



## ***Ahara Vidhi Vidhan: An Analytical Perspective in Context of Modern Food Habits***

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Title:** *Ayurvedic Principles of Ahara Vidhi Vidhan: A Comparative Analysis with Modern Dietary Practices.*

**Background:** In *Ayurveda*, *Ahara* (food) is recognized as one of the *Trayopastambha* (three pillars of life), essential for sustaining life, maintaining health, and preventing disease. Among these pillars, food is regarded as the foremost contributor to physical and mental well-being.

**Objective:** To explore the *Ayurvedic* guidelines on *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* (dietary conduct) compare them with modern dietary practices and analyze their respective implications for health and the development of lifestyle disorders.

**Methods:** This study involves a textual analysis of classical *Ayurvedic* literature, primarily the *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, to extract core principles of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan*. These principles are then critically compared with current dietary trends and nutritional recommendations in modern medicine and public health.

**Results:** *Ayurvedic* texts provide comprehensive dietary rules that emphasize the quality, quantity, timing and mental state during food consumption. In contrast, modern diets focus on macronutrients, calories and convenience, often overlooking individualized and mindful approaches. The deviation from *Ayurvedic* principles in current dietary behavior correlates with an increase in lifestyle-related disorders such as obesity, diabetes and gastrointestinal issues.

**Conclusion:** The *Ayurvedic* concept of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* offers a holistic and preventive framework for diet and lifestyle management. Integrating these time-tested principles with modern nutritional science may contribute to better health outcomes and a reduction in chronic disease prevalence.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ayurveda*, *Ahara*, *Trayopastambha*, diet, lifestyle disorders, holistic nutrition.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In *Ayurveda*, *Ahara* is more than sustenance it is both a therapeutic tool and a determinant of mental and physical well-being <sup>[1]</sup>. In *Ayurveda*, food known as *Ahara* is much more than just fuel for the body. It's seen as a powerful tool for healing and a key to both mental and physical well-being. Guidelines called *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* stress the importance of eating mindfully, based on one's body type, the season and the state of digestion. The idea is simple when we eat right, we live well. But in today's world, things have

changed. Life moves fast, meals are often rushed or skipped and convenience often trumps nourishment. We eat processed foods on the go, driven by schedules rather than hunger, and emotions often guide our food choices more than wisdom. This shift has taken us far from the natural, balanced way of eating that *Ayurveda* promotes. By reconnecting with *Ayurvedic* food practices, we can bring more awareness and care into our daily meals. It's about slowing down, choosing what truly nourishes us and restoring a sense of balance something that can go a long way in improving our health in today's chaotic world. However, today's fast-paced, industrialized lifestyle has given rise to processed, irregular and emotionally driven eating habits, which starkly contrast with these ancient guidelines. Reintegrating *Ayurvedic* food discipline can counteract modern health challenges. [2]

### Aims and Objectives

- To elaborate on the classical principles of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*.
- To critically compare these principles with contemporary food habits.
- To analyze the impact of deviations from *Ayurvedic* food rules on health.
- To suggest practical strategies for harmonizing modern lifestyles with *Ayurvedic* dietary wisdom.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Primary sources include *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita* and *Chakrapani Tika*. Secondary sources include WHO dietary pattern reports, modern research articles, and health statistics on food-related diseases. A thematic comparative analysis was conducted.

