

Dietary Goals in Modern Nutrition and their Correlation with Ayurvedic Principles

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ABSTRACT

Diet play the central role in both health promotion and disease prevention. Modern nutrition emphasizes caloric balance, macronutrient adequacy, maternal and child nutrition, prevention of deficiency and chronic diet-related disorders, and healthy aging. Ayurveda, one of the most ancient medical sciences, considers *Ahara* as the foundation of health and longevity, forming one of the *Trayopastambha* (three pillars of life) alongside *Nidra* and *Brahmacharya*. This study aimed to explore the correlation between modern dietary goals and classical Ayurvedic nutritional principles by reviewing Ayurvedic texts including *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, *Kashyapa Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya*, along with contemporary literature. Ayurvedic principles such as *Ahara Vidhi Vidhana* (dietary rules), *Garbhiniparicharya* (antenatal care), *Lehana Karma* (infant nutrition), and *Rasayana Tantra* (rejuvenation therapy) address key modern nutrition objectives, including maintenance of health, maternal and child nutrition, disease prevention, and promotion of longevity. Unlike modern nutrition, which focuses primarily on energy and nutrient composition, Ayurveda emphasizes digestive strength (*Agni Bala*), tissue nourishment (*Dhatu Poshana*), and individualized dietary guidelines based on constitution (*Prakriti*), age, and health status. Integrating Ayurvedic dietary wisdom with modern nutritional strategies offers a holistic framework for preventive and promotive health. Such an approach can enrich global nutrition policies and contribute to comprehensive public health strategies, fostering long-term health, balanced metabolism, and sustainable disease prevention.

Keywords: Ahara, Dietetic, Dietary Goals, Ahara Vidhi Vidhana, Āsana Pravicharaṇa, Rasayana

INTRODUCTION

The *dosas* maintain the firmness of the body they are called pillars and the three sub-pillars of life are *Ahara*, *Nidra* (*Swapna*), and *Brahmacharya*, these supports are considered as *Upasthamba*, which literally means sub-supports. These three factors play an important role in the maintenance of a living organism. These *Upasthambha* are necessary source to get strength, this is the reason why it immediately follows description of *Trividha bala*. It continues well-endowed with strength, complexion and development till the completion of life span provided one abstains from harmful practices. *Ahara* is the substance which is to be taken in or swallowed in through the throat is called *ahara*.¹

Recently, dietetics as a profession has been defined by the American Dietetic Association as the integration and application of principles derived from the disciplines of food, nutrition, management, communication, biological, physiological, behavioural and social sciences to achieve and maintain human health. While

modern nutrition quantifies dietary adequacy through nutrient intake, caloric requirements, whereas Ayurveda evaluate it qualitatively by emphasizing agni, dosha balance and proper nourishment of the dhatus to sustain health. Hippocrates (5th century BC), the father of medicine wrote, “Let thy food be thy medicine, thy medicine be thy food,”² reflecting a parallel with Ayurvedic dietary concept, by Vaidya Lolimbaraj explained in his text Vaidya Jivan about pathya and apathya as “If a patient takes pathya ahara, they do not require medication, if they continuously take apathya they do not require medication because it will not be effective.”³

In modern nutritional science, the measurement of energy derived from food is expressed in kilocalories, determined using a bomb calorimeter. Energy in the human body is primarily obtained from the oxidation of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, each yielding a defined caloric value—approximately 4 kcal/g from carbohydrates and proteins and 9 kcal/g from fats. These macronutrients provide the fuel necessary for basal metabolism, growth, repair, and physical activity.⁴ In Ayurveda, the concept of energy is understood through the functional strength of Agni, the digestive and metabolic fire responsible for transforming food (Ahara) into body constituents (Dhatus). The efficient functioning of Agni determines how effectively food is converted into usable energy and vitality (Bala). Thus, rather than quantifying energy in numeric calories, Ayurveda assesses the qualitative strength of Agni and Vyayama Shakti (capacity for exertion) as indicators of metabolic sufficiency.

