

BASICS OF AYURVEDIC NUTRITION

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WEBINAR NOTES



The three primordial forces (Trigunas)

- Satwa
- Rajas
- Tamas

The 5 Elements (Panchamahabhutas)

- Prithvi - Earth
- Ap - Water
- Tejas - Fire
- Vayu – Air
- Akasha – Ether/ space
- Mixed in infinite variety, in distinct proportions – creates matter
- Constantly changing
- Interacting
- Example 1: Human cell
- Structure to cell - Earth
- Cytoplasm – Water
- Metabolic process – Fire
- Gases – Air
- Space – Ether
- Example 2: Human body
- Structure – Earth
- Body fluids – Water
- Movement – Air
- Spaces (mouth, stomach) - Ether
- Metabolism, transformation, physiological functions – Fire
- PMB: Foundation of treatment, diagnosis
- Fire – acid, gastric diseases, → hyperacidity → antidote is water → water, sugarcane juice

The Tridoshas (biophysical energies/ humors)

- Dynamic forces
- Determines growth and decay
- Hidden – delicate balance, that can go off any time!
- Vata – nervous system, moving force, life force, most dominant
- Pitta – chemical processes, assimilation force

- Kapha – anabolic structures, stability force
- Imbalance – diseases
- Kapha – water, earth
- Pitta – fire, air
- Vata – air, ether

Definition of Ahara (diet)

- Diet is what we eat and drink
- Body made of PMB, hence food also should be made of PMB

Matra (Quantity of food)

- Decided based on agni
- 4 parts of stomach – 2 for food, 1 for air, 1 for water

Food fit for everyday consumption

- Shastika rice
- Shali rice
- Food cooked with rock salt
- Amla
- Rain water
- Ghee
- Honey

Food unfit for everyday consumption

- Dry meat
- Dry veggies
- Meat of diseased animal
- Boiled buttermilk
- Milk in bad combinations – fruit, non-veg, barley etc.

Diet and mind

- Satva - strengthening, invigorating and vitalizing.
- Rajas - movement, aggressiveness and extroversion
- Tamas -ignorance, inertia, heaviness and dullness

Qualities of food

- All substances – qualities, textures – sense of touch – wet, dry, soft
- Ayurveda – food – qualities & effects – mind and body
- Food - linked to Pancamahabhutas
- Food – linked to 6 tastes
- Example – Urad Dal (pulse, bean, black lentil, black gram, masha)
- Black , looks like mung dal which is green
- Very heavy
- Hard to digest
- Poor man's meat
- Helps build immunity, body building, body strengthening
- Higher nutritional content, superfoods
- But indigestion → undigested food toxicity →
- super foods = toxic mess, as digestive fire cannot digest properly (“allergic!”)
- Digestive health game – all about quantity & quality
- Light quality – easy to digest
- Actions make food lighter – cooking, toasting, heating, boiling
- Eating light foods – detoxify body
- Heavy, hard to digest food – builds on, builds strength, builds immunity
- Like increases like
- Mung dal is light, urad dal is heavy (uneducated eye – only color difference)

The light & heavy foods

- The challenging part
- Earth, water - go downward (water, sand) – rest on the ground – heavy
- Flame from lamp – go upward, turn lamp – moves up --> light
- Air – feel the breeze – air is light & moves
- Ether – space, everywhere, a container for everything
- Chair – sitting – takes up space
- All these elements - gives quality to food
- Foods with earth element – hard to digest but anabolic , building tissues, immunity
- Lighter – detoxification

The properties of food

- Guru-laghu (heavy, light)
- Mridu-kathina (soft, hard)
- Shita-ushna (cold, hot)
- Vishada-picchila (clear, unctuous)
- Snigdha-Ruksha (oily, dry)
- Sthira-sara (firm, moving)
- Shlaksna-khara (smooth, rough)
- Manda-teekshna (slow, piercing)
- Sukshma-sthula (subtle, gross)
- Sandra-Drava (viscous, liquid) (Ch. SS. 25/36)

Examples of foods based on quality

- Heavy: bread, pasta, cheese, and yogurt
- Light: millet, buckwheat, rye, barley, corn, spinach, lettuce, pears and apples
- Oily: dairy products, meat, fatty foods, and cooking oils
- Dry: beans, potatoes, barley, and corn
- Hot: hot beverages and warm, cooked foods
- Cold: cold beverages and raw foods

Combinations of Qualities

- Foods don't just have one quality, but a combination
- Eg. Yoghurt
- Yoghurt is Heavy, but is also slimy
- Slimy – Clogging
- Have yoghurt before bed?
- Old yoghurt – more sour, more solid
- Fresh yoghurt – more sweet, less viscous
- Each different effects

The 6 tastes & their effects

- Sweet - sweet starts digestion. Heaviest, 1st part of digestion – mouth, stomach

- Sour - gets digestion going as it has fire. Good for the heart, next step in digestion
- Salty – opens channels. Hottest substance, gets digestion fired up.
- Pungent - more of the same
- Bitter - cleansing & clearing when the food has gone further into the large intestine
- Astringent - makes colon work by pulling out the water & makes stools solid.

The Taste Order

- Sweet taste first
- Sour & Salty – middle
- Pungent, bitter, astringent in the end
- (Su. SS. 46/466)

Rule for optimum consumption of food

- According to one's digestive fire
- Conducive to one's body type according to constitution
- That which gets digested in time

8 Factors to consider while deciding the diet

- Prakruti (Natural Qualities)
- Karana (Preparation)
- Samyoga (Combination)
- Raashi (Quantity)
- Desha (Habitat)
- Kaala (Time)
- Upyoga samstha (Rules of use)
- Upyokta (User)

What is Pathya & Ahara

- Pathya corrects the physiology, ahara maintains the physiology
- Fortified medicated food – Pathya (Bitterguard juice in Diabetes)
- Ahara is intended for swastha

Making a diet plan

- A participative experience
- Hitahara, mitahara, based on ritu
- Well-rounded meal– suits all prakruti, has 6 tastes, well mixed, well processed
- White rice or brown rice
- Wheat or rice
- When you should choose wheat over rice
- The concept of dairy
- The concept of non-vegetarian food
- Why meat is preferred over chicken & sea food?
- How to plan a breakfast, lunch and dinner for a healthy individual?
- Factors that contribute to good digestion.
- The weight loss diet
- Is weight loss about calories in calories out?
- Does Ayurveda approve negative calorie balance?