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Viruddha Ahara (wrong food combination) - A Review

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ABSTRACT

The wellbeing of the individual chiefly depends upon the kind of food he consumes. The maximum benefits of *Ahara* (food) can be achieved only by following the healthy dietary guidelines mentioned in classics of *Ayurveda* whereas wrong dietary pattern can be hazardous to health. The food which is incompatible in respect to climate, quantity, method of preparation, combination etc. are described as potent cause of both physical and psychological illnesses. The present article is intended to explore the concept of *Viruddha Ahara* (incompatible food) described in *Ayurveda* classics mainly *Charaka Samhita*. The recent publications related to incompatible food is also referred for this. The ancient and recent surveys both prove that incompatible food habits are one of the chief causes of physical and psychological pathologies.

Key words: *Ayurveda, Thrayopasthamba, Viruddha Ahara, Wrong food combination, Dietary measures.*

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is one of the most ancient medical sciences which is still continuing and proving its effectiveness in present scenario. Unlike other medical sciences, instead of focusing on treatment of any particular disease, *Ayurveda* focuses more on the healthy living and wellbeing of the person. For healthy living, *Ayurveda* emphasizes on consuming right kind of diet which is healthy and nutritious.^[1] In *Ayurvedic* classics Incompatible diet is explained in scientific manner, as per *Ayurveda* cause of many systemic disorders is *Virudha Ahara* which is prone to many disorders. It is very important those how certain food combinations

interact with each other and prone for metabolic disorders.

Types of *Viruddha Ahara* (incompatible food)

Ayurveda literature has described various types of *Virudha Ahara*^[2] which can be summarized as follows in table no. 1.

Table 1: Shows the types of *Virudha Ahara* (incompatible food)

SN	Type of <i>Virudha Ahara</i>	Examples
1.	<i>Desha Viruddha</i> (place incompatibility)	<i>Ruksha, Teekshna Dravyas in Jangala Desha</i>
2.	<i>Kala Viruddha</i> (time incompatibility)	Consuming curd at night
3.	<i>Agni Viruddha</i> (digestive incompatibility)	Overeating when there is <i>Agnimandya</i>
4.	<i>Matra Viruddha</i> (dose incompatibility)	Honey & <i>Goghrita</i>
5.	<i>Satmya Viruddha</i> (suitable incompatibility)	Person habit of hot, pungent substances consuming sweet, cold

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6.	<i>Dosha Viruddha</i> (dosha incompatibility)	<i>Vata Rogi</i> taking <i>Vatakara Ahara</i>
7.	<i>Sanskar Viruddha</i> (preparation incompatibility)	Heated honey
8.	<i>Veerya Viruddha</i> (potency incompatibility)	Fish & milk
9.	<i>Koshtha Viruddha</i> (gut incompatibility)	Mild laxative in chronic constipation
10.	<i>Avastha Viruddha</i> (health incompatibility)	<i>Kaphavardhaka Ahara</i> to sleepy, lazy individual
11.	<i>Krama Viruddha</i> (sequence incompatibility)	Hot water after taking honey
12.	<i>Parihar Virudha</i> (contraindication incompatibility)	Cold water after hot tea
13.	<i>Upachar Viruddha</i> (indication incompatibility)	Cold water after ghee
14.	<i>Paak Viruddha</i> (cooking incompatibility)	Over roaster rice
15.	<i>Samyoga Viruddha</i> (combination incompatibility)	Milk + banana
16.	<i>Hridya Virudda</i> (palatable incompatibility)	Phobia towards object
17.	<i>Sampad Viruddha</i> (property incompatibility)	Sweet with samosa
18.	<i>Vidhi Viruddha</i> (rules incompatibility)	Laugh, speak while eating

Diseases due to food incompatibility

Maharshi Charaka mentions that such types of unwholesome diet can lead to diseases like abdominal distension, stiffness in neck, varieties of anaemia, indigestions, insanity, various skin diseases, diseases of intestines, fever, rhinitis, and infertility etc. It can be observed from the above list that *Viruddha Ahara* can lead to disorders up to impotency, infertility, and defects in pregnancy, thus it has an impact up to *Shukra Dhatu Dushti*.^[3] If the above list of diseases is classified as per the body system, it can be said that,

immune system, endocrine system, digestive system, nervous system, and circulatory systems are affected by continuous consumption of *Viruddha Ahara*.

According to *Vagbhata* diseases occurs due to *Virudha Ahara* are *Atisara, Ajeerna, Krimi, Vishaphota, Shopa, Mada, Vidradhi, Gulma, Rajayakshma, Jwara, Raktapitta, Ahtomahagada*^[4]

Madhava has included *Viruddha Ahara* is one among the etiological factor of the following conditions- *Atisara, Krimi, Unmada, Vatarakta, Amavata, Shoola, Kushta, Amlapitta, Ashrugdhara, Masurika*.^[2]

Food incompatibilities in Today's Perspective

Viruddha Ahara can lead to inflammation at a molecular level. Number of food incompatibilities is mentioned in old *Ayurvedic* literature, such as *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhitas*. Along with these types of food combinations some are also use in today's era. We have to identify those new food incompatibilities which are used today in day-to-day life as per *Ayurvedic* perspective and made research on them and has to create awareness in public about its consequences.