Carbohydrates, proteins, and fats can be correlated with Ayurvedic food components in terms of their Guna (qualities) and Karma (actions). Carbohydrate-rich foods like grains and fruits are predominantly Madhura Rasa (sweet in taste) and provide immediate nourishment and stability. Proteinaceous foods such as pulses and milk exhibit Brimhana (anabolic and tissue-building) properties, while fatty substances like ghee and oils represent Snigdha Guna and act as Ojovardhaka (vitality-promoting) and Vata-shamaka (Vata-pacifying) agents. This indicates that Ayurveda inherently recognized the energetic and functional importance of all three macronutrients, though expressed through qualitative attributes rather than calorimetric measures.

Regarding daily energy and food requirements, Ayurveda does not specify numeric caloric values for different age groups; instead, it emphasizes *Ahara Matra* (appropriate quantity of food) according to Deha Pramana (body constitution), Vaya (age), Agni Bala (digestive capacity), Ritu (season), and Vyayama Shakti (physical activity tolerance) (Ca. Vi. 1/24; Su. Su. 46/465). For instance, children and adolescents in a state of growth (Vardhamana Sharira) are advised Brimhana-type diets rich in unctuous and nourishing foods, while adults require a balanced regimen of light and moderate meals to sustain metabolic harmony. The elderly, with naturally declining Agni, benefit from easily digestible, warm, and unctuous diets to maintain vitality and prevent tissue depletion (Jara Chikitsa).

Healthy dietary practices, if practiced early in life support in healthy growth, ensure proper nutrition and improve cognitive development in children and it shows a long-term health benefits by reducing the risk of being over-weight / obese and developing NCDs- diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer later in life. Unhealthy diet, unhealthy lifestyle practices and lack of physical activities are the leading cause of global risk to health.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Health and nutrition are the most important contributory factors for human resource development in the country. Long-term malnutrition leads to stunting and wasting, non-communicable chronic diet related disorders, increased morbidity and mortality and reduced physical work output. It is a great economic loss

to the country and undermines development. Common Nutrition Problems Protein Energy Malnutrition, micronutrient deficiencies such as vitamin A deficiency, Iron Deficiency Anemia, Iodine Deficiency Disorders and vitamin B-complex deficiencies are the nutrition problems frequently encountered, particularly among the rural poor and urban slum communities.

Dietary goals are 1. Maintenance of a state of positive health and optimal performance in populations at large by maintaining ideal body weight. 2. Ensuring adequate nutritional status for pregnant women and lactating mothers. 3. Improvement of birth weights and promotion of growth of infants, children and adolescents to achieve their full genetic potential. 4. Achievement of adequacy in all nutrients and prevention of deficiency diseases. 5. Prevention of chronic diet-related disorders. 6. Maintenance of the health of the elderly and increasing the life expectancy.⁵

Dietary Goals and Their Correlation with Ayurveda

The primary goal of diet in modern nutrition is the maintenance of positive health and an ideal body weight. For maintenance of positive health, principle of dietetics for all prakriti (constitution) have been mentioned in Ayurvedic dietetics, in which the diet opposite in properties of the doshas of body constitution are considered wholesome. Acharya Sushruta emphasizes that health (swasthya) is a state of complete balance between dosha, agni, dhatu, mala (which function adequately and in coordination with each-other) along with a calm state of mind and soul (atma), sense organ (indriya), mind (manas) (Su. Su. 15/41). Food is described as the root cause of both health and disease (*ahara sambhavam vastu roga-ahaara-sambhavah* – Ch. Su. 28/45). Acharya Charaka has elaborated about the principles of treatment of obesity and scragginess- to obese for reducing bulk heavy and non-satiating articles and to scraggy for increasing bulk light and satiating articles should be given. (Ch. Su. 21). Acharya have mentioned not only about the langhan and brmhaniyam measures for regulating body weight depending on the need (Ch. Su. 21) but also categories the light and heavy food along with the method to consume it in adequate amount. Thus, maintaining ideal weight and positive health is deeply rooted in Ayurvedic dietetics.

