AYUSHDHARA
ISSN: 2393-9583 (P)/ 2393-9591 (O)
An International Journal of Research in AYUSH and Allied Systems

Review Article

SIGNIFICANCE OF *AHARA VIDHI VIDHANA* IN CONTEMPORARY LIFE: *USHNAM* (WARM) & *NA ATIVILAMBITAM ASHNIYAT* (DO NOT EAT VERY SLOWLY)

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Article info

Article History:
Received: 18-08-2026
Accepted: 20-09-2026
Published: 02-11-2026

KEYWORDS:
Ayurveda, *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana,* Dietary, Digestion, Metabolism.

ABSTRACT

Ahara, Nidra, and *Brahmacharya* are the *Trayopastambha* (three subsidiary pillars) that sustain life and maintain health. The classical Ayurvedic concept of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* lays out specific guidelines for food consumption to support optimal digestion and health. **Aims and Objectives:** To evaluate the significance of *Ushnam Ashniyat* (eating warm food) and *Na Ativilambit Ashniyat* (do not eat very slowly) in maintaining digestive health, as per Ayurvedic principles. **Methods and Materials:** This study is a narrative literature review based on classical Ayurvedic scriptures, peer-reviewed publications, and other relevant scientific sources related to the concepts of *Ahara* and *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*, emphasizing dietary practices that promote healthy eating behaviour and proper digestion. **Result:** *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* provides a classical framework for appropriate food selection and eating practices that support digestion and overall health. **Discussion & Conclusion:** Consumption of cold food may contribute to anorexia, diminished digestive capacity, nausea, and abdominal distension. Warm food facilitates effortless digestion, enhances flavour retention, and activates the digestive fire. Due to *Ushnaguna's* heated potency, it will also aid in *Anulomana (Anulomana* refers to the process that regulates *Apana Vata* by promoting the downward movement and elimination of *Dosha* and *Mala* through the *Adhomarga*) or regulating *Vata's* appropriate movement. It also helps in reduce excess *Kapha* in the body. Excessively prolonged eating may allow food to cool and may interfere with the proper process of digestion according to Ayurvedic principles, uneven digestion due to irregular digestive fire contact, and lack of satisfaction. Even those who are sufficiently informed on dietary guidelines frequently show poor adherence in practical settings, which can have a detrimental impact on general wellbeing and health outcomes. Compliance with these dietary guidelines is fundamental for health maintenance and may significantly aid in and may contribute to the prevention of diet- and lifestyle-related health disturbances.

INTRODUCTION

The *Trayopastambha* (three subsidiary pillars) that uphold health and preserve life are *Ahara*, *Nidra*, and *Brahmacharya*. *Ahara* is a key factor in determining physiological balance, health, and well-being, as it provides essential nutrients that support bodily functions and overall vitality[1].

Access this article online

Quick Response Code

https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdhara.v13i5.3026

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In all the Ayurveda books, *Ahara Vidhi Vishesha Ayatana*[2] and *Rasa, Guna, Virya*, and *Vipaka* of *Ahara Varga* are discussed with great significance. Acharya Charaka's reference to the *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* in *Rasavimaniya Adhyaya* focuses on "how to eat" and "why"[3]. *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* provides a systematic framework governing the method, timing, and conditions of food intake. In addition to preventing illness, *Pathya Sevana's* and *Nidana Parivarjana's* guidance in the form of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* aids in *Vikar Prashamana*[4]. Acharya Charaka and Acharya Sushruta assert that while properly administered *Ahara* is essential for nourishing the body, improving digestive capacity, and general physiological well-

being, *Anna* (food) is the primary sustainer of life and has a major impact on complexion, longevity, strength, and intellect[5].

Ayurveda advocates a set of specific dietary guidelines known as *'Ahara Vidhi Vidhana',* providing a detailed framework for ideal dietary practices. These *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* guidelines help individuals take food in a proper way[6].

AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1. To review the concept and importance of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* in Ayurveda.
2. To describe the significance of *Ushnam Ashniyat* and *Na Ativilambitam Ashniyat* and explore their relevance to contemporary eating practices.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was conducted as a narrative literature review focusing on *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*, particularly *Ushnam Ashniyat* and *Na Ativilambitam Ashniyat*. Relevant information was collected from classical Ayurvedic texts and selected contemporary scientific literature related to dietary practices and digestion. The literature was reviewed and narratively synthesized to understand the classical basis and contemporary relevance of these dietary principles.

