



REVIEW ARTICLE

# Diet and Ideal Lifestyle as a Preventive Measure for Cancer in Ayurvedic Perspective: A Review Article

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## ABSTRACT

Ayurveda focus more on prevention of diseases than treatment. *Aahar* (diet) and *dincharya* (ideal life-style) are two important principles described as to prevention. Cancer is responsible for a large no of morbidity and mortality in the world, responsible for new cases of about 18.1 million and death of about 9.6 million in 2018 according to WHO and a lot of evidence suggests that major responsible causes of cancers are life style factors, physical inactivity, refined sugar, the typical high fat and smoking. However, 30 -35% of the cancer cases can be prevented by a healthy life style and diet according to the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF). Cancer can be managed through diet because they are the source of important physiologically functional components. According to scientific observations research dietary supplement helpful to prevent breast cancer recurrences. Fibers, which is the main dietary components, having antineoplastic functions, due to its unique properties it is recognized as treatment of cancer. Antioxidant rich diet is required for the prevention of cancer. It has been observed that by healthy *Aahar* (diet) and *dincharya* (ideal life-style) i.e., reducing alcohol consumption, nonsmoking, physical activity and weight control and, breast-feeding and a plant-based diet can avoid half of the cancer.

**Key Words** *Dincharya, Aahar, Life-style, Antioxidant, Fiber*

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## INTRODUCTION

The ancient science of medicine i.e., *Ayurveda* is practice since *vedic* era in India. It is beneficial to promote better health and longevity rather than to cure disease. It focus more on prevention of diseases than treatment. *Aahar* (diet) and *dincharya* (ideal life-style) are two important principles described as preventive measure. Cancer is responsible for a large no of morbidity and mortality in the world, responsible for new

cases of about 18.1 million and death of about 9.6 million in 2018 according to WHO and a lot of evidence suggests that major responsible causes of cancers are life style factors, physical inactivity, refined sugar, the typical high fat and smoking. The global burden of cancer continues to increase largely because of an increasing adoption of cancer-causing behaviors and the aging and growth of the world population. However, 30 - 35% of the cancer cases can be prevented by a



## REVIEW ARTICLE

healthy life style and diet according to the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF). Commonly used therapy i.e., Chemo and radiation for cancer treatments, often have side effects, and a complete cure is sometimes not possible. Therefore, prevention, suppression, or prolonging the beginning of the disease is important aspect. Fruits and vegetable rich diet can lower the chance of onset of cancers and increase life expectancy; because natural antioxidants are present in fruits and vegetables. According to ancient *Ayurveda*, different type of diseases connected with change in psychophysiological and pathologic behavior, which is caused by imbalances in different *doshas* (i.e. *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*). To balance and resort between these *doshas* is the basic aim in the *ayurvedic* treatment. Proper diet is mention in *ayurvedic* text which promote health and wellbeing. The *Ayurveda* also prescribes more than 700 plant-based medicines that contain spices and food additives to encourage good health.

### CANCER FROM AN AYURVEDIC PERSPECTIVE

According to Ayurvedic literature body is control by three systems, viz., the nervous system (*Vata*), the venous system (*Pitta*) and arterial system (*Kapha*), normal functions of body is performed by mutual coordination between these systems. A disease condition is developed by any imbalance in these body-control systems. The basic purpose of *ayurvedic* treatments is to maintain the equilibrium between the three major systems of the body. *Prakritisthapani chikitsa* (health maintenance), *Rasayana chikitsa* (restoration of

normal function), *Roganashani chikitsa* (disease cure), and *Naishthiki chikitsa* (spiritual approach) are four therapeutic approaches mention in ayurvedic text. Disease is classified into six stages, including *sanchaya* (aggravation), *prkoapa* (accumulation), *Prsar* (overflow), *sthansanshay* (relocation), *vyakti* (buildup in a new location), and *bheda* (manifestation into a recognizable disease) in Ayurveda. Cancer is a results of lifestyle changes, like as unhealthy foods, lack of hygiene, or by physical trauma, or poor behavior, which causes imbalances in *Vata*, *Pitta*, and *Kapha*, by which the inner layer of the *tvacha Rohini* (the 6th layer of skin) get injured and there is formation of abnormal branches of many blood vessels. In this stage, there is early bubble shaped glandular growths can be developed in *granthi or arbuda*; however, both are visible and external growths only. In *ayurveda Granthi* has been explain as a hard, round, and the bulging swelling produced by aggravation of *Vata and Kapha*, vitiating the blood, muscle, and fatty tissues. This *arbuda* is a large, muscular, round, immovable, deeply rooted, and slowly growing swelling which is produced by the aggravation of *doshas*, vitiating the blood, muscle, and fatty tissues. These swelling may be inflammatory or non-inflammatory, depending on the basis of *doshas* involved. According to *Ayurvedic* classics, *Charaka* and *Sushruta Samhita*, cancer is an inflammatory or noninflammatory swelling and either *granthi* (i.e., minor neoplasm) or *arbuda* (i.e., major neoplasm).



## REVIEW ARTICLE

The following factors are responsible for the vitiation of doshas.

