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THE AYURVEDIC FOOD PRINCIPLES

Vol 10 Issue VII

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Dear Readers,

This edition of our Newsletter describes the "Importance of Ahara (food) in our life" written by Dr. Mita Kotecha.

Ayurveda advocates to take care for the tripods (Traya Upastambha): That is Aahara (food & nutrition), Nidra (sleep) and Brhimhacharya (regulated sex behavior).

Depending on the three Gunas, the food is classified into three types of food - Satwic food, Rajasic food and Tamsik food.

In Ayurveda, Food is considered as a sacred thing and so we try our best to make eating a form of meditation (to eat in peacefulness and with awareness) and Sadhana (taking ordinary activity and approaching it with spiritual awareness).

Regarding diet Ayurveda says: if a person wishes to be healthy and fit with Oja and glamor than he should use qualitative food but less in quantity. "HITAM ASHNIYAT, MITAM ASHNIYAT."

We heartily welcome your suggestion on our newsletter how to make it more useful and knowledgeable.

Dr. Rajesh Kotecha 'Vaidya', M.D. (Ayurveda)
Director,
Chakrapani Ayurveda Clinic and Research Center

TESTIMONIAL

Dear Dr. Kotecha,

Greetings from Omaha! I just want to tell you how well I am doing and offer my sincere thanks and appreciation. I first met you in May of 2009 for a consultation. I began the prescriptions you recommended and took to heart the lifestyle and diet changes you advised. They were subtle and simple things you recommended, but they took a bit of time to really effectively adopt. On your next visit on October 1st 2009, I was fortunate enough to receive a Panchakarma treatment, thank you. At this meeting you made a slight adjustment to my prescription and I want to tell you how wonderful I am feeling now – one month later. I've been faithful to your advice and feel as though I am experiencing "perfect health." My friends are asking me what I am eating and doing because they have noticed an improvement and are very curious. Better yet, H1N1 went through my household and affected both my daughters and husband at the same time - I took care of them and did NOT get it. I believe that this is because I am living with reduced Ama and improved Ojas and that as a result my immune system is operating at it's optimum and I have never felt better. My weight is balanced and ideal for my age and I am sleeping soundly. Everything is running as it should be, thanks to your gifts and talents as a doctor of Ayurveda! The next time you visit Omaha, I will be coming for another treatment and will be bringing my two at home daughters so that I can be sure to help them reach their optimum health. Dr. Kotecha, I am so grateful and appreciative to you and wish you all the best – thank you for doing what you do!

With love and respect,
Stacy Simon, USA

The Ayurvedic Food Principles - by Dr. Mita Kotecha

Ayurveda has always classified food in terms of its positive and negative attributes, which are now being recognized by modern nutrition studies. According to the holistic approach adopted by Ayurveda, apart from food, lifestyle also influences one's thoughts, behavior, physical appearance and actions.

Food is seen as Prana, the carrier of life force, and is judged according to how it affects the conscious self. Based on its inherent qualities food is categorized into — Sattva (purity), Rajas (activity, passion, the process of change), and Tamas (darkness, inertia).

Sattvic food

This kind of food is always freshly cooked and simple. It is food that can be digested easily and puts one's mind in a state of balance. It helps build immunity and improves the health of those who are ill. It includes foods closest to their natural forms like milk and milk products, fresh and dried fruits, and fresh vegetables (except onion, garlic, and chives). All whole grain cereals, most lentils, sprouts, natural sweeteners like jaggery and honey, and natural oils like homemade Ghee, butter and cold-pressed oils are considered sattvic.

Such food is lightly cooked with moderate spices (no chillies and black pepper) and has less fat. The spices commonly used in sattvic cooking are turmeric, ginger, cinnamon, coriander, fennel (saunf) and cardamom.

It's important to note that raw foods are not sattvic as they harbour parasites and microbes and are believed to weaken digestion and reduce ojas (vital energy) on which the proper functioning of the mind and spiritual

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development depends.