The second goal relates to ensuring adequate nutrition for pregnant and lactating women. Ayurveda provides a detailed regimen for *garbhiniparicharya* (antenatal care), prescribing specific foods during each month of pregnancy to ensure proper fetal growth and maternal health. Sushruta (Sha. 10/48) mentions that diet must constantly nourish both the fetus and the mother. After delivery, *sutikopacharya* (postnatal care) includes light, easily digestible, and *stanya-janana* (galactagogue) foods such as milk, ghee, and herbs like *Shatavari* to promote lactation and recovery.

A third objective in modern nutrition is the improvement of birth weights and promotion of growth in infants, children, and adolescents. Ayurveda places strong emphasis on this through *jatakarma* (newborn care), *lehana karma* (medicated feeding), and *balopacharya ahara*. *Kashyapa Samhita* (Su. 28) highlights that medicated *ghrita*, honey, and other suitable supplements enhance strength (bala), intellect (medha), and complexion (varna). Such practices ensure that children and adolescents achieve their full genetic potential in growth and development.

The fourth dietary goal is the achievement of nutritional adequacy and prevention of deficiency diseases. Ayurveda addresses this through the concept of *rasayana* therapy, which enhances *vyadhi-kshamatva* (immunity), supports dhatu *poshana* (tissue nourishment), and prevents premature aging. According to Acharya Charaka (Su. 1/7), *rasayana* promotes longevity, memory, intelligence, health, and strength. The sequential nourishment of all seven dhatus from *ahara rasa* ensures that deficiency of one nutrient or improper digestion (*agni dushti*) leads to *dhatu kshaya* (tissue depletion) and subsequent disorders.

The fifth goal highlights the prevention of chronic diet-related disorders, which in Ayurveda are classified as *santarpanajanya vyadhi* (diseases of overnutrition). These include obesity, diabetes (*madhumeha*), and hypertension. *Charaka* (Su. 23/5–6) clearly identifies the harmful effects of excessive and unwholesome diet. To prevent such conditions, Ayurveda prescribes *ahara vidhi vidhana* (dietary rules, Ch. Su. 25), which regulate quantity, timing, food combinations, and eating habits. This prevents *ajirna* (indigestion) and *ama* (toxin accumulation), both of which are considered the root cause of chronic diseases.

The final dietary goal is the maintenance of health in the elderly and promotion of longevity. Ayurveda offers a specialized branch, *Rasayana Tantra* (geriatrics), focusing on rejuvenation and anti-aging. The basic objective of *rasayana* are- *Vayasthapana* (preventing the aging of bodily tissues), *Ayukara* (provide longevity), *Medhakara* (promotion of intelligence, learning and memory), *Balakara* (provide strength), *Rogapaharana* (prevention and cure of diseases by promoting body immune system).⁶ *Rasayana dravyas* such as *Amalaki*, *Haritaki*, and *Guduchi* are recommended for enhancing memory, strength, immunity, and delaying degenerative changes. *Charaka* (Su. 1/7) mentions that *rasayana* ensures longevity and supports physical and mental functions, while *Ashtanga Hridaya* emphasizes *vayasthapana chikitsa* (age-sustaining therapy) for the elderly. Special reference of *Medhya Rasayan* is mentioned by *Achaya Charak* for improving the intelligence, memory and cognitive function of the individual.

Right Quantity of Food

The right quantity of food depends on the quality of food. If the food is heavy, only one third or half of the stomach capacity is to be filled up, even in case of light food articles excessive intake is not conducive to the maintenance of the power of digestion and metabolism. Food taken in appropriate quantity, helps the individual to achieve adequate strength, complexion, happiness and longevity without disturbing the balance of the *dhatu*s and *dosh*as. Ch.su.5/7-9

Ashta Ahara-Vidhi-Vishesa-Ayatanani

Ayurveda have a unique concept of *Ahara-Vidhi-Vishesa-Ayatanani*, *ahara* can be wholesome as well as unwholesome depending on the variation in *Matra* (dose), *Kala* (time), *Kriya* (method of preparation), *Bhumi* (place), *Deha* (body), *Vyadhi* (disease) and *Vaya* (age) of an individual.⁷

