or oil .

Paistika - (dehrauri, chila, dushka, angaarkar) preparation of rice flour.

All above food items are difficult to digest. Paistika being the most difficult one out of all.

Eatables prepared with fruits, meat, muscle fat, vegetables, paste of sesame and honey are aphrodisiac, strength promoting, bulk promoting and difficult to digest.

*Veshwar (meat soup, surua, kadhi) :*

Method of preparations : Minced meat preparations- meat without bone is to be boiled and minced in pestle and mortar. This should be cooked again by adding powder of pepper longum, dried ginger, pepper nigrum, sugar candy and ghee into it. It is heavy, unctuous and promoter of strength and plumpness. Eatable prepared by jaggery, sesame, honey, rock sugar are aphrodisiac, strength promoting and difficult to digest.

Various type of eatable of wheat prepared by adding fat or fried with fat are aphrodisiac and cardio-tonic.

The preparations of wheat flour such as dhana, parpat, apupa become easily digestible by being seasoned.

*Prithuka-(flatten rice) chiwda-poha-* is difficult to digest, strength promoting, must be eaten in small quantity after being roasted or fried. If it is un-fried acts as laxative,

*Yava Chipita-* flatten barley- it produces wind during process of digestion.

*Supya-(pulses and legumes)- Bhajia, Namkeen, Mangauri, Vada, Tethri, Mathri :*

These items aggravate vata, causes dryness and cold. These should be taken in small quantity together with pungent things, fat and salt.

When these edibles are cooked over a low fire for a long time and that are thick and hard (bafauri, litti, baati) are difficult and take a long time (sustained release of energy) to get digested but they promote nourishment and strength.

*Vimardak-(bhel-jhaalmudhi) :*

It is prepared with ripe, unripe, softened and roasted substances. It is difficult to digest, aphrodisiac and cardiogenic. It is useful for person who are physically strong.

*Rasala (Shrikhand, Moran) :*

It is prepared of curd by adding *cinnamomum zeylanica, elettaria cardamomum, cinnamomum tamala, mesuea ferrea*, dry zinger along with sugar.

It is nourishing, aphrodisiac, unctuous, strength promoting and palatable.

*Guda dadhi (lassi):*

Method of preparation: curd mixed with sugar candy.

It is unctuous, refreshing, cardio tonic and alleviator of vata.

*Panaka-(beverages) :*

Method of preparation: Prepared of *Vitis vinifera, Phoenix sylvestris, Zizyphus jujube, Grewia asiatica*, honey and products of sugarcane.

It is heavy in digestion, produce wind during digestion. But its properties vary after adding pungent and sour things.

*Ragasaadava(pana) :*

Method of preparation: By boiling fresh mango fruits with sugar candy and by adding oil and powder of dry ginger into it.

It is pungent, sour, salt, sweet in taste and light, palatable, cardio tonic and carminative. These increase palatability in other food when added to it.

*Aamra-aamalaka leha(aamrasa) :*

Decoction of these fruits prepared in first instance and this is further boiled to a thicker consistency by adding sugar.

These are nourishing and strength promoting.

*Sukta (vinegar, sirka) :*

It is prepared by whey, sugar candy, honey and congee by keeping it inside a hip of grains for three days.

It aggravates bleeding disorders, kapha and alleviates vata.

Aashut: When it is prepared with rhizome, roots and fruits.

*Sindaki :*

Beverages kept for long time after fermentation become sour.

These are palatable and light

### Conclusion :

Ayurvedic dietary guidelines are designed to take care both our physical and psychological health. What ancient scientists of Ayurveda have documented on food preparations about 5000 year ago is as relevant in present scenario as it was before. Food, when taken in adequate quantity provides us strength, complexion and happy life without disturbing the normalcy of fundamental tissues. This quantity of food further depends on the power of digestion and metabolism. The digestion further depends on lightness and heaviness of the food articles and methods of preparation. So it is mandatory for each and every individual to evaluate very cautiously about his/her digestive power and type of food articles, before taking it. One should not rather just go for routine time bound meal intake. Now it is the need and the perfect time to go back to our ancient indigenous food.

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