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Ayurvedic food concept , 6 tastes (Shadrasa)

- One of the ways of food classification in Ayurveda is based on *rasa*. There are six major tastes according to Ayurveda, viz., sweet, sour, salty, pungent, bitter, and astringent. There are primary and secondary qualities (*guna*) that increase the properties of a material. This is further augmented by potency (*virya*), post digestive effect (*vipaka*), and therapeutic action (*karma*)
- For example, *amla* is predominantly sour in taste but post-digestive effect is sweet. Even though sour taste can increase *pitta* in the body, gooseberry nullifies *pitta* due to the sweet post digestive function





Sweet

- ? Water and earth element
- ? It increases kapha dosha and reduces vata and pitta
- ? Foods and herbs with the sweet flavour are considered to be tonics as they nourish us: licorice, shatavari and beetroot are all good examples as well as all sweet fruits, root vegetables, mung dal, honey, rice, milk and milk products.



Sour

- ? Fire and earth elements
- ? It increases pitta and kapha and decreases vata.
- ? Helps in digestion , moist the mouth , increase digestive juices
- ? Examples :- Citrus fruits , fruits , unripe fruits , chutneys, kanji ,alcohol
- ? Needed in small quantities



Salt

- ? Fire and water
- ? It increases pitta and kapha and decreases vata
- ? It is moist , hydrated , digestive , appetizer
- ? It causes ageing , baldness , raised blood pressure
- ? it should be taken in less doses
- ? Examples :- varieties of salt . Saindhav lavan is best , various foods especially sea food .



Katu (Pungent)

- ? Fire and air
- ? Increases vāta and pitta and reduces kapha.
- ? Stimulates metabolism , digestion
- ? Examples :- spices such as black pepper , ginger , cumin .



Tikta(bitter)







- Space and air
- ? It increases vata and decreases pitta and kapha.
- ? Medicinal property , used in ailments like arthritis , diabetes , metabolic disorders , it detoxify the body .
- ? Less quantity is needed .
- ? Examples :- turmeric , spinach, fenugreek , neem, karela , olives ,coffee and tea .



Kashaya (astringent)

- ? Earth and air
- ? It increases vāta and decreases pitta and kapha
- ? It soaks the fluid in the body so helps in diseases with lot of secretions and dehydration , it is useful in wound healing , diarrhea, swelling .
- ? Examples :- beans , lentils , cauliflower, broccoli, turnip . Dry fruits , turmeric , coffee , tea , banana, pomegranate .



TASTE	Elements	Source examples	VĀTA	PITTA	KAPHA
SWEET (madhura)	 Earth Water	Honey, rice, sugar, nuts, fruit, carbohydrates, grains, natural sugars, milk	↓	↓	↑
SOUR (amla)	 Earth Fire	Yogurt, citrus fruits, ascorbic acid, vitamin C, vinegar, cheese, fermented foods	↓	↑	↑
SALTY (lavana)	 Fire Water	Seaweed, tamari, table salt, sea salt, sea vegetables	↓	↑	↑
PUNGENT (katu)	 Air Fire	Cayenne, chile pepper, black pepper, ginger, garlic, herbs and spices	↑	↑	↓
BITTER (tikta)	 Air Ether	Turmeric, dark leafy greens, herbs and spices	↑	↓	↓
ASTRINGENT (kashāya)	 Air Earth	Alum, green banana, legumes, raw fruits and vegetables, herbs	↑	↓	↓



- ? Adding a squeeze of lemon to cooked dishes, for example, can quickly satisfy the sour taste, while adding a side salad fulfils the bitter and astringent tastes.

Order of taking tastes

- Madhur , amala , lavana , katu , titka , kasaya is the sequence
- reason :- just before our meal (at the end of digestion), vata dosha increases so to pacify the vata dosha madhur amla lavana rasa are consumed while at the end of meals , digestion process begins so there is aggravation of kapha so to balance kapha dosha katu , tikta , kasaya rasa are used .



