



## Short Communication

### AYURVEDIC DIETARY CONCEPTS IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUP OF CHILDREN

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#### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a science of life, which mainly aims to promote and preserve the health of the individuals. In this techno and competitive era, life style and diet are major factors influencing the health of the individuals. Diet and dietary habits play important role in maintenance of health. Ayurveda, its main aim is to promote and preserve the health, strength and longevity of healthy person and to cure the disease. Ayurveda places special emphasis on *Ahara* and believes that healthy nutrition nourishes the *Sharir, Mana, Atma*. As *Acharyas* has described *Ahara, Nidra, Brahmcharya* are *Tryoupsthambha* (sub pillars) which support the body itself. Here *Ahara* has been placed first which shows that it is most important to maintain and sustain of life. Children are delicate and most sensitive and prone to the infectious diseases. They are miniature of adult. They are in *Ajatvyajanawastha* (developing stage). Psychologically they are innocent. Being in developmental phase, *Ahara* plays very important role in the life of children. So parents should be aware of dietetic components required by child in different age groups.

**KEYWORDS:** *Ahara, Tryoupsthambha, Brahmcharya, Ajatvyajanawastha.*

#### INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is a science of life, which mainly aims to promote and preserve the health of the individuals<sup>[1]</sup>. In this techno and competitive era, life style and diet are major factors influencing the health of the individuals. Diet and dietary habits play important role in maintenance of health.

As per Ayurveda *Ahara* is one of the *Tryopsthamba* i.e., pillars for healthy body. *Ahara* is also considered as *Sarva Roga Karanama* (cause of all disease). *Ahara* is considered as *Mahabheshaja* by *Acharya Kashyapa*. These all shows the importance of *Ahara* in our life. A healthy and brilliant child is a national wealth. So, it is important, one should give babies a healthy start and healthy future.

The child nutrition begins before birth only. Poor nutrition during pregnancy may stunts fetal growth and leads poor brain development. Even after birth the child growth depends on mother diet, later period on own diet. So, right diet and life style from early years leave permanent impact on the child physical and mental well being.

In Ayurveda, children are classified into 3 groups as per their diet<sup>[2]</sup> which are as follows:

- 1) *Ksheerap Awastha*- Upto 1 year of life consuming only breast milk<sup>[3]</sup>.
- 2) *Ksheerannada Awastha*- Upto 2 year of life along with milk child is consuming solid food<sup>[4]</sup>.

- 3) *Annad Awastha*- After 2 year of life where child consumes all like adult<sup>[5]</sup>.

#### Diet According to Different Age Group (*Awastha*) of Child

##### *Ahara in Ksheerap Awastha*

For new born, breast milk (*Stanya*) is considered as *Amruta* and Ayurveda praise breast feeding i.e. *Stanyapana*. Most of the *Acharyas* told exclusive breast fed up to 6 month. Mother milk contain the exactly proportion of fat, cholesterol, protein and carbohydrates for baby. Mother's milk is not only perfect nutritional choice; it also provides protection against several diseases. So it is exclusively advised in early age of child. Mother should start feeding the child from first day only.<sup>[6]</sup> First three days there is secretion of *Piyush*, which is necessary for development of immunity in children.

According to *Acharya Kashyapa* breast feed result in good growth, strength, longevity, and good health of child as well as not causing any trouble or disease to child<sup>[7]</sup>. The benefits of *Stanyapana* are *Jeevaniya* (longevity), *Deepaniya*<sup>[8]</sup>, *Balakarak* (develop immunity), *Satmya* (congenial)<sup>[9]</sup>, *Sthairyakara* (stability), *Dehavridha*<sup>[10]</sup> (aids digestion), *Dosha shamana* (maintains *Dosha Samyata*), *Vrisha* (*Harsha*).

In the absence of mother milk there is "*Dhatri Kalpana*" is describe in Ayurveda because it is the first substitute of mother milk.

If there is no *Dhatri* is available then animal milk is advisable e.g, Cow milk, goat milk.

If animal milk is not available and child is not taking any kind of milk then there is one another concept is explained which is called as "*Lehya Kalpana*". There are some *Lehana* preparation had been discussed by *Acharya Kashyapa*<sup>[11]</sup>.

#### **Ahara in Ksheerannada Awastha**

From 6 months up to 2 years are considered in *Ksheerannada awastha*. Around six months the baby begins to grow teeth. Once the teeth begin to come in the baby is giving a sign that it is ready to eat food other than milk. Hence, *Acharya Kashyapa* told *Phalaprashana samskara* at the age of 6 months.

