



NITYA SEVANIYA AAHARA (WHOLESOME DAILY FOOD) IN AYURVEDA – REVIEW ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

In *Ayurvedic* classics, *Nitya sevaniya Aahara dravya* (wholesome daily foods) and *Nitya asevaniya aahara dravya* (unwholesome daily foods) have been described in detail. Daily consumption of *Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas* does the promotion of health of healthy individual and prevents the disease condition. *Aahara* (Food) has been recognized as an important component for human being, both in healthy and diseased state. The proper *Aahara dravya* consumed in proper manner helps in the proper growth of the body. On other side if taken in improper manner leads to various kinds of diseases. Therefore this review article attempts to highlights the importance of *Nitya sevaniya aahara dravya* as mentioned in *Ayurvedic* classics in day today life.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurved*, *Aahara*, *Nitya Sevaniya Dravya*, wholesome daily foods, Balance diet.

INTRODUCTION

Acharya Charak has mentioned *Aahara* (Balanced diet), *Nidra* (sound sleep) and *Bramhacharya* (Abstinence or regulated sex) as *Trayopasthambas* (Three external Sub-pillars of body) of life.^[1] On these sub pillars, whole life of a person is depend. *Acharya Charak* has equated human body with a building. If any one of these pillar is weak or defective, the building of life is also weak and the whole building will suddenly fall down into pieces. For making stable and strong building, the role of pillar (base) is undisputed. These pillars are very essential for the smooth running of life. Therefore *Charak Samhita*, the ancient

authoritative text of *Ayurveda* has given more importance to three of them.

Aahara is the best among all things which sustain life.^[2] According to *Acharya Charak*, our body is the final and supreme product of *Aahara*. He says that food helps in sustenance of the life of all living beings. Complexion, clarity, good voice longevity, intelligence, happiness, satisfaction, nourishment, strength and intellect are all present in food.^[3] According to *Acharya Sushruta*, food enhances vitality, strength and makes our body sturdy. Food increases enthusiasm, memory, *Agni*, life span, luster and *Oja* of the body.^[4]

In *Charak Samhita*, *Acharya Charak* clearly mentioned that, if any human being follows proper code of conduct related to intake of wholesome food then he lives for 36,000 nights (hundred years) free from diseases. He lives healthy life and gets blessing of good people.^[5]

According to *Ayurveda* food plays an important role in establishing the phenomena of wear and tear, continues process of growth, development and gives protection to body from decay and disease etc. A man can live without clothes, without shelter but cannot live without *Aahara*. Therefore *Aahara* has been given the prime place and importance among all three *Trayopasthambas*.

The proper *Aahara* consumed in proper manner helps in the proper growth of the body. On other side if taken in improper manner leads to various kinds of diseases. All types of diseases can be cured without any type of medicine by just following wholesome regimen. Whereas even hundreds of medicine cannot cure a disease in absence of wholesome regimen.^[6] *Acharya Lolimbaraja* also focuses on the same aspect saying that in both the conditions viz. health and disease, the *Pathya Aahara* (wholesome diet) and the *Apathya Aahara* (unwholesome diet) is a prime factor. Similarly, *Acharya Kashyapa* clearly mentioned that no medicine is equivalent to food. It is possible to make a person disease free with just proper *Aahara*.^[7] He also mentions that health is dependent on food.^[8]

Health (Happiness) and unhealth (Unhappiness) is depends upon the quality and quantity of *Aahara*.^[9] Therefore for healthy living, *Ayurveda* emphasizes on consuming right kind of *Aahara* which is healthy and nutritious^[10]. *Acharyas* also had given much importance and description of proper quantity as well as improper quantity and their effects on the human body. Day to day consumptions of *Hita*, *Avirudha*, *Satmya* and *Nitya Sevaniya Aahara* makes the person disease free condition, so one should plan his diet according to his constitution.

Therefore for healthy living, *Acharya Charaka* and *Acharya Vagbhata* enlisted some *Nityasevaniya Dravyas* which are healthy and nutritious. *Nityasevaniya Dravyas* are nothing but the *Dravyas* which are necessary for maintenance of health, proper body growth and development.

Acharya Charak enlisted the foods which are advisable to consume daily are *Shashtika shali* (a kind of rice maturing in 60 days), *Godhuma* (wheat), *Yava* (*Hordeum Vulgare* Linn), *Mudga* (*Phaseolus mungo* Linn), *Saindhava* (rock salt), *Amalaki* (*Emblica officinalis*), *Antariksha jala* (rain water), *Ghrita* (ghee), *Go- dugdha* (cow milk), *Madhu* (honey) and *Jangala Mamsa* (meat of animals dwelling in arid climate)^[11].

Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas

1. **Shashtika Shali** - *Shashtika Shali* is good source of energy and also contributing significant quantity of protein, minerals and B group vitamins like Thiamin, Riboflavin and Niacin. It contributes 70 to 80% of total energy intake.

Table No. 1: Showing Ayurvedic pharmacological properties of *Shashtika Shali*.

Latin name	<i>Oriza sativam</i>
English Name	<i>Rice</i>
Family	Graminaeae
Gana	<i>Stanyajanana, Shuka dhanya varga</i>
Guna	<i>Laghu</i> (light for digestion), <i>Snigdha</i>
Rasa (Taste)	<i>Madhura</i> (Sweet)
Anurasa (Sub-Taste)	<i>Kashaya</i> (Astringent)
Virya (Active principle)	<i>Sheeta</i> (cold)
Vipaka (Post digestive taste)	<i>Madhura</i>
Doshaghanta (effect on <i>Doshas</i>)	<i>Tridosha</i>
Rogaghanta (effects on Diseases)	Emaciation, <i>Raktapitta</i> (bleeding disorders), rheumatoid arthritis, <i>Arsha</i> (hemorrhoids), <i>Prameha</i> (diabetes) and <i>Twaka roga</i> (skin diseases).
Karma (effects on body)	<i>Hridya, Ruchikara, Pittahara, Vrishya</i> (aphrodisiac), <i>Vishaghna, Mutral, Brimhana, Swarya, Baddhavarchskara,</i>

2. **Mudga (Green gram)** - *Mudga* is the best among *Shimbhi Dhanya*.^[12] It is rich in iron (3.9 mg/100 gm) and potassium (1150 mg/100 gm). *Mudga* is best among pulses utilized in the form of soup.^[12] Many pulses have *Kaphamedohara* Property and are *Pathya* in cardiovascular disease and obesity which are proven through modern researches. Consumption of legumes has been associated with reduced risk of coronary heart disease and cardiovascular disease.

Table No. 2: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Mudga*.

Latin name	<i>Phasenlus mudga Linn</i>
English Name	Green Gram
Guna	<i>Laghu and Ruksha (dry)</i>
Rasa	<i>Madhura, Kashaya</i>
Virya	<i>Sheet</i>
Vipaka	<i>Katu (pungent)</i>
Doshaghanta	<i>Kapha Pitta Dosha Shamaka</i>
Rogaghanta	<i>Jwara (fever), Medoroga (obesity), Kapha, Pitta and Rakta disorders.</i>
Karma	<i>Grahi, Chakshushya (good for eyes), Jvaraghna</i>

3. *Saindhava Lavana* -There are mainly five varieties of *Lavanas* used frequently in *Ayurveda* viz. *Saindhava*, *Sauvarchala*, *Vida*, *Samudra* and *Audbhida Lavana*. According to *Acharya Charak*, amongst the varieties of *Lavana*, *Saindhava Lavana* is considered best for internal use. It helps in getting rid of toxic minerals and refined salt deposits by stimulating blood circulation and mineral balance. It also helps in strengthening skin tissue to rejuvenate the skin to make it look younger and firm. *Saindhava Lavana* increases appetite and adds taste to the food. It also improves digestion and is a natural way to relieve stomach pain.^[13]

Saindhava Lavana provides all the essential trace minerals and greatly improves the body's immune system. It regulates the level of melatonin and thus, regulates our sleep cycle.^[14] *Saindhava* is the best among salts. It is palatable, promoter of digestion, aphrodisiac, conducive for eyesight and alleviates the three *doshas*.^[15] *Saindhava* is *Rochana*, *Deepana*, *Pachana* therefore used in Anorexia, constipation and other gastric disorders. *Saindhava* plays the role of carrier and help to reach the *Basti dravya* at microcellular level.

Table No. 3: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Saindhava Lavana*.

Latin name	<i>Sodii chloridum</i>
English Name	Rock salt, Sodium chloride
Gana	<i>Pancha lavana and Shad lavana</i>
Guna	<i>Visyandi, Sukshma, Ushna, Vyavayi, Snigdha, Tikshna and Laghu.</i>
Rasa	<i>Lavana, Madhura</i>
Virya	<i>Sheeta</i>
Vipaka	<i>Madhura</i>
Doshaghanta	<i>Tridoshamak</i>
Rogaghanta	<i>Adhmana, Shula, Vamana, Vrishya,</i>
Karma	<i>Agnideepaka, Pachaka, Ruchikaraka (improves taste), Chakshushya, Lekhana Vibandahara (Laxative), Hridya (good for heart), Shothahara Vrana Sodhaka and Ropana</i>