Virudha Ahara can be categorized into:

1. *Karma Virudha,*
2. *Krama Virudha,*
3. *Veerya Virudha* and so on.

Such food combinations can prove harmful, which may be imparting its untoward effects on immune system, cellular metabolism, and growth hormone.

A new branch called topography (a science related to combination of food) is emerging, which tells about the combination of basic categories of the food. As per this science proteins must not get combined with starch and carbohydrates and may be consumed differently.

1. Consuming proteins and starches together will result in delayed absorption.
2. Similarly eating sugars and acid fruits hinder the action of ptyalin and pepsin, reducing the secretion of saliva, and delaying digestion. If insufficient amylase is present in the mouth, starch will not be digested at all in the stomach, instead clogging up

the works until amylase in the small intestine can get to work on it.^[5]

This unwanted effect of wrong combinations of food is not limited up to gastrointestinal tract, but may affect the major systems of the body. Such reactions can be less important but on long term, it can be fatal to precipitating serious side effects.

Virudha Ahara we are taking now-a-days unknowingly, are more harmful. For example;

a) Green tea or black tea and milk - Tea contains flavonoids called catechus, which have many beneficial effects on the heart.

When milk is added to tea, then a group of proteins in milk, called caseins interact with the tea to reduce the concentration of catechus. So, avoid tea and milk together.

b) Milk and yoghurt - As you know consuming both together can precipitate milk inside the stomach that may irritate and induce vomiting. So, avoid milk and yoghurt together.

c) Tea and garlic - Tea contains anticoagulant compounds called coumarin. When combined with garlic (that also has anticlotting properties), they may increase the risk of bleeding, so better to avoid tea and garlic together.^[6]

d) Pomegranate juice and grapefruit juice - Pomegranate juice and grapefruit juice are both known to block the cytochrome P450 3A4 enzyme in the intestine and increase blood levels of many medications you are taking. Taking these two juices together may synergize the above action.^[7]

e) Unripe (green) tomatoes or potatoes and alcohol - The unripe green tomatoes contain huge amount of solanine, which may interact with alcohol. You may feel more sedation if the intake is more.^[8]

DISCUSSION

Mode of Action of Viruddha Ahara

Association between dietary pattern and diseases has always been a field of interest among the health professionals. Frequent intake of combination of

incompatible food leads in to production of toxins. Then in the alimentary tract this toxins provoke all *Doshas* and which get mixed with digestive juice and then *Rasa Dhatu* and so on it spread from one *Dhatu* to next *Dhatu*. Thus, this *Doshas* spread from *Koshtha* (gut) to *Shakha* (*Dhatu*s and skin). While travelling through all over the body where ever there is *Khavaigunya* (inherent deformity) it gets lodged and shows the symptoms of the diseases. Effects of incompatible food can be classified in to *Aashukari* (acute) and *Chirakari* (chronic) which may be modified in the form of symptoms or diseases.

Viruddha Ahara taken regularly could induce inflammation at a molecular level, disturbing the eicosanoid pathway creating more arachidonic acid leading to increased prostaglandin-2 and thromboxane, this inflammatory effect is an important effect as these all are the basic pathologies that create *Agni Mandya*, *Ama*, and a number of metabolic disorders.

The growth and maintenance of body tissues depend on the intake of proper food. The nutrients like proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and certain active principles present in various food/drugs are essential for performing various functions of the body.

The management of *Virudha Ahara* induced diseases - it is advisable to intimate the therapy with *Amapachana* with *Vishahara* drugs like *Shunti*, *Haridra*, and *Shirisha*, any incompatibility among the drugs of formation in terms of *Rasa*, *Virya* and *Vipaka* may alter the therapeutic activity.^[9]

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The person who habitually takes *Viruddha Aahara* should be subjected to either of *Shodhana therapy* mainly *Vamana* (therapeutic emesis) and *Virechana* (therapeutic purgation) or *Shamana* (pacifying) therapy denending upon the *Doshik* vitiation with drugs which are qualitatively opposite to such *Viruddha Aahara*.^[10] Along with drug therapy gradual shift from unwholesome diet to wholesome diet should be done with care. Sudden change of dietary

pattern may not be suitable for the person so this must be done in slow manner

CONCLUSION

The seers of *Ayurveda* furnished the *Viruddha Ahara* is an important aspect to today's improper dietary habits. This can lead to several hazardous diseases unknowingly to the patients. In *Ayurveda* it is clearly furnished the etiological as well as therapeutic profiles of wholesome and unwholesome (*Hita & Ahita*) food and drugs in their classics. The purpose of intake of wholesome diet/drug is to maintain normal health and elevate various disorders keeping these in view one has to choose a sensible diet and suitable *Rasayana Dravya* (rejuvenating substance) to maintain good health and proper care should be taken to avoid *Viruddha Ahara*. *Virudha Ahara* shows its effects from *rasa* level *Dhatu* to *Sukra Dhatu* i.e., it effects all the *Dhatu*s which shows its severity of consequences which leads to many systemic disorders and it also acts at gene level which reveals that many diseases of unknown aetiology and also cause for carcinogenesis, so in order to prevent these deadly disorders one has to take the preliminary step of preventing the intake of *Virudha Ahara* in our day to day life.

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