(1) *Vata*-aggravating factors such as excessive intake of dry, bitter, astringent, pungent foods and some stressful conditions.

(2) *Pitta*-aggravating factors such as excessive intake of salty, sour, fried foods, and excessive anger.

(3) *Kapha*-aggravating factors such as excessive intake of sweets, oily food and a sedentary lifestyle.

(4) *Rakta*-aggravating factors such as excessive intake of foods contain acid- or alkaline, for example, fried or roasted foods, sour fruits and alcoholic beverages. Severe emotional upset or excessive anger, working near fire or under the scorching sun or sunbathing, and hot conditions are likely some other factors.

(5) *Mamsa*-aggravating factors such as excessive use of foods like meat, yoghurt, fish, cream and milk. Behaviors which lead to exudation, like overeating and day time sleeping are some other causes of pathogen invasions of fatty tissues.

(6) *Medo*-aggravating factors such as excessive intake of sweets, oily foods, and alcohol and a lazy attitude.

### DIET, LIFE STYLE AND CANCER PREVENTION

The relationship between diet, life style and health has been recognized throughout recorded history. Dietary habits are the major contribution for the genesis of cancer. Diet, physical inactivity, and obesity are caused to approximately 30–35 % of cancer deaths. Physical inactivity contributes to

cancer risk not only through its effect on body weight but also through negative effects on the endocrine and immune systems. Diets that are low in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and high in processed or red meats are linked with a number of cancers. A frequent contaminated food is linked with liver cancer, diet rich in salt is linked to gastric cancer, aflatoxin B 1, and betel nut chewing with oral cancer

### DIETARY MODULATION AS PREVENTIVE MEASURE FOR CANCER: AYURVEDIC VIEWPOINT

According to Ayurvedic single food diet is not healthy for any individual. In Ayurveda these six major *rasas* (tastes) in our diet we need every day - *Madhur* (sweet), *amla* (sour), *lavana* (salty), *kattu* (pungent), *tikta* (bitter), and *kashaya* (astringent). Each of these *rasas* has specific effect on health of an individual. By including all six in their diet, one can be most completely nourished. Ayurveda mention strict dietary principles for maintaining healthy life. For example, *Satvika ahara* (food which is fresh, composed of fruits, milk, and vegetables consumed in a favorable environment), as mention in Gita, is considered wholesome compared to *rajas'* food (hot, fast food, spicy, acidic food) and *tamas* food and habits (alcohol, smoking, stale food, nonvegetarian food). *Rajas* and *tamas* foods may have a greater affinity for developing malignancy as compared to *satvika* foods. Individuals consuming relatively large amounts of fruits, vegetables, grains, and herbs are at a decreased risk of cancer of many organs. Cancer-chemoprevention effects of the  
September 10<sup>th</sup> 2021 Volume 15, Issue 2 Page 69



## REVIEW ARTICLE

eating of cruciferous vegetables like as cabbage, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower and broccoli, has been found to have in human and experimental animals. *Emblica officinalis* (Indian gooseberry or amla) is medicinal plant with more benefits. All parts of amla are useful in the treatment of a range of diseases, but its fruit has more importance. According to some experimental studies amla and its phytochemicals, such as ellagic acid, gallic acid, pyrogallol, elaeocarpusin, some norsesquiterpenoids, geraniin, corilagin, prodelphinidins B1 and B2, also possess antineoplastic effects. *Amla* is an important component of an Ayurvedic preparation called *Triphala*, which is made by combining three fruits – *Emblica officinalis*, *Terminalia chebula*, and *Terminalia bellerica*. It is useful in various condition as a colon cleanser, digestive, laxative and diuretic. Experimental studies results show that *Triphala* possesses antineoplastic, radioprotective, and chemoprotective properties.

## CONCLUSION

According to *Sushrita Samhita* ancient *Ayurvedic* text, A healthy person is the one whose *doshas* remain in balance state, who has good appetite, who has body, mind, and senses remain in balance and full of bliss. One can enhance good health and keep cancer away by following *Ayurvedic* dietary principles in our daily lives. According to *Ayurveda* the disease-preventive and health-promotion approach takes into account the whole body, mind, and spirit while maintaining health,

and the approach of Ayurveda to promoting health and treating disease is holistic and is now accepted in many areas of the world. In *Ayurvedic* there are certain dietary and therapeutic measures to arrest/delay aging and it rejuvenate the whole functional dynamics of the body. There are more than 700 plant-based medicines, strict dietary principles, and yoga to encourage good health in Ayurveda. In plant foods hundreds of bioactive chemical compounds identified. A large no of phytochemicals, non-nutritive substances is provided by the diet rich in plants food, which have health protective benefits. The prevention of cancer through food and ideal lifestyle is a better option than toxic cancer treatment. Prevent or delay the onset of cancer can achieved by a proper healthy and balanced diet definitely. Scientifically reevaluate the *Ayurvedic* concept of food and ideal lifestyle-based cancer prevention and management must be required.



## REVIEW ARTICLE

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**REVIEW ARTICLE**

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