4. Amalaki - *Amalaki* is the most concentrated source of vitamin C in the plant kingdom. The active ingredients in *Amalaki* are phyllembin, gallic acid, tannins, pectin and ascorbic acid. Vitamin C present in *Amalaki* is one of the main factors that can help to retrieve or refill the energy lost by body. *Amalaki* fruit possess Antioxidants, Hepatoprotective and Anti-inflammatory activities. *Amalaki* is a good absorption agent of iron. *Amalaki* is a great *Rasayana* that helps to protect from disease and reduce the possibilities of premature ageing. *Acharya Charak* and *Vagbhata* have admired *Amalaki* as the drug of choice for *Vayasthapana karma*.^[16] *Acharya Charak* has also mentioned it as *Ayushya*, *Deepaniya* and *Pachniya*. *Bhavprakash* and *Dhanwantri nighantu* mentioned the *Rasayana* properties of *Amalaki*.^[17]

Amalaki alleviates *Tridoshas* and specially normalizes *Pitta dosha*. *Vagbhata* describes *Amalaki* as the best drug for *Prameha* (diabetes) along with *Haldi* (turmeric).^[18] It is very rich in Vitamin C and contains many minerals and vitamins like Calcium, Phosphorus, Iron, Carotene and Vitamin B Complex. *Amalaki* is also a powerful antioxidant and acts as an Antiaging agent.

Table No. 4: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Amalaki*.

Latin name	<i>Embilica officinalis</i>
Family	Graminae
Part used	<i>Phala</i> (Fruit)
Guna	<i>Laghu, Ruksha, Sheeta, Sheeta, Guru,</i>
Rasa	<i>Pancharasa (Amlapradhana)</i>
Virya	<i>Sheeta</i>
Vipaka	<i>Madhura</i>
Doshaghanta	<i>Tridosha Shamaka</i> mainly <i>Pittashamaka</i>
Roghaghanata	<i>Kandu, Kamala, Ajirna, Yakritroga, Prameha, Shotha Hridroga, Jvara, Raktapitta, Amlapitta, Shosha, Trushna,</i>
Karma	<i>Chakshushya, Keshya, Rechana, Deepana, Vrishya, Kushthaghna, Anulomana, Rasayana, Balya, Kaphaghna, Krimighna, Vayasthapana, Ruchya, Medhya, Daha prasamana, Bhagna sandhana karaka.</i>

5. Yava (barley) - It is used in a wide range in *Ayurveda* and described under *Shukadhanya Varga*. The use of *Yava* both as *Pathya* and *Oushadha* is established in ancient texts and modern research experiments.

Table No. 5: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Yava*.

Latin name	<i>Hordeum Vulgare</i> Linn.
Family	Graminae
Guna	<i>Laghu</i> (light), <i>Ruksha</i> (dry), <i>Pichilla</i> (slimy), <i>Mridu</i> (soft), <i>Sara</i> (flows easily)
Rasa	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Tikta</i> (bitter), <i>Kashaya</i>
Virya	<i>Sheet</i>
Vipaka	<i>Katu</i> (pungent)
Doshaghanta	<i>Kapha Pitta Shamak</i> and <i>Vatakara</i>
Karma	<i>Kapha Shamaka</i> , <i>Mutrala</i> , <i>Lekhana</i> (scraping effect), <i>Medohara</i> (eliminates excess fat), <i>Vrishya</i> (aphrodisiac), <i>Balya</i> , <i>Varnya</i> (increases complexion), <i>Swarya</i> (helps to gain good voice), <i>Agnidheepana</i> (increases appetite and metabolism),

6. *Varsha Jala (Antariksha jala)* - It is the prime source of all the water and purest water in the nature. *Antariksha jala* (water from the sky) is tasteless, and having properties like nectar, vital for life, satiating, maintains the body, invigorating and allays tiredness lethargy, thirst, intoxication, fainting, drowsiness, sleep and burning sensation and is always highly beneficial.

Table No. 6: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Varsha Jala*.