#### **Phalaprashana Samskara**

It is performed at 6 months<sup>[12]</sup> and infants are supplemented with fruits. Mother milk is deficient in vitamin C, D and iron these are to be substituted to the infants. Fruits juices are rich sources of these nutrients. Fruit juices helps in supplementing extra nutrition along with *Agni vrudhi*, relieve constipation and keeps child hydrated.

Freshly prepared juices are always better than packaged juice, which are full of extra sugar, additives and may cause dental carries.

After 6 months of age, gradually introduce semisolid mashed foods. Smashed food is fed to the child 3 to 5 times in little quantity. This is called as *Annaprashana Samskara*.

#### **Annaprashana Samskara**

After 6 months child require concentrated energy dense foods are essential in order to maintain an adequate velocity of growth for infant, child teeth begins to erupt, a biting movements begins and tendency to push solid out of mouth decrease, digestive system is mature enough to digest food. Alone breast milk is no longer sufficient to meet nutrition as birth weight doubles<sup>[13]</sup>.

When food is first time introduced, a small amount and soft food should be given and gradually increase in amount. *Acharya Kashyap* mentioned food preparation below<sup>[14]</sup>.

Prepare a *Payasa* by old, husk free and well washed rice mixed with ghee and salt. Powder of wheat and barley also should be given according to congeniality.

The one knowing *Desha, Agni, Bala* observes the child as hungry, should be given food according to congeniality with gap of one or two periods<sup>[15]</sup>.

Rice is considered as a very low allergen food and ideal for child. Rice is rich in carbohydrate and good source of Vit B complex, Easy to digest, rejuvenates body when used with milk. Wheat is good supplier of carbohydrates for energy. It is not only good source of vitamin and minerals but also act as a good natural laxative. Barley is a nutritious and has good amount of dietary fibers, strengthen bones.

*Acharya Vagbhatta* mentioned some specific type of food preparation called *Modaka*. *Modaka* preparation are mentioned below<sup>[16]</sup>.

*Modaka* prepared by using powder of *Priyal, Yastimadhu, Madhu, Laja* and *Sita*. It is a combination of protein, carbohydrates and is mentioned in general for improving the infants nutritional status.

*Modaka* prepared by *Bilva, Ela, Sita, Laja*. This preparation is indicted in infants with weak digestive capacity.

Prepared by *Dhatki, Pushpa, Sharkara, Laja*. Preparation is indicted in indigestion and who repeatedly suffer from *Atisara*.

#### **Ahara in Annada Awastha**

Child from the age of the 2 years is considered in *Annada Awastha*<sup>[17]</sup>. In this *Awastha* child should be shifted on the cereals as a whole. All type of food with all form i.e. *Lehya, Peya, Bhojya* etc can be given in this *Awastha* of children life.

This is growing age therefore children need the bulky foods, rich in energy and proteins such as legumes, pulses, nuts, edible oil/ghee, sugar, milk and eggs. Vegetables including green leafy vegetables and locally available seasonal fruits should be part of their daily menu. Older children and adolescents should consume plenty of milk to fulfill the high calcium requirements, *oil/ ghee* should consumed. Food should be taken in proper place, without talking with full concentration. First take sweat to pacify aggravated *Vata* due to excess of hunger. Sour and salt in middle, increases *Agni* so that digestion of food is easy. Bitter and astringent in the end, reduces *Pitta*. Incorporate ghee in child diet, ghee helps in improving memory, concentration, boosts digestion, relieves constipation, strengthens immunity, complexion, colour<sup>[18]</sup>.

Dry fruits are not just delicious but extremely rich source of proteins and minerals. Including fruits in the diet of children can help to aid their overall growth and development, rich in dietary fiber, aids digestion, prevent anemia. So add at least a handful of dry fruits in daily diet.

Vegetables are a great source of essential nutrients that the child needs for development, vegetables are low in calories and fat. Vegetables benefits child in many ways like improves nutrition,

decrease obesity risk, helps the digestive system function properly, and prevents constipation.

Fruits and vegetables will further enhance nutritional quality of food providing minerals.

## CONCLUSION

As we know that Ayurveda is the science of life. *Ahara* is very important substance for formation and maintenance of life at different stages. Hence *Ahara* plays very important role in children life also. According to Ayurvedic dietary concept different *Ahara Kalpana* described at different age group of child.

Up to age of 1 year child should exclusively on milk while upto the 2 year we should give the *Peya* and *Lehya Ahara* along with the milk and after the 2 years children can eat all the form of *Ahara* which is important in the growth and development of the child.

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