Food intake sequence

Food such as *guru*, *madhure* and *snigdha* should be consumed first, followed by *amla* and *lavana ahara*. Then food that are *ruksha*, *katu*, *tikta* and *kashya* should be taken in the last half of the meal for optimal *agni* activation, proper absorption and assimilation of food.⁸

Ahara Vidhi Vidhana (Dietary Guidelines in Ayurveda)

Ayurveda emphasizes that health depends not only on what we eat but also on how we eat. Food taken in the right manner supports life, strength (*Bala*), complexion (*Varna*), nourishment (*Upacaya*), and overall wellbeing. On the contrary, even wholesome food, if consumed improperly, can become a cause of disease. Unlike other medical sciences, which primarily focus on the type of food, Ayurveda gives equal importance to the method of eating and highlights the harmful effects of improper dietary habits.

Charaka Samhita (*Vimanasthana* 1/24) outlines essential principles of food intake, advising that both healthy individuals and patients should follow them. According to these principles, food should be:

1. *Ushna* (Warm) – served hot and fresh
2. *Snigdha* (Unctuous) – containing an adequate amount of healthy oils or ghee
3. *Matravat* (In proper quantity) – neither too less nor excessive
4. *Jeerna Ahara* (After complete digestion of the previous meal)
5. *Virya-aviruddha* (Compatible, not contradictory in potency)

6. *Ishta Desha* and *Ishta-sarva-upakarana* (Consumed in a proper place with suitable arrangements)
7. *Naati-gati* (Eat at a moderate pace – not in hurry)
8. *naati-vilambitam* (Eat at a moderate pace –not too slowly)
9. *Ajalpan ahasan tanmana bhunjita* (eating without talking or laughing with full concentration of mind)
10. *Atmanam abhi samiksyas samak* (eating with proper self-awareness/ paying due regards to oneself)

Acharya Charaka further explains the special benefits of each which are as following

1. Uṣṇa Ahāra (Warm Food): Ayurveda emphasizes that food should always be consumed warm and freshly prepared. Warm food is naturally more appetizing and enhances taste. It stimulates the digestive fire (Agni), supports the secretion of digestive juices, and allows the meal to be digested efficiently. Additionally, warm food helps regulate the movement of Vāta and reduces excess Kapha, thereby preventing heaviness and sluggishness in the body. For this reason, Ayurveda discourages cold, stale, or reheated meals, instead recommending freshly cooked warm food as the ideal choice.

2. Snigdha Ahāra (Unctuous Food): Food should have an adequate amount of natural unctuousness, obtained from healthy fats such as ghee, oils, or naturally moist ingredients. Snigdha Ahāra makes food palatable and enhances satiety. It stimulates digestion without aggravating the stomach, ensures smooth assimilation, and balances Vāta by preventing dryness in the body. Unctuous food also nourishes the tissues (Dhātus), strengthens the sense organs, promotes vitality (Bala), and enhances the glow of complexion (Varna). Thus, moderate inclusion of ghee and oils in the diet is considered essential for strength, stability, and radiance.

3. Mātravat Ahāra (Food in Proper Quantity): Ayurveda stresses that even wholesome food becomes harmful if not consumed in the right quantity. Food taken in proper measure does not disturb the balance of Vāta, Pitta, or Kapha. Instead, it promotes longevity, provides comfort, and passes smoothly through the digestive tract. Eating in moderation ensures that the digestive fire (Agni) remains strong and food undergoes complete digestion without causing heaviness, discomfort, or indigestion. Thus, Ayurveda advises mindful eating — neither too little nor too excessive — as the key to health and well-being.

4. Jīrne Bhojana (Eating After Complete Digestion of the Previous Meal): Ayurveda strongly advises that one should eat only after the previous meal has been completely digested. If food is consumed in a state of indigestion, the undigested portion of the earlier meal mixes with the new food, disturbing the balance of Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, and quickly leading to disease.

