

Importance of Ahara matra in conservation of health in present lifestyle

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ABSTRACT :-

Diet plays an important role in the maintenance of good health and in the prevention and cure of the disease; the proper balanced food is the most important factor in the promotion of positive health. Quantity of food taken should depend on the capacity of the stomach. One third of stomach should have solids, second third should have liquids and last third should be empty to facilitate biochemical and biomechanical action of stomach. If food taken in the morning is digested by evening and food taken in the evening is digested by morning, it indicates that the correct amount of food has been consumed. Excess or inadequate food causes malnourishment while optimum quantity of food causes nourishment. Food ingested in proper quantity produces effects on all biological systems including sense organs, strength and complexion. Assessment of proper digestion and metabolism can be done as per given signs. Positive mental status is important while ingesting food. The negative mental status while taking food can lead to improper digestion even if the food is in proper quantity. The food that is heavy to digest, dry, cold, dehydrated, causing constipation or burning, unclean and incompatible causes amapradoshak vikara, such as visuchika, alasaka, and dandalasaka (indigestion, food poisoning, paralytic ileus). Food taken in excessive quantities aggravates all doshas and produces symptoms characteristic of each of the vitiated dosha separately. In addition to the quantity of food, untimely intake and the quality of food, i.e., intake of heavy, unctuous, cold, unclean and mutually contradictory food are responsible for the formation and vitiation of aama. Wholesome food, even if taken in proper quantity does not get properly digested if the individual is afflicted with anxiety, fear, grief, envy, anger, greed etc. and

other such emotional states. These causative factors lead to formation of aama. Aama is the undigested food material which remains inside body and produces disease.

Keywords:- Ahara, Ama, Ahara matra, Dosha

I. INTRODUCTION :-

One must take food in proper quantity, which depends on the strength of agni (digestive power)¹. But food quantity is also depends on food substance². That shall be known as the proper quantity of food which is digested in due time without disturbing the normalcy³. The right quantity always depends upon the substance itself. Based on the food-article itself, it is advised that heavy articles should be taken upto one third or one half of the saturation point (of capacity of stomach); even light ones should not be taken in surfeit in order to maintain the strength of agni⁴. As much as the amount of food that gives satisfaction, half the amount of Guru substances should be consumed. Laghu substances should not be eaten with full stomach.. The proof of quantity should be known as much as it is digested happily⁵. The substances which are heavy should be consumed till half satiety and the substances which are light can be eaten till full satiety. Liquid i.e. fluid-rich substances and fluid i.e. drinks etc. should also not be consumed in Guru (excessive) quantity⁶. Thus, shali rice (*Oryza sativum*), Shashtika rice (variety of *Oryza sativum*), mudga (*Vigna radiate* green gram), common quail, gray partridge, antelope, rabbit, wapiti, Indian sambar deer, and such other food-articles, though light to digest by their inherent properties, depends on the proper quantity. Similarly, preparations of flour (pastry), sugar-cane juice and sugar preparations, milk and milk preparations, til (*Sesamum indicum*-sesame), masha (*Vigna mungo*- black gram), flesh

of aquatic animals, marshy land animals are inherently heavy to digest foods⁷. From this, one should not conclude that heaviness or lightness in a food-article is mentioned without a reason. The light to digest substances have a predominance of the qualities of vayu and agni. The others have a predominance of the qualities of prithvi and jala. Therefore, the light food-articles are stimulants of agni owing to their innate quality, and are said to be less harmful even if they are eaten to a surfeit. On the other hand, heavy articles are non-stimulant of agni by nature, due to their dissimilarity of qualities. Thus, they cause harm if taken in excess quantity, unless there is strong agni achieved by physical exercise. Thus the right quantity of diet is determined by the strength of agni⁸. In disease and in health, a man should eat in moderation; Because quantity is going to induce fire. Guru Dravya and Laghu Dravya all expect quantity⁹.

