

Change Your Plate

Change Your Fate

Ayurvedic Diet



Ayurveda is defined as the science of living a long and healthy life. According to Ayurvedic literature, Lord Brahma's is considered as the central depository of all knowledge on Ayurveda and those traditions were written down by Sushruta Maharishi in 6000 BCE. Ayurveda not only combines herbs, but also astronomy, mantra, physiognomy and etc. Though Siddha Ayurveda is the popular mode of practice in Asian countries, it is now gaining ground in Europe. Yunani Ayurveda is popular in the Middle-East.

Ayurveda is unique because it:

- offers remedies - not to the disease but to the root of disease
- caters to individuals – treatments vary from person to person depending on their prakruthi, life style, mentality, behavior, diet and etc.
- uses natural substances to cure diseases
- shares strong spiritual relationship with Hinduism and Buddhism

According to Ayurveda, diet is one of the foremost factors which decide your lifespan because the diet that we consume varies from one persons to another.

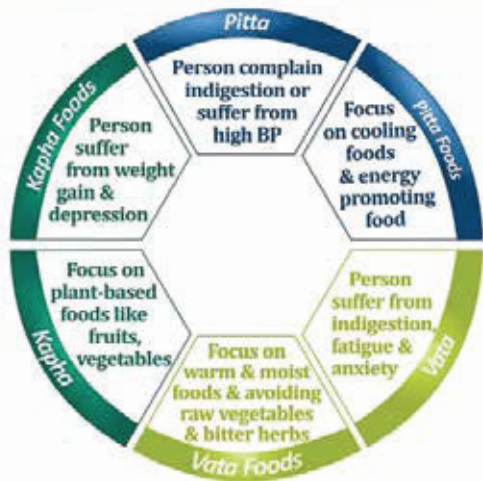
Basic concepts in Ayurveda:

1. **Five great elements (pancha mahabhutus)** : Constitution of the entire universe - Akash (ether-space), Vayu (air-gases), Thejo/Agni (fire-energy), Aapo/Jal (water-liquids), Prithvi/Bhumi (earth-solids)



2. **Three Dosha** : Abundances of the constitutions - Pitta (Thejo + Aapo), Kapha (Prithvi + Aapo), Vatta (Akash + Vayu).

- **Prakruthi** is known as the natural dosha of our body. Generally, everybody has at least two doshas as prakruthi.
- Three doshas change with time of the day, experience of food, season of the year, and our age respectively, and are given below.



- ◆ Pitta - 10-2 a.m. and p.m. - while eating - summer - young age
- ◆ Kapha - 6-10 a.m. and p.m. - before eating - spring - childhood
- ◆ Vatta - 2-6 a.m. and p.m. - after eating - winter/autumn - adulthood

3. Three Gunas : Natural energies stored in the body - Sattva - (Kapha prominent, calm, quiet, focused, wise, honest), Rajas - (Pitta prominent, restless, hyperactive, agitated, passionate, emotional), Tamus - (Vatta prominent, sleepy, lazy, destructive, ignorant, weak, unclean)

4. Six Rasas : Essence/tastes - Sweet (aapo + prithvi), Salty (aapo + thejo), Sour (prithvi + thejo) , Pungent (vayu + thejo), Bitter (akash + vayu), Astringent (vayu + prithvi)

- ◆ Pitta - consume sweet, bitter, astringent foods - avoid sour, salty and pungent foods
- ◆ Kapha - consume pungent, bitter and astringent foods - avoid sweet, sour and salty foods
- ◆ Vatta - consume sweet, sour and salty foods - avoid bitter, pungent and astringent foods



Ayurvedic aspects of foods:

1. Prakruthi - Nature of food - The nature of food can change with the other factors.

- **Sweet** : bananas, dates, mangoes, beets, cooked carrots, cucumber, olives, corn, rice, wheat, tofu, almonds, cashews, coconut, gee, milk, eggs, beef, pork, salmon, all sweets, mint, vanilla, fennel
- **Salty** : celery, seaweed, tuna, cottage cheese, table salt, soy sauce, tamari
- **Sour** : grapefruit, lemon, lime, pickles, tomatoes, butter, cheese, yoghurt, alcohol, vinegar, garlic, most fermented foods, dough breads
- **Pungent** : chillies, garlic, leeks, onions, raw spinach, most spices, mustard seeds
- **Bitter**: bitter melon, bitter gourd, leafy greens, egg plants, sesame seeds, coffee, cocoa, cumin
- **Astringent** : apples, avocado, broccoli, cabbage, green beans, most raw vegetables, pasta, popcorn, chicken, coriander, rosemary, nutmeg

2. Karma - Processing of food - The way of preparing food affects the change in prakruthi of the food. For example, gee has sweet taste while yoghurt and cheese consist of sour taste. Furthermore, old rice is lighter and easy to digest than new rice. It is good to eat raw fruits than processed fruity nectars as we can get their original nutritional value.

3. Samyoga - Combination of foods - This is a very considerable fact as incompatible, opposite food combination which is known as viruddha samyoga causes many poisonous diseases such as blindness, fainting, intoxication, stiffness in neck, varieties of anemia, indigestions, various skin diseases, diseases of intestines, swelling, gastritis, fever and infertility. Higher toxicity may cause death.

e.g.: *viruddha samyoga* - fish + milk, heated honey, honey + cow's gee in equal proportions, hot water after taking honey, pungent substances in summer and cold substances in winter, taking sweet taste end of the meal and bitter and pungent at the starting of meals, consuming cold water immediately after having hot tea or coffee, green or black tea with milk, milk + yoghurt

- 4. Rashi - Quantity of food** - Heavy foods should be taken in lesser amounts for proper digestion though eating lighter foods in higher quantity is somewhat harmless. For true satisfaction, you may fill 2/4 of your stomach with solid and 1/4 with liquid. The other 1/4 should be kept empty to move vatta, pitta and kapha. You may drink water while having meal which acts as nectar, however, for proper digestion leave the stomach 3/4 full. Drinking water immediately after eating may create digestion problems.
- 5. Desha - Influence of region on food** - In colder countries, one can consume heavy foods which are difficult to digest but better to avoid spicy food. In general, fruits, vegetables and nuts are produced seasonally. Therefore, it is better to stay in synergy with nature rather than eating incompatible foods.
- 6. Kala - Influence of time of eating** - Heavier meal is not suitable at night as we are resting physically and mentally.
- 7. Upayoga samstha - Rules of diets** - People should eat only when they are hungry. Eating when you are not hungry or eating without a specific schedule may cause digestion problems. In ancient times, having meal considered as ritualistic process as contacting God. Eating without a conscious mind can be harmful to you. Breakfast should be taken before 8 a.m., lunch before 1 p.m. and dinner before 7 p.m. for proper digestion. Every day you should drink 3-4 L of water.

In Ayurveda, nutrients quantity of once's diet measures according to a cooking cup (patha). One cooking cup consists of 8 ounces or 240 ml. Here is a balanced diet:

- ◆ Carbohydrates - 1-2 cups - 400 kcal - rice, potatoes, wheat foods
- ◆ Protein - 1/2 cups - (75 - 150) kcal - soy, fish, dhal, meat (cooked with milk or oil)
- ◆ Vegetables - 1 cup - 130 kcal - cooked with milk or oil
- ◆ Green leaves - 1 cup - 25 kcal - salad
- ◆ Fruits - 1/2 cup - 25 kcal - fresh

- 8. Upayuktha - Person who consumes food** - Influence of a specific food varies from person to person. His/her prakruthi, dosha, habitual behavior, desire for food and many more things influences him or her. Curd is a heavy food and not suitable to eat in the night. But in some regions in India, people eat a small amount of curd before they go to bed. It is not harmful to them as they are used to do it for a long time. Likewise, some people cannot consume spicy food without tearing up whilst some can eat a lot of sweets.

Food is the source of energy for every living being. If you misuse the power of energy, it makes you suffer. Hence, your plate of food decides your fate.

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