Food plays an important role in healthy, diseased and convalescent states. It is more important than the medicine itself. The body can be nourished and maintained in good health, by adopting suitable diet and full benefits of life can be reaped by adherence to proper mental hygiene. There are some special conditions, which demand a diet with specific properties. This is because different people respond differently to same food. Ayurveda has given some guideline in this direction by dividing diet into twelve types. These are based on Doshas, constitution (Prakriti), disease conditions and state mind in the body. The food articles, which maintain the equilibrium of bodily Dhatus and help in eliminating the disturbance of their equilibrium, are to be regarded as Hitakara Ahara otherwise they are Ahitakara to body. Hitakara diet is the only cause of growth and development of body and Ahitakara diets is the only cause of disease.

**Keywords:** Diet, Rules, Ayurveda, Aahara.
the Jatharagni, as a result of which the body is strengthened. Too rooksha food on the other hand will cause Vatakopa and diseases caused by increase of Vata. 

There are some special conditions, which demand a diet with specific properties. This is because different people respond differently to same food. Ayurveda has given some guidelines specific to these conditions and state mind in the body.

1) Sheeta: - People who have an aggravated level of Pitta should take cold food items. This includes diseases like Trishna, Madatayam, Daham, Visham, Raktapittam and Moorcha. People fatigued or exhausted by excessive heat or work can also take such food. The Sheeta Guṇa of these foods will pacify the aggravated pitta and thus provide relief. The food items that may be advised here include fruit juices, milk etc.

2) Ushna: - In conditions of aggravated Kapha and Vata hot foods are recommended. Hot water is prescribed after Snehanapanaso that the large amount of Snehagats digested. After (cleaning measures) Sodhana Karmas also there will be Aṇi āndyām therefore hot foods are to be used in the post Sodhana period.

In Conditions like fresh onset of fever (Navajwara) hot water has got various advantages such as causing promotion of appetite (Agni Deepthi), cleansing of channels (Srothosodhanam), removing the discomfort associated with toxins (Ama) and generally revitalizing the body. Using cold water in this condition will be counterproductive leading to further Dosha aggravation.

3) Snigdha:- Snigdha or Unctuous foods are needed in larger proportion in those afflicted with Vata complaints and those who are fatigued by excessive sexual activity or exercises. Here the Snigdha food will act against increased Vata.

4) Rooksha: - Obesity, Prameham and other diseases which are conditions of aggravated Kapha and characterised by an increase of fat tissue (Medovirdhi) need the fasting (Langhana) form of treatment and therefore their diet should be Rooksha in nature. This will remove the extra Medas and redeem the Doshas to their normal state.

5) Drava: - Drava or liquid foods are indicated in conditions of excessive thirst and fatigue. Diseases like diarrhea and vomiting, which cause dehydration, also need fluid supplements.

6) Shushka: - Foods, which are less fluid in nature, are to be used in humid body (Klinnadeham), Prameham and abscess (Vranam). In these conditions moisture (Kleda) in the body already increased. So the diet should be dry (Vrityartham) to counter this increased Kleda.

7) Ekakalam: - Food should be given once a day to persons suffering from decreased appetite (Agniandyam) in order to strengthen their Agni.

8) Dwikala: - Food can be given twice a day in person with normal digestive capacity to maintain their Agni in balanced state (Samavastha).

9) Oushadha yuktam: - Food can be used as a vehicle to administer medicine in people who find it totally unpalatable. In this way the qualities of food and medicines are utilized for treatment.

10) Matraheenam: - A proper amount of food has been prescribed for each and every individual. Food taken more than this or less than this does not serve its purpose. But in certain conditions it is therapeutically wise to give food in reduced quantity. These include diseases caused by Aṇi āndyām. Here the right quantity (Matra) will be a comparatively lower one so that the Aṇi can be slowly brought to its normal state.

11) Dosha shamanam: - The diet, which is followed according to Dosha vitiation in the six seasons, is called Dosha Samaradiet.

12) Vṛityartham: -The diet of the healthy person is called Vṛityartham. This will help to maintain the balanced Dosha (Samadosha), balanced tissues (Samadhatu) and normal appetite (Samagni) state of the body.

DISCUSSION

A drug or diet not causing harmful effects to any channel of body and which is comfortable to mind is granted as Pathya. Although pungent and bitter cause discomfort at a time to mind but it is ultimately comfortable for body, so it is taken as Pathya. Pathya in fact changes its qualities, depending on the Matra (dose), Kala (time), Kriya (method of preparation), Bhumī (habitat), Deha (body) and Dosha (Vatadī body component). The food items that we consume are a mixture of different tastes and preparations etc. Care should be taken that this combinations do not become antagonistic to each other as this may lead to several diseases. The choice of food is as important as its time and amount. It is not only the improper time or amount alone that can upset digestion. The food articles, which maintain the equilibrium of bodily dhatus and help in eliminating the disturbance of their equilibrium, are to be regarded as Hitakara Ahara otherwise they are Ahitakara to body. Hitakara diet is the only cause of growth and development of body and Ahitakaradiets is the only cause of disease. Consumption of too hot, too cold, unclean, overcooked or under cooked foods is also to be avoided. Too dry or Rooksha foods leads to the loss of strength and color, dryness of the skin and obstruction to bowel movements and constipation by causing Vatakopa. Too unctuous (Snigdha) foods on the other hand cause the aggravation of Kapha and a variety of Kaphaja diseases like salivation (Praseka), heaviness (Gourava) etc. It also leads to loss of appetite. Too hot foods cause vitiation of pitta and a host of patika diseases like hemorrhagic disorders (Raktapita), burning sensation (Daha), thirst (Trishna) etc. Too cold foods cause dampening of digestive fire and there by loss of appetite. Too hard or uncooked foods cause difficulty in evacuation of faeces and urine. It does not provide satisfaction to the mind. Too liquid foods cause diseases like rhinitis (Peenasa), cough (Kasa) and diabetes (Prameham). Too sweet foods lead to decreased metabolism (Agniandyam).Too salty foods are not good for the eyes and hair and too sour foods cause faster ageing. It is possible for all to select the right kind of diet from this depending on their condition. It should be remembered that these are just guidelines and cannot be blindly applied to everybody, but
these can be adopted to rectify the wrongs in diet habits. Both plant and animal products are part of the diet. Some special factors to be considered regarding animal products. These include habitat, organ, nature, dhatus, activity, sex, size, quantity and processing.

**CONCLUSION**

The food articles, which maintain the equilibrium of bodily Dhatus and help in eliminating the disturbance of their equilibrium, are to be regarded as Hitakara Ahara otherwise they are Ahitakara to body. Hitakara diet is the only cause of growth and development of body and Ahitakara diets is the only cause of disease. A drug or diet not causing harmful effects to any channel of body and which is comfortable to mind is granted as Pathya. Although pungent and bitter cause discomfort at a time to mind but it is ultimately comfortable for body, so it is taken as Pathya. Pathya in fact changes its qualities, depending on the Matra (dose), Kala (time), Kriya (method of preparation), Bhumi(habitat), Deha(body) and Dosha (Vatadi body component). There are some special conditions, which demand a diet with specific properties. This is because different people respond differently to same food. Ayurveda has given some guideline in this direction by dividing diet into twelve types. These are based on Doshas, constitution (Prakriti), disease conditions and state mind in the body.

**REFERENCES**


Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared