

Ayurvedic Nutrition

Ayurveda – “Mother of all Healing”

Definition of Health –

“One who is established in Self, who has balanced energies, balanced digestive fire, properly formed tissues, proper elimination of wastes, well functioning bodily processes, and whose mind, soul, and senses are full of bliss is called a healthy person.”

- Dr. Vasant Lad, **Textbook of Ayurveda**, Vol. 1

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“No disease can be cured unless supplemented by the right diet, but about 90% of the diseases can be prevented by the right diet alone.” Dr. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General

“What is consumed each day over many years will be the principal factor in deciding health or disease.” Vaidya Atreya Smith, **Ayurvedic Nutrition**

“Our food, our body, and nature are one entity”. Maya Tiwari, **A Life in Balance**

Ayurveda emphasizes proper diet based on the individual as vital for promoting health and happiness. No one size fits all.

Whole foods – mostly organic grains, vegetables, fruit

At the right time in the right amount

Ayurveda has a very sophisticated knowledge of the effects of food. Its view of diet and nutrition is based on the sensations – the senses – so it is more about how we feel. It classifies food by the effect rather than nutritional content and looks to the qualities of food and the feeling it evokes. When we are in balance, we desire foods that are good for us. However, if our mind, body, or spirit is out of sync, our connection to our body’s inner intelligence goes awry.

5 Elements – Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth

There are 20 qualities or “Gunas” consisting of 10 pairs of opposites of which the most important are: Heavy (bread)-Light (salad); Moist (oils)-Dry (popcorn);
Hot-Cold

The Six tastes are: Sweet, Sour, Salty, Bitter, Pungent, Astringent

Each of these tastes has specific health giving effects. By including all six tastes we will be more satisfied and have less cravings. When we consistently eat only a few of the tastes it is apt to cause health problems as well as trigger food cravings. For example, fast foods contain mostly sweet, sour, salty tastes. If we regularly eat fast foods, we will develop a craving for sweets. Including more pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes can help curb the cravings for candy and desserts. **Include all six tastes in each meal.**

Ayurveda's Primary Nutritional Concerns:

1. One's ability to digest.
2. Eat foods that balance constitution and do not cause metabolic imbalance.
3. Eat foods as close to their natural state.
4. Give enough time for the body to digest what has been eaten. If we don't, we overwork the system, create toxins, thereby shorten one's life span.

10 Good Eating Habits - *Improve blood flow and digestion*

1. Wait for a sign of true hunger. Generally, 3 meals per day.
 2. Eat at the same time every day. Set a specific time and place.
 3. Drink warm water 20 minutes before the meal. (Improves digestive function up to 24%)
 4. Relax while eating and 15 minutes after the meal. Eat with a proper frame of mind: happy mood.
 5. Eat simple food combinations.
 6. Avoid cold drinks and cold foods.
 7. Baby your digestion after a tough day. Eat soups, for example.
 8. Chew food thoroughly and mix food with saliva.
 9. Fill stomach 1/3 food, 1/3 water, 1/3 empty
 10. Eat simple breakfast, hearty lunch, and gentle dinner.
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Also:

- Food must have prana, - life force. Fresh is best!!
- No leftovers older than 24 hours.
- Create a pleasant environment (flowers, music, candles)
- Wash hands thoroughly.
- Feed somebody before you eat.

Bless your food before eating.

Improper Eating Habits - *Cause poor digestion, absorption, and assimilation.*

- Snacking between meals.
- Excess fats, proteins, or the sweet, sour, and salty tastes.
- Heavy foods late at night.
- Eating too much or too soon after the previous meal.
Eating while constipated, gassy, burping, or any other distress.
- Improper food combining.
- Stale or processed foods.

General Rules of Food Combining

- Avoid mixing two proteins (meat, fish)
- Avoid mixing meat or fish with milk
- Avoid mixing sour fruits with milk
- Avoid fruit juice with meat, fish or nuts
- Avoid mixing honey and ghee in equal amounts
- Avoid mixing milk and yogurt
- Avoid eating raw fruit with meals – Have fruit between meals as snack.

Signs of Well Digested Foods

- Having clear BM – brown, with consistency of ripe banana
- Feeling energetic
- Feeling hungry
- Feeling light

Some Signs of “Indigestion” - Weak Agni

- Gas – caused by fermentation of food. Food ferments when it sits too long in the gut. As food rots, its bacteria produces tiny bubbles that collect together and create gas.
- Bloating, gurgling in abdomen
- Burping, belching
- Acid reflux
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Tired after eating
- Body odor
- Bad breath
- Thick coating on tongue
- Excess mucous
- Very smelly stools
- Smelly sweat
- Smelly or very yellow urine
- Chronic low energy; Chronic Fatigue
- Frequent colds and fevers
- Allergies
- Prickly pain in body
- Thick coating on tongue
- Burning pain in chest
- Vaginal discharges
- Skin rashes; pimples