Table 1: Fundamentals of *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*

S.No.	***Ahara Vidhi Vidhana***	**Definition**	**Benefits**	**Consequences of non-compliance**
1.	*Ushnam Ashniyat*	The term "*Ushna*" refers to the temperature of food rather than its potency; therefore, food should be consumed at an optimum warm temperature, not excessively hot.	Consumption of warm and freshly prepared food enhances taste, stimulates digestive fire *(Agni),* promotes *Vata Anulomana*[7]*,* and improves digestive efficiency.	Consumption of excessively cold food may lead to respiratory symptoms such as cough and hiccups and aggravation of *Vata* and *Kapha* disorders[8].
2.	*Snigdham Ashniyat*	The term *"Snigdha"* includes *Sneha Dravyas* such as g*hee* (primary *Sneha)* and oil, as well as foods like *Godhuma, Shali*, and *rasa* among these[9].	Consumption of *Snigdha Ahara* promotes *Vata Anulomana,* enhances taste *(Bodhaka Kapha*), and stimulates *Agni (Pitta* and *Kledaka Kapha),* thereby aiding digestion[10].	Excessive consumption of dry foods may lead to loss of strength and complexion, skin dryness, aggravation of *Vata,* and obstruction of stool and urine.
3.	*Matravat*	The term *"Matravat*" refers to consuming food in proper quantity.	A proper quantity of food supports normal metabolism and can be identified by the absence of heaviness, discomfort, or pressure in the abdomen.	While excessive intake immediately aggravates all three *Dosha*, insufficient intake causes a variety of *Vata* illnesses.
4.	*Jeerne Ashniyat*	"*Jeerne Ashniyat*" refers to taking food only after the complete digestion of the previous meal.	Food should be consumed after the previous meal has been digested, when *Dosha* are positioned correctly, *Agni* is activated, and appetite has grown.	When food is consumed before the previous meal is completely digested, the partially digested *Ahara rasa* combines with the current food, creating *Ama Dosha* and quickly aggravating all *Dosha*[11].
5.	*Virya Aviruddham Ashniyat*	*'Viruddha Ahara'* refers to the combination of two or more food substances that are incompatible or dissimilar in nature.	*Virya Aviruddha Ahara* avoids skin conditions and lifestyle disorders, enhances digestion and metabolism, and aids in	Consumption of foods that are opposite or incompatible in *Virya* (potency) can lead to various diseases such as *Kushta, Andhatva, Visarpa,*

			maintaining *Doshas* equilibrium.	*Grahani, Amavisha*, and other disorders related to vitiation of blood (*Rakta Pradushtaja Vyadhi*)[12].
6. 7.	*Ishta Deshe/Ishta Sarvopakaranam Ashniyat*	Food should be consumed in a clean and hygienic environment with proper utensils.	It helps avoid the spread of microorganisms through contact and mental distractions.	Even when healthy food is consumed in moderation, emotional stress (such as worry, grief, fear, or rage) can impede effective digestion.[13]
8. 9.	*Na Atidrutam, Na Ativilambhitam Ashniyat*	Food should not be taken too hurriedly nor too leisurely.	On the other hand, mindful eating leads to better hydration, easier weight control, better digestion, and increased satisfaction.	Eating too quickly causes poor swallowing, raises *Vata,* interferes with digestion (*Agni*), and makes it impossible to properly evaluate the attributes of food. Eating food too slowly may also become cold, which can weaken *Agni* and impair proper digestion.
10. 11. 12.	*Ajalpan, Ahasan Asniyat, Tanmana Bhunjitam Ashniyat*	Food should be consumed calmly without excessive talking or laughing, with full attention focused on the food and the process of eating.	By preventing food from passing through the digestive tract incorrectly, it improves satisfaction by enabling accurate assessment of food's qualities.	The same symptoms as eating food too quickly or slowly are caused by talking, laughing, or not paying attention during meals[14].
13.	*Atmanam Abhisameekshyam Asniyat*	*'Atmanam'* means 'self', and *'Abhisameekshya'* means properly evaluating or assessing. To assess food's compatibility and possible impacts, each person should consider their body composition and physiological capacity.	By understanding the value and significance of food and consuming it accordingly, an individual can maintain and protect their physical and emotional health outcomes.	Not adhering to self-assessment in nutrition can adversely affect self-preservation, digestion, well-being, and physical and mental health.

Ayurveda emphasizes the use of nutritious food and lifestyle to both prevent and treat illness. Over time, bad eating habits have resulted from modernization, which is characterized by processed foods, urbanization, and sedentary lifestyles. The fast-paced routines of today have made it usual to disregard dietary recommendations, which greatly increases the risk of lifestyle-related disorders such as obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, and cancer[15]. According to recent research, consuming freshly prepared warm meals at a reasonable pace, avoiding eating too slowly, improves gastrointestinal motility, increases digestive enzyme activity, and increases satiety and overall digestive efficiency. Maintaining good health and general well-being requires adhering to appropriate dietary standards (*Ahara Vidhi Vidhana).* The importance of these concepts in controlling food intake and encouraging a healthy lifestyle is highlighted in this article. Inappropriate eating habits can also result in health problems, just as eating the wrong food can create disorders. Adhering to appropriate dietary rules is crucial for preserving good health. *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* Since these concepts aid in controlling food intake and fostering general well-being, awareness of their significance is essential. Therefore, the present article has been undertaken to highlight the significance of following these dietary rules for maintaining a healthy dietary habits.