The right time to eat is recognized by natural signs: true hunger arises, belching is clear and without any unpleasant taste, the body feels light, the heart feels comfortable, and natural urges of stool, urine, and flatus are unobstructed. At this time, the digestive fire (Agni) is strong and ready to process the next meal. Eating in such a state ensures proper digestion, nourishment of tissues, balance of doshas, and promotion of longevity.

5. Viruddha Ahāra (Compatible Food, Not Contradictory in Potency): Ayurveda places great importance on the compatibility of food items. Even wholesome foods, when taken in wrong combinations, can act like poison and lead to various disorders. For example, combining fish with milk, or heating honey, are considered Viruddha Ahara (incompatible foods) as they create toxins in the body and disturb the balance of doshas.

When food is consumed in a compatible manner (Avirodha), it is digested smoothly and does not produce harmful effects. Thus, Ayurveda advises that one should be mindful not only of what is eaten, but also of how different foods are combined, ensuring they are harmonious in potency (Virya).

6. *Iṣṭa Deśa & Iṣṭa Sarvopakarana* (Eating in a Proper Place with Suitable Arrangements): According to Ayurveda, the environment in which food is taken greatly influences digestion and overall health. Eating in a clean, calm, and pleasant place allows the mind to remain peaceful and focused, preventing distractions that may arise in noisy, unclean, or unpleasant surroundings.

Similarly, having proper arrangements—such as clean utensils, adequate seating, sufficient light, and a comfortable setting—helps one eat without disturbance. A favorable environment not only uplifts the mind but also supports healthy digestion and absorption of nutrients.

Thus, Ayurveda recommends that food should always be taken in a suitable place, free from disturbance, with all necessary arrangements that make the act of eating calm and mindful.

7. *Na Ati Drutam Bhojanam* (Not Eating Too Fast): Ayurveda cautions against hurried eating. When food is consumed too quickly, it does not mix properly with saliva and digestive secretions, which are essential for the initial stages of digestion. As a result, food remains inadequately processed, leading to poor digestion, discomfort, and even fatigue. Moreover, eating in haste prevents us from truly experiencing the taste, texture, and quality of the food, making it harder to distinguish what is wholesome or unwholesome.

Therefore, Ayurveda recommends eating at a moderate pace, giving sufficient time for chewing, salivation, and mindful enjoyment of food. This ensures that digestion begins well in the mouth and continues smoothly in the stomach.

8. *Na Ati Vilambitam Bhojanam* (Not Eating Too Slowly): Ayurveda advises against eating too slowly or with long interruptions. When meals are stretched over excessive time, food tends to cool down and lose its freshness. This hampers proper digestion and leads to irregular processing of food in the stomach. Moreover, slow and distracted eating often prevents the natural feeling of satiety, causing a person to eat more than needed.

Hence, food should be eaten at a steady, moderate pace—neither too fast nor too slow—allowing for warmth, freshness, and proper digestion, while ensuring that the body recognizes satiety at the right time.

9. *Ajalpan Na Hasan Tanmanah* (Mindful Eating without Talking or Laughing): Ayurveda emphasizes that meals should be taken in a calm and focused manner. Eating while talking, laughing, or with a distracted mind interferes with the body's ability to properly process food, producing the same harmful effects as eating too quickly. Such behavior disturbs attention, reduces salivation, and hampers the harmonious coordination of digestion.

Therefore, one should eat mindfully—without conversation, without laughter, and with a peaceful, concentrated mind. This practice not only supports better digestion but also cultivates awareness and respect toward food.

10. *Ātmānam Abhi Samīkṣya* (Eating with Self-awareness and Individual Consideration):

Ayurveda acknowledges that every individual is unique in constitution (Prakriti) and digestive capacity (Agni). Therefore, before eating, one should reflect on whether a particular food is suitable for oneself. By understanding “this food suits me, this does not”, a person naturally chooses what is wholesome (Sātmya) and avoids what is unwholesome (Asātmya).

Thus, meals should always be guided by self-awareness, considering one's constitution, health condition, digestive strength, season, and even current state of mind. This personalized approach ensures nourishment, prevents disease, and supports balance of body and mind.