Ahar varg (food articles)

- Shook dhanya (corn with the bristles)
- Shami dhanya (pulses)
- Mamsa (flesh)
- Shaaka (vegetables)
- Phala (fruits)
- Harita (greens , salads)
- Madya (wine)
- Ambu (water)
- Gorasa (milk and milk products)
- Ikshu vikarsa (products of sugarcane)
- Krittana (food preparations)
- Ahar upyogi (accessory food articles)



Ambu (water)

- Rain water to collected before just touching the ground is best .
- The water which is slightly astringent , sweet in tastes, light , soft is best of all
- Based on season it's qualities varies
-
- Rain water collected in rainy season is heavy and greasy . We should boil it to consume .
- Autumn rain water is non greasy , thin , light



- Winter season :- heavy , greasy , aphrodisiac , and nourishing in nature
- Late winters (shishir ritu) :- slight light , balance kapha and vata .
- Spring season :- astringent and sweet
- Summer season :- non greasy
- River water of Himalaya is pious and best and wholesome
- Rivers flowing towards west is light , clear and wholesome water
- Rivers flowing towards east is soft and heavy water.



Gorasa varg (milk and dairy products)

- Cow milk :- best one. Have various qualities sweet , cold , unctuous , dense , smooth , slimy , calming properties .
- Cow milk posses oja properties so this is best to enhance your oja
- Buffalo milk :- heavy to digest , prescribed in insomnia



- Goat milk :- astringent , sweet and cold, light to digest , used in conditions where there is bleeding disorders , fever , diarrhea . It is suitable to feed baby .
- Sheep milk is hot , it aggravates hiccups
- Human milk :- it is wholesome , nourishing , help to relieve pain in eyes . And in pitta associated disorders like epistaxis.



CURD

- Hot in potency , improve digestion , appetizer , heavy , balance vata
- Used in diseases like diarrhea , irregular fever , difficulty in passing urine .
- Not to be taken in autumn , summer , spring season , not to be taken in diseases of pitta and kapha .



- Cream of curd is helpful in enhancing sperm count , quantity and female fertility
- Buttermilk :- It is digestive , cardio tonic used in conditions like edema , IBS, piles , anemia
- GHEE :- cow ghee is cold and sweet . It pacify the vata and pitta , promotes memory , intellect , oja .it is helpful in many conditions like psychological disorders , toxic conditions ,emaciation



- ? Puran ghrita :- old cow ghee is especially beneficial in treating psychosis , epilepsy , indigestion , poisons .

Ikshu varg (products of sugarcane)

- Sugarcane :- when chew it is sweet , cold , increase kapha , laxative , nourishing
- while when taken from machine it causes burning sensation
- best variety is paundrak (near to white colour)
- Jaggery :- digestive as it contains molasses , improves blood , it increase the quantity of bone marrow . Recommended over sugar .



- Sugar :- refined form of sugarcane , source of instant energy , coldest of all and used in pitta related conditions .
- HONEY :-

This is of four types

- 1) Makshika (red variety of bee)- color of til taila.
- 2) Bhramara (bhramara type of bee)- white color
- 3) Kshaudra (small type of bee)- brown in color
- 4) Pattika(big size bee)- color of ghee

*makshika is best



- Honey is cold , astringent , tridosha har , it is used in wound healing and obesity .
- Warm honey is fatal
- Equal quantity with ghee is fatal
- It is best catalyst .
- It should be consumed in small quantity .



Ahar upyogi

1) Oil :-

sesame oil :- vata pacifying , does not increase kapha . Good for skin and hairs ‘

- Castor oil :- sweet and heavy .Balance the vata , Purgative
- Mustard oil :- hot in potency , pungent, aggravates rakta and pitta , useful in urticaria and itching .



- Atasi oil :-sweet , sour , hot in potency . It pacify vata but aggravates pitta and kapha .
- 2) fat
- 3) spices
- 4) choice of grains , pulses , meat etc .



ANUPANA (POST PRANDIAL DRINKS)

- Generally post prandial drinks should have property opposite to the food but they should not be hampering the digestion .
- Vata/kapha condition :-oily and hot drinks can be taken
- Pitta condition :-sweet and cold
- Emaciation :- meat soup / wine
- Physical strain :- milk



- Obesity :- honey water
- Contradictions :- water should not be taken in conditions of vata aggravation like hiccups , cough and loud speeches.



Thank You

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