RESULT

Ahara Vidhi Vidhana is essential for preserving the intestinal health, physical and mental well-being of the body. Warm meal *(Ushnam Ashniyat)* lowers excess *Kapha*, increases *Agni*, supports *Vata Anulomana*, and facilitates better digestion. Eating food while it is warm helps know its taste. Abdominal distension, nausea, anorexia, and poor digestion can all be brought on by cold meals. Eating too slowly might lead to decreased appetite, poor or irregular digestion, and cold food. Additionally, it cannot produce enough satiety, which could result in poor digestion and overindulgence in food. In addition to preventing lifestyle problems, proper mealtime and consumption of warm foods support digestive health Appropriate dietary practices may support *Dosha* equilibrium according to Ayurvedic principles.

DISCUSSION

Overeating and an unbalanced diet are prevalent issues. The eating habits and lifestyle of the present time, particularly of the young generation, are not good in view of health[16]. There is a severe concern associated with the use of cold beverages, chilled water, spicy food, preserved food, and junk food. This results in a significant rise in diseases such as cardiovascular conditions, metabolic disorders, and digestive issues. In contemporary occupational settings, individuals frequently consume stored meals that may be consumed after prolonged intervals, often at suboptimal temperatures. Anorexia, diminished digestive fire, nausea, and distension of the abdomen are all caused by cold meals[17].

Instead of referring to the *"Ushnaguna"* of the food ingredient, the term "*Ushna*" refers to the temperature of food rather than its potency; therefore, food should be consumed at an optimum warm temperature, not excessively hot[18]. *Ushna Ahara* increases the fire in the stomach, enhances flavour retention, and facilitates quicker digestion. *Ushnaguna's* heated potency, which opposes *Vata's* irritating element, will also help with *Anulomana,* or controlling *Vata's* proper movement and lowering the body's elevated *Kapha.*[19]

Eating freshly prepared meals soon after cooking can help with digestion because it lessens the physiological strain of initial food breakdown. However, nutrients are already partially broken down in heated meals. Foods can be steamed, cooked, baked, or roasted to initiate the breakdown of nutrients and beneficial compounds before they enter the body[20].

Furthermore, eating food very slowly is also considered undesirable, as it may lead to the consumption of cold food, improper digestion due to irregular interaction with digestive fire *(Agni*), and reduced satisfaction after meals. Individuals who eat while watching television, experiencing stress, or being mentally preoccupied are generally unaware of their eating pace. Consequently, they tend to overeat and fail to appreciate the qualitative aspects of food, which ultimately resembles the effects of hurried or improper eating practices.[21]

Excessively prolonged eating *(Ati Vilambita Bhojana*) has been described in Ayurvedic literature as a factor contributing to improper or irregular digestion[22]. Effective digestion depends on proper mastication because it makes food easier to break down mechanically and encourages the release of saliva that contains enzymes like amylase, which starts the breakdown of carbohydrates. While the vagus nerve controls gastrointestinal secretions through cephalic phase reflexes, chewing and swallowing[23] also trigger sensory impulses mediated by cranial nerves. Furthermore, according to contemporary physiology, eating warm food (*Ushna Ahara*) at the right time and at a reasonable speed improves digestive efficiency. Enzymatic activity, stomach motility, and blood flow to digestive organs are all enhanced. Eating in response to hunger cues promotes better digestion, food absorption, and overall metabolic balance by ensuring appropriate production of hormones and digestive enzymes.

The conditions include infertility, diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular problems, anemia, viral infections, gastrointestinal diseases, and metabolic abnormalities. Following *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* stops the progression of a number of metabolic problems, including poor eating habits.

Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on particular dietary recommendations (*Ahara Vidhi Vidhana*) that promote a healthy metabolism and digestion.

CONCLUSION

In Ayurveda, the concept of *Ahara* encompasses more than just eating. It extends beyond the idea of calorie intake, as Ayurveda suggests eating habits, food quality, and quantity according to a person's digestive capacity (*Agni*). A major worldwide worry in the modern period is the prevalence of lifestyle diseases brought on by irregular eating habits, which must be addressed with suitable preventive measures. By boosting *Agni,* increasing enzyme activity, encouraging gastrointestinal motility, and permitting improved nutrient absorption, consumption of warm meals may enhance digestive efficiency. Avoiding eating too slowly promotes regular digestive enzyme interaction, maintains ideal meal temperature, and enhances overall satiety and

digestive efficiency. These ideas are highly applicable to contemporary lifestyle problems like metabolic syndrome, obesity, and dyspepsia. Thus, *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* is crucial for maintaining the body's mental and physical health.

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Cite this article as:
Bidam Choudhary, Bhanu Pratap Singh, Sneha Someshwar Ghawale. Significance of Ahara Vidhi Vidhana in Contemporary Life: Ushnam (Warm) and Na Ativilambitam Ashniyat (Do Not Eat Very Slowly). AYUSHDHARA, 2026;13(5):148-152.
https://doi.org/10.47070/ayushdhara.v13i5.3026
Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared

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