II. DISCUSSION :-

The food taken in right quantity certainly provides strength, complexion, happiness and longevity to the person; without disturbing the normalcy¹⁰. Regular intake of diet of all taste/habitual use of food (sarvarasa abhyasa) Promote strength (balakaranam). Regular intake of food having only one taste (eka rasabhyas) causing weakness (daurbalyakaranam)¹¹. Whether the quantity of food to be consumed is appropriate or not is determined on the basis of the capacity of the stomach and its division into three parts, as mentioned earlier. This will again be described here in detail. Any quantity of food to be consumed can be considered appropriate if it does not exert undue pressure on the abdomen, does not cause obstruction in the proper functioning of the heart, does not exert any pressure on the sides of the chest, does not leave a feeling of excessive heaviness in the abdomen, properly nourishes (satisfies) the sense organs, subsides hunger and thirst, after consuming which the person is able to perform activities such as standing, sitting, walking, exhaling, inhaling, laughing, and talking with ease, and is easy to digest when taken in the morning and evening hours. Food consumed in the appropriate quantity enhances strength, complexion, and nourishment of tissues¹². Three divisions of stomach - The consumer of the food should divide the total capacity of his stomach into three parts - a third of the portion of the space should be allocated to solid food articles, a third to liquid food substances and the remaining third should be left for the

(movement of) vata, pitta and kapha. One who keeps this basic thumb-rule during dietary intake, does not get affected by any adverse effect arising out of improper quantity of diet¹³. Imagine four parts of the abdomen - out of this, two parts should be filled with food and one part should be filled with liquids. Leave the fourth part for the shelter of Vata etc. Do not eat food with a full stomach (there should be space left for the movement of food)¹⁴.

Rashi (quantity) consists of sarvagraha (account of a whole amount or unit) and parigraha (account of part of a substance, or of individual parts (in case the substance is a combination of multiple ingredients or parts)) which ascertain the effect of any food article taken in proper or improper quantity¹⁵. Inappropriate quantity is of two types deficient or excessive in quantity¹⁶. The food taken in deficient quantity is said to be the cause of reduction in strength, complexion and nourishment of body tissues, non-satisfaction, altered peristalsis and misplacement of vayu, impairments in life-functions, quality of body tissues (saara), sexual stamina (virility) and ojas (vitality), damage to the body, mind, intellect, and sense organs, inducing inauspiciousness and also making the person home to a variety of disorders of vata¹⁷. Food taken in deficient quantity is said to be the cause of constipation¹⁸. Eating less in quantity is neither for strength, nor for nutrition and lusture. And causes in the origin of all Vata related diseases¹⁹. One who eats solid foods in excess and also drinks beyond satiation will have all the three dosha- vata, pitta and kapha - in his stomach vitiated simultaneously due to their getting compressed by all the excess food. Thus, vitiated dosha in the undigested food mass get localized into a part of the stomach, which then either obstruct the movements in the abdomen or suddenly get eliminated through upper and lower channels of the alimentary tract. They produce distinct features in the person as follows: Vata causes colic pain, distension of the abdomen, body ache, dryness of the mouth, fainting, giddiness, variability in digestive power, rigidity in flanks, back and waist and contraction (spasm) and hardening of vessels. Pitta causes fever, diarrhea, burning sensation inside body, thirst, intoxicated state, giddiness and delirium, and Kapha causes vomiting, anorexia, indigestion, fever with cold, laziness and heaviness in the body²⁰.

Eating food in excess quantity quickly vitiates all the doshas²¹. Food eaten in small quantity (inferior quantity) causes dissatisfaction and also destroys the strength of the body. Eating

in excess produces laziness, heaviness, flatulent and fatigue²².

How much food you need depends on many factors, including²³ -

HEIGHT	AGE	SEX	GENERAL STATE OF HEALTH
JOB	LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES	PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES	GENETICS
BODY SIZE	ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	BODY COMPOSITION	WHAT MEDICATIONS YOU MAY BE TAKING

Food is taken in excess quantity may cause Obesity, Cardiovascular diseases including Coronary artery disease and Hypertension, Diabetes, Cerebrovascular stroke & Food is taken in less quantity may cause Kwashiorkor/Marasmus, Iron deficiency, Anemia, Stunting, wasting especially in children.

III. CONCLUSION :-

All the doshas vitiated by eating more than the quantity, being suppressed by the same undigested food, get vitiated again together and entering the same contaminated undigested food, stop it and generate Alasaka; Or by excreting undigested food from the upper and lower passages (in the form of vama virechana) rapidly, it produces visuchika in an incontinent man²⁴. If Ama is little, only Langhana (fasting) will be suitable; If it is moderate Langhana (fasting) and Pachana – digestive drugs are needed; if it is severe, then Shodhana (purification Panchakarma therapy) is necessary; for these will expel out the dosha and ama from the very root²⁵.

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