### DISCUSSION

#### 1. Classical Principles of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*

| Sr.no. | Ahara vidhi vidhan (Food rules)  | Description   |
|--------|--|---|
| 1.     | <i>Ushnam Ashniyat</i> (Eat warm food)                                 | Enhances digestion ( <i>Agni Deepana</i> )  |
| 2.     | <i>Snigdham Ashniyat</i> (Eat unctuous food)                           | Lubricates tissues, promotes satiety  |
| 3.     | <i>Matravat Ashniyat</i> (Eat appropriate quantity)                    | Avoids indigestion and malnutrition   |
| 4.     | <i>Jirne Ashniyat</i> (Eat after previous meal is digested)            | Prevents accumulation of <i>Ama</i> (toxins)  |
| 5.     | <i>Virya Aviruddham Ashniyat</i> (Eat non-antagonistic food)           | Avoids <i>Viruddha Ahara</i> and metabolic disorders  |
| 6.     | <i>Ishta Deshe Ashniyat</i> (Eat in pleasant place)                    | Promotes mental calmness  |
| 7.     | <i>Ishta Sarvopkarnam Ashniyat</i> (with all accessories)              | Promotes hygiene and organized eating   |
| 8.     | <i>Na Ati Drutam Ashniyat</i> (not to eat too fast)                    | Ensures proper chewing and digestion  |
| 9.     | <i>Na Ati Vilambitam Ashniyat</i> ((not to eat too slow)               | too slow eating (food becomes cold) is not properly digested and may result in excess food intake |
| 10.    | <i>Ajalpan</i> (Eat silently, focused)                                 | Promotes better assimilation  |
| 11.    | <i>Ahasan</i> (without laughing)                                       | Ensures proper food pathway   |
| 12.    | <i>Tanmanabhunjita</i> (mindful eating)                                | Promotes mind and food connection   |
| 13.    | <i>Atmanam Abhisameekshya Bhunjita</i> (Eat considering self-capacity) | Prevents overeating distress, maintains balance of <i>Tridosha</i>                                |

## 2. Modern-Day Food Habits: Characteristics

| Modern Habits                    | Description                                     |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Fast food culture                | Reliance on processed, deep-fried, sugary items |
| Cold or refrigerated meals       | Frequent consumption of chilled foods           |
| Emotional eating                 | Eating driven by stress, sadness, or boredom    |
| Overeating and frequent snacking | Large portions and short gaps between meals     |
| Eating while multitasking        | Meals consumed during work, TV, or on the move  |
| Mixing incompatible foods        | E.g. fruit with dairy, meat with milk           |
| High-speed eating                | Inadequate chewing, rushed meals                |
| Skipping meals                   | Especially breakfast due to time constraints    |

## 3. Comparative Analysis: *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* vs. Modern Food Habits

| Ayurvedic Principle                          | Modern Deviation                      | Health Impact  |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Warm, freshly prepared food                  | Cold, processed, reheated meals       | Weakens <i>Agni</i> , causes bloating and <i>Ama</i> buildup |
| Unctuous food ( <i>Snigdha</i> )             | Low-fat or trans-fat-laden foods      | Leads to dry tissues or lipid disorders                      |
| Appropriate quantity ( <i>Matravat</i> )     | Overeating, buffet culture            | Obesity, diabetes, hypertension                              |
| Proper meal timing ( <i>Jirne Ashniyat</i> ) | Frequent snacking, late dinners       | Disrupts circadian rhythm, insulin resistance                |
| Compatible food ( <i>Viruddha Ahara</i> )    | Junk combinations, incompatible mixes | Allergies, skin diseases, gut issues                         |
| Calm environment ( <i>Ishta Deshe</i> )      | Eating while working or driving       | Poor digestion, stress-induced disorders                     |
| Moderate eating speed                        | Rapid gulping                         | Gastroesophageal reflux, indigestion                         |
| Mindful eating                               | Distracted, emotional eating          | Overeating, poor satiety signals                             |
| Self-awareness in eating                     | Peer pressure, marketing-driven       | Unhealthy food choices, eating beyond satiety                |

### 1. Classical Principles of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*

*Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* emphasizes rules such as consuming warm, freshly prepared food, eating in proper quantity, avoiding incompatible food combinations, eating mindfully and eating only after digestion of the previous meal [3]. These principles aim to balance *Agni* (digestive fire), *Doshas* and tissues.

### Squatting: A Natural Boost for Digestion, Metabolism, and overall, Health

#### 1. Improves Digestion

Squatting changes the recto anal angle from about 90° to 35°, making bowel movements smoother and more complete. This reduces the risk of constipation, hemorrhoids and straining. The posture gently stimulates abdominal organs and activates the parasympathetic nervous system, enhancing digestion.