While Ghee is allowed (it helps the development of the mind), oily and fatty foods should be eaten sparingly.

The Sattvic personality

People who follow the sattvic way of eating are known to be clear-minded, balanced, and spiritually aware. They usually avoid alcohol, stimulants like tea, coffee, tobacco and non-vegetarian food.

Rajasic food

This is food that is fresh but heavy. It includes non-vegetarian food like meat, fish, eggs, and chicken, all whole pulses and dals (not sprouted), hot spices like chillies, pepper, and all vegetables including onion and garlic. The rajasic diet is also cooked fresh and is nutritious. It may contain a little more oil and spices compared to sattvic food. It benefits those who believe in action and aggression in a positive way such as business persons, politicians, and athletes.

The Rajasic personality

This diet is linked to sensual stimulation. Rajasic people are usually aggressive (in a positive way) and full of energy. They are interested in the four Ps — power, prestige, position and prosperity. But they are quite in control of their lives and aren't obsessed by any of the above. They are go-getters and know how to enjoy life.

Tamasic food

This includes foods that are not fresh, overcooked, stale and processed — foods made from refined flour (maida), pastries, pizzas, burgers, chocolates, soft drinks, rumali roti, naan, tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, canned and preserved foods like jams, pickles and fermented foods, fried foods, sweets made from sugar, ice creams, puddings and most 'fun foods' are included in this list. All spicy, salty, sweet and fatty foods form part of the tamasic diet. Overeating is a tamasic trait. However, overeating sattvic food too brings on tamas in an individual.

The Tamasic personality

Tamas brings about stagnation leading to degeneration of people's health. Such individuals suffer from intense mood swings, insecurity, desires, and cravings and are unable to deal with others in a balanced way. They have little regard for the welfare of others and tend to be very self-centered. Their nervous system and heart do not function optimally and such individuals age fast. They usually suffer from conditions like cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, and chronic fatigue. They usually lead a sedentary lifestyle. Such individuals would benefit from switching to a sattvic diet. Others, who live life in moderation and are into politics, business, defense or into athletics would do well by following the Rajasic way of life.

Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic are more than just qualities in food - they are a way of life.

DR. MITA KOTECHA

Dr. Mita Kotecha is Ph.D. (Ayu) - Dravyaguna (medicinal plant sciences) and presently working as Associate Professor in the Department of Dravyaguna at the National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur (India). Earlier, she was Head, Department of Dravyaguna and Director of Herbal Garden at Chitrakoot University. She has authored and published several research papers and articles on Ayurveda and a book entitled "Concept of Lekhana (obesity management) in Ayurveda". You can contact her personally at mita@ayu.in

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For more details on this please visit <http://chakrapaniayurveda.com/kichadi.html>

INTERESTING NEWS FOR THE MONTH

Ayurveda can reduce costs

Source: [Hindustan Times](#)

To reduce the rising cost of healthcare, India needs to bring traditional medicine systems, such as Ayurveda, into the mainstream, said renowned cardiovascular surgeon Dr Naresh Trehan.

Addressing the HT Leadership Summit on Friday, he said, "The new era of Indian medicine lies in putting to test the gems of herbal medicine along with modern science. Ayurveda works from within the body and decreases the need for intensive medical intervention, thereby reducing the overall cost."

Trehan — whose 'Medicity Medanta' in Gurgaon, with 1,250-1,800 beds and specialty care, would be one of the largest health care facilities in the country - was speaking on Innovative Solutions to Health Challenges.

<http://shilajeet.in>

AKSHAYA PATRA: Good initiative for free food to school going children in India -

The Akshaya Patra Foundation, the world's largest school meal programme currently feeding over one million school children across seven states in the India. Their kitchen in Jaipur, Rajasthan is having state-of-the-art facility and it is equipped to feed 30,000 children everyday.

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