Guna	<i>Laghu</i> , <i>Snigdha</i>
Rasa	<i>Avyakta Rasa</i>
Virya	<i>Sheeta</i>
Vipaka	<i>Madhur</i>
Doshaghanta	<i>Kapha Pitta Shamak</i> and <i>Vatakara</i>
Karma	<i>Jeevana</i> , <i>Tarpana</i> , <i>Hridya</i> , <i>Buddhivardhaka</i>

7. *Go-Dugdha (Cow's milk)* - *Go-Dugdha* is one of best rejuvenate food according to *Acharya Charak*. It has a fine blend of all nutrients. It is a good source of protein, fat, sugar, vitamins and minerals. It is also a rich source of calcium. Milk is known in *Ayurveda* is one of the foremost and most important dietary substance, which is used both in healthy for health maintenance and promotion and in diseased to help alleviation of the clinical conditions. According to *Ayurveda*, milk provides special and unique nutrition that cannot be derived from any other type of food. Milk, when digested properly, nourishes all the tissues, promotes balanced emotions and helps to balance all the *doshas*.^[19] It is one of the most important foods to promote.

Go-Dugdha enhances *Ojas* (Essence of all tissues), *Dhatu* (all body tissues), balances *Vata* & *Pitta dosha* and is *Vrishya* (Aphrodisiac). It is best among *Jivaniya* substances

(vitalizes).^[20,21] Cow milk is beneficial in *Kshatakshina* (Those who are weak or emaciated due to injury). It improves mental faculty and physical strength. It increases breast milk production. It is beneficial in chronic fever, dysuria and bleeding disorders. *Acharya Charaka* states regular intake of Cow milk with ghee is best among the anti-ageing substances.

Table No. 7 Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Dugdha*.

Synonyms	<i>Dugdha , Ksheera, Paya</i>
Guna	<i>Sheeta</i> (cool), <i>Mridu</i> (Soft), <i>Snigdha</i> (Unctuous), <i>Bahala</i> (Thick), <i>Guru</i> (Heavy) and <i>Manda</i> (Mild)
Rasa	<i>Madhura</i>
Virya	<i>Sheeta</i>
Vipaka	<i>Madhur</i>
Prabhava	<i>Manaskara</i> (Pleasing to mind)
Doshaghanta	<i>Kapha Pitta Shamak</i> and <i>Vatakara</i>
Roghaghanata	<i>Rakta pitta disorders, Karshya, Kshaya, in Vata and Pitta disorders. relieves fatigue and thirst</i>
Karma	<i>Tarpana, Hridya, Buddhivardhaka, Jivaniya, Rasayana, Brimhana.</i>

8. Madhu (Honey)- *Madhu* is a sweet fluid produced by honey bees and derived from the nectar of flowers. Most micro-organisms do not grow in honey because of its low water activity.^[22] It possesses nutritive properties. The fatty acids present in honey stimulate peristalsis and digestion. It has beneficial effect on the digestion and appetite of those weak stomach and loose bowels. It decreases flatulence and increases general metabolism.

Madhu has also been used topically as an antiseptic therapeutic agent for the treatment of ulcers, burns and wounds. *Madhu* is composed of 38% of fructose, 31% of glucose, 1% of sucrose. The most common nutrients found in honey are Vitamin B6, niacin, thiamine, pantothenic acid, and riboflavin. Honey has also been used topically as an antiseptic therapeutic agent for the treatment of ulcers, burns and wounds. It is a best food that reduces cholesterol and thus prevents the diseases like coronary artery diseases and also prevents obesity.

Madhu is described as the best *Yogavahi* substance i.e., it carries the properties of the drugs added to it.^[23] Honey acts as a purifying and healing agent can penetrate all the minutest channels of the human body.^[24] Old honey is astringent, *lekhana* (scrapes the excessive fat) and reduces obesity.^[25]

Table No. 8: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Madhu*.

English Name	Honey
Guna	<i>Ruksha, Laghu, Sukshma</i>
Rasa	<i>Madhura, Kashaya</i>
Anurasa	<i>Kashaya</i>
Virya	<i>Sheeta</i>
Vipaka	<i>Madhura</i>
Doshaghanta	<i>Tridoshashamak</i>
Rogagnata	<i>Kustha, Arsha, Kasa, Shwasa, Hikka, Atisara, Vibandha, Daha, Kshata, Kshaya. Trishna, Visha, Raktapitta, Prameha, Krimi, Chardi,</i>
Karma	<i>Lekhana, Sangrahi, Shodhana, Swarya, Chakshushaya, Mehaghna, Deepana, Vranashodhana, Srotoshodhana, Varnya, Medhya, Vrishya, Sangrahi, Lekhanam, Sandhanam, Ropanam, Chedanam, Prasadnam. Yogavahi</i>

9. Go – Ghrita (Cow's Ghee) - Ghrita, Taila, Vasa, and Majja are the best *sneha dravyas* of all. *Ghrita* is one of the most important milk products widely used in India from immemorial times. *Ghrita* is a yellowish white oily substance which solidifies on becoming cold and requires a little heat to melt down. It is one of the most important milk products. Among all *Sneha Dravya*, it is considered as best owing to its special properties i.e. "*Samskarasya Anuvartana*" which means that Ghee carries property of drug without leaving its own property.