***Dvādaśa Āsana Pravicharaṇa* – The Twelve Considerations of Food in Ayurveda**

Ayurveda, the science of life, pays great attention not only to the quality and quantity of food but also to the conditions under which food should be consumed. Along with *Āhāra Vidhi Vidhan* (the ten rules of eating described in *Charaka Samhitā*), *Suśruta Ācārya* further elaborates twelve specific considerations of food intake, known as *Dvādaśa Āśana Pravicharaṇa*.

These guidelines emphasize that diet should vary according to the individual's constitution, digestive fire (Agni), disease condition, season, and other external and internal factors. By following these principles, food becomes medicine, ensuring both health maintenance and disease management.

Acharya Suśruta enumerates the following twelve types of food intake:

Śīta, Uṣṇa, Snigdha, Rūkṣa, Drava, Śuṣka, Eka-kālīka, Dvi-kālīka, Auśadha-yukta, Mātrā-hīna, Doṣa-praśamana, and Vṛtty-artha.

The Twelve Considerations

1. **Śīta Guṇa Āhāra (Cold Food):** Persons suffering from thirst, burning sensation, alcoholism, bleeding disorders (Raktapitta), poisoning, fainting, or weakness due to excessive copulation should be given cold food. Cold food pacifies heat, reduces burning, and restores strength.
2. **Uṣṇa Guṇa Āhāra (Warm Food):** Those afflicted with Kapha and Vata disorders, those who have undergone purgation, who consume Sneha (unctuous therapy), or those with excessive dryness should consume warm food.
Warm food improves digestion, stimulates Agni, and alleviates Vata–Kapha.
3. **Snigdha Āhāra (Unctuous Food):** Individuals of Vata constitution, those with dry body tissues, those weakened by excessive sexual activity, and people who perform heavy exercise should be given unctuous food prepared with ghee, oil, or fats. Snigdha food nourishes tissues, strengthens the body, and prevents Vata disorders.
4. **Rūkṣa Āhāra (Dry Food):** People suffering from obesity (Medoroga), those with excessive unctuousness, patients with Prameha (urinary disorders/diabetes), or those with excess Kapha should be prescribed dry food. Rūkṣa food reduces Kapha and Meda, prevents excessive oiliness, and maintains balance.
5. **Drava Āhāra (Liquid Food):** Persons with dryness of the body, thirst, or general debility should be treated with liquid diets such as soups, gruels, and nourishing broths. Drava food restores hydration, improves strength, and is easily digestible.
6. **Śuṣka Āhāra (Dry/Solid Food):** Individuals with excessive body moisture (Kleda), wounds, or Prameha should consume dry foods. Śuṣka food reduces excess fluidity, manages Kapha and metabolic disorders.
7. **Eka-kālīka Āhāra (Food Once a Day):** Those with weak digestive fire (Manda Agni) should take food only once a day. This prevents overloading digestion and helps kindle Agni.
8. **Dvi-kālīka Āhāra (Food Twice a Day):** A person with normal digestive fire (Sama Agni) should take meals twice a day—morning and evening. This maintains regular digestion and prevents accumulation of Ama (toxins).
9. **Auśadha-yukta Āhāra (Food with Medicine):** If a patient dislikes medicine, it should be mixed with food and administered. This ensures compliance and therapeutic benefit without aversion.
10. **Mātrā-hīna Āhāra (Food in Small Quantity):** Patients with low digestive fire or those suffering from illness should be given food in small quantity. Light food prevents burdening digestion and aids recovery.

11. **Doṣa-praśamana Āhāra (Dosha-pacifying Food):** Food should be selected according to season, place, and the prevailing state of Doṣas. Example: light, cooling foods in summer; warm, unctuous foods in winter.
12. **Vṛtty-artha Āhāra (Food for Maintenance of Health):** For healthy individuals, food should be consumed with the aim of sustaining life, vitality, and balance. This aspect highlights preventive care and daily nourishment for longevity.