Pancreatic Support: Improved blood flow to the pancreas helps regulate insulin production and digestive enzyme release, supporting better blood sugar control and nutrient absorption. [4]

## 2. Supports Metabolic Health

Deep squatting activates major muscle groups, increasing glucose uptake and improving insulin sensitivity - key for preventing metabolic disorders like type 2 diabetes. It also boosts circulation and lymphatic drainage, which helps detoxify the body and reduce inflammation.

## 3. Benefits the Whole Body

Spinal Health: Supports natural posture and reduces lower back strain.

Pelvic Floor Strength: Helps with bladder control and reproductive health.

Joint Flexibility: Keeps hips, knees and ankles mobile and strong.

**In Summary:** Squatting isn't just a posture - it's a powerful tool to support digestion, metabolism and overall well-being. Including it in daily routines, whether through yoga or natural habits, can offer lifelong health benefits.

## 2. Modern-Day Food Habits: Characteristics

Modern food habits are characterized by processed foods, irregular meal timings, frequent snacking, cold food consumption and emotional eating [5]. These habits have been associated with an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, gastrointestinal issues, and psychosomatic disorders [6].

## 3. Comparative Analysis: *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* vs. Modern Food Habits

*Ayurvedic* texts recommend eating in a calm environment with full concentration (*Tanmanabhunjita*), while modern eating is often distracted and rushed [7]. Classical rules stress compatibility (*Viruddha Ahara*) and warm, fresh food, whereas modern diets mix incompatible foods and rely heavily on frozen or packaged items. [8]

## Modern-Day Food Habits: Deviations and Consequences

### Cold, Processed and Refrigerated Foods

Frequent consumption impairs *Agni*, increases *Kapha*, leading to obesity, diabetes, and *Ama*-related disorders.

### Dry, Low-Fat or Zero-Fat Diets

Excessive avoidance of fats causes *Vata* aggravation, hormonal imbalance, skin issues, and mental health disorders.

### Overeating and Buffet Culture

Regular overeating burdens digestion, increases *Medo Dhatu* (fat tissue), and predisposes to metabolic syndrome.

### Frequent Snacking and Grazing

Violates *Jirne Ashniyat*, leading to chronic *Ama* accumulation and insulin resistance.

### *Viruddha Ahara* Practices

Examples include milk with fruits, yogurt with meat causing gut dysbiosis, allergies and autoimmune reactions.

### Eating on the Go and Screen-Time Eating

Distracted eating disturbs *Manovaha Srotas* (mind channels), causing emotional eating, bloating and indigestion.

### Fast Eating Culture

Associated with obesity, acid reflux and poor glucose control.

### Ignoring Satiety Signals

Mindless eating causes loss of hunger regulation, emotional eating and long-term weight gain.

## Pathophysiological Outcomes

### A. Weak Digestive Fire (*Agni Mandya*)

Modern practices such as consuming cold food, overeating and combining incompatible foods weaken *Jatharagni* (digestive fire), leading to *Ama* (toxins) [9]. *Ama* formation is the root cause of diseases like obesity, diabetes, arthritis and autoimmune conditions [10].

### B. Disrupted Gut Microbiome

Ayurveda's focus on freshly prepared, compatible foods supports gut health, while processed and mixed diets disturb gut flora [11]. Disruption of the gut microbiome contributes to IBS, IBD and metabolic syndrome [12].

### C. Psycho-Somatic Disorders

Mindless eating increases stress hormones like cortisol and promotes emotional eating. *Ayurveda Tanmanabhunjita* rule encourages focused eating, preventing psychosomatic disorders and maintaining mental equilibrium [13].

### D. Circadian Misalignment

Late-night dinners and irregular snacking disrupt circadian rhythms. *Ayurveda's Jirne Ashniyat* aligns with modern chrono nutrition, showing irregular eating increases obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular risks [14].

## CONCLUSION

*Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* offers a timeless, scientifically supported framework for promoting digestive health, metabolic balance and mental well-being. Modern eating habits significantly deviate from these classical rules, leading to lifestyle diseases. Reintroducing *Ayurvedic* principles like consuming warm, fresh, appropriately portioned and mindfully eaten food can serve as preventive and curative measures against today's health challenges. Adopting *Ahara Vidhi Vidhan* is about restoring biological harmony in modern living.

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