Ghrita removes toxic substances from the body and works as a *Vrana - shodhak* and *Vrana ropak*. It improves memory, *Buddhi* (intelligence) and personal beauty of the body. It is also useful in *Vridhdha, Abala* and *Krishna*. *Ghrita* alleviates *Pitta* and *Vata dosha*. This is beneficial for *Rasa, Rakta, Shukra Dhatus* and *Ojas*. In *Bhava Prakash* it is mentioned that *Ghrita* is a *Rasayana*, good for the eye, digestive, enhances stamina and promotes longevity. *Ayurveda* recommends the *Go - Ghrita* as best and the *Ghrita* of choice for both food and medicinal purposes. The individuals which are affected from heat and injured by weapons and poison are also recommended for the administration of *Ghrita*.

Table No. 9: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Ghrita*.

Latin name	<i>Butyrum departum</i>
Gana	<i>Madhura Skandha</i>
Source	Animal
English name	Clarified butter
Synonyms	<i>Ajya, Havi, Sarpi, Ghrita</i>
Guna	<i>Snigdha, Mridu, Sheeta, Guru, Yogavahi</i>
Rasa	<i>Madhura</i>

<i>Virya</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>
<i>Vipaka</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Doshaghanta</i>	<i>Vata-Pitta Shamaka, Kaphavridhikar.</i>
<i>Rogagnata</i>	<i>Udavartta, Jwara, Unmada, Shula, Anaha, Vrana, Daha, Shosha, Visarpa, Rakta Vikara and Agnimandya etc</i>
<i>Karma</i>	<i>Deepaniya, Vayasthapana, Rasayan, Medhya, Chakshushya, Vrishya, Lavanya, Rakshoghna, Vayasthapaka, Rochak, Kantivardhaka, Vishahara, Agnivardhaka, Oja-Teja-Bala-Ayushya vridhikar, Balavardhaka, Smriti vardhaka (improves memory)</i>

10. Jangala Mamsa – *Jangala mamsa* is a rich source of protein of a high biological value and also has all the amino acids and vitamin B complex. Riboflavin and nicotinic acid from vitamin B complex group, iron and phosphorous are present in an adequate quantity in such meat.

Aja Mamsa (Goat meat) is *Na-Ati-Sheeta Na-Ati-Ushna*. It does not lead to *Dushti* of any *Doshas* and is homologous with muscle of human body. It is *Brumhaniya* and *Anabhishyandhi* in nature. *Acharya Sushruta* considers it to be beneficial in *Pinasa-Nasha*.^[26] *Aja Mamsa* possesses similar qualities to *Mamsa* of human beings, hence acts as *Bruhmaniya*. It promotes *Bala, Varna, Swara, Vaya, Budhhi, Indriya* and act as ambrosia when consumed in prescribed method. *Mamsa Rasa* is considered as *Sarva-Roga Prashamana*. *Mamsa Rasa* is advised for regular consumption for those habitually indulging in *Vyayama, Vyavaya* and *Madhya*.^[27] *Aja Mamsa* is said to be the most compatible of human tissues and it is included in whole some food in the form of soup. This is the only type of red meat *Ayurveda* allows on regular basis or as medicinal diet.

Table No. 10: Showing Ayurvedic Pharmacological Properties of *Jangala mamsa*.

<i>Guna</i>	<i>Guru</i>
<i>Rasa</i>	<i>Madhura</i>
<i>Virya</i>	<i>Sheeta</i>
<i>Doshaghanta</i>	<i>Pitta-Kapha dosha Vardaka</i>
<i>Karma</i>	<i>Mamsa Rasa</i> is indicated in <i>Shosyata</i> (dehydration), <i>Krushyata</i> (emaciation)

CONCLUSION

Ayurveda has considered about the *Aahara* in detail. *Aahara* is one that not only nourishes the body, but also restores balance of '*Tridoshas*' which is very much essential for maintaining Health. In *Ayurveda*, the concept of *Nitya Sevaniya Dravyas* mentioned by *Acharya Charka* and *Vagbhata* clearly indicates the importance of nutrition in day today life. *Aahara* consumed in proper manner and quantity helps in the proper growth of the body. It

provides strength, vigor, good complexion and nurtures the health of the tissues. On other side if taken in improper manner leads to various kinds of diseases. From above various references, a conclusion is drawn that *Nitya Sevaneeya Dravya* plays important role in maintaining healthy life and prevents the forthcoming disease.

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