In Ayurveda Dietetics Acharya has mentioned about the quantitative dietetics, Acharya Carak has mentioned about the proper quantity of food which depends upon the power of *agni* where food get digested and absorbed in time without disturbing the nature (equilibrium of *dosa*, *dhatu* and digestive fire). The benefits of taking adequate quantity of food provides strength, complexion, happiness and longevity to the person without disturbing the homeostasis. Along with giving the importance of diet, acharyas have put forward the dietary regimens to be practiced in different seasons.

Elaborative description about the food articles to be avoided and to be taken along with the effects on our body. Acharya have strictly prohibited the use of three substances i.e. *pappali*, *lavan* and *kshara* (alkali) for longer duration.

The highlighted concept that every person is considered different, they are buildup of different *prakritis*. So, acharya have mentioned about the principles of dietetics for the person of all constitutions. Diet contrary in properties of the *dosas* of the body constitution are wholesome for maintenance of positive health, however, person having *tridosha* constitution, for them diet consisting all *rasa* are wholesome.

DISCUSSION

Modern dietary goals and Ayurvedic concepts converge on the fundamental understanding that food is both preventive and therapeutic. Sushruta's definition of health as balance of dosha, agni, dhatu, and mala correlates with the modern goal of maintaining positive health and optimal body weight. Charaka's strategies of *langhana* and *brimhana* mirror nutritional interventions for weight management.

In maternal and child nutrition, Ayurveda provides a detailed framework through *garbhini paricharya* and *sutikopacharya*, prescribing monthly regimens for pregnant women and restorative diets for new mothers. These guidelines are not only nutritive but also preventive, aiming at better birth outcomes and improved lactation. *Lehana karma* and *balopacharya ahara* support child growth and development, resonating with modern goals of improving birth weight and ensuring children reach their full genetic potential.

The concept of *rasayana* offers a holistic counterpart to modern nutritional adequacy. By strengthening immunity (*vyadhikshamatva*), promoting tissue nourishment (*dhatu poshana*), and delaying aging, *rasayana* therapy provides a preventive and promotive dimension to health. Modern parallels can be drawn with micronutrient sufficiency, functional foods, and adaptogens.

With respect to chronic diet-related diseases, Ayurveda classifies them as *santarpanajanya vyadhi*, highlighting overnutrition as their root cause. Conditions like obesity, diabetes, and hypertension align with this category. The preventive measures of *ahara vidhi vidhana*—regarding food quantity, timing, and combinations—closely resemble modern dietary recommendations on portion control and balanced eating.

Finally, in the care of the elderly, *rasayana tantra* and *vayasthapana chikitsa* provide insights into enhancing longevity and quality of life. The use of rejuvenative herbs such as *Amalaki*, *Guduchi*, and *Haritaki* demonstrates Ayurveda's anticipation of geriatric nutrition and health, which modern science increasingly explores through nutraceuticals and anti-aging research.

Thus, the dialogue between Ayurveda and modern nutrition highlights not only parallels but also unique contributions of Ayurveda, particularly its emphasis on digestion (agni), tissue-level nourishment, and holistic balance, which are often underemphasized in contemporary frameworks.

CONCLUSION

Modern dietary goals and Ayurvedic dietary principles share a common vision of promoting health, preventing disease, and enhancing longevity. While modern nutrition emphasizes nutrient requirements and disease-specific guidelines, Ayurveda integrates these with broader concepts such as digestive strength, *dosha* balance, and the sequential nourishment of tissues. The timeless principles of *ahara vidhi vidhana*, *garbhini paricharya*, *lehana karma*, and *rasayana tantra* illustrate that Ayurveda not only anticipated modern dietary concerns but also offered practical, preventive, and holistic approaches. By bridging modern nutrition with Ayurvedic wisdom, a more comprehensive and sustainable dietary framework can be developed for improving global health outcomes.

Hence, while modern science quantifies energy through caloric measurements, Ayurveda provides a functional, personalized, and qualitative framework—centering on Agni, Prakriti, and Ahara Vidhi Vidhan—to determine how much and what kind of food should be consumed for maintaining energy balance across different ages and physiological states.

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