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## Ayurvedic Concepts of Nutrition: An Overview

*Dr. Vishnu Sreenivas\*, & Dr. T K Sujan\*\**

*\*PG Scholar, Department of Panchakarma, Government Ayurveda College, Thiruvananthapuram.*

*\*\*Professor & HOD, Department of Panchakarma, Government Ayurveda College, Thiruvananthapuram.*

**Email Id:** [serviceheb@gmail.com](mailto:serviceheb@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*Ayurveda* places special emphasis on *ahara* (diet) and *anna* (food), as a means to good life, health and wellness. *Ayurveda* asserts that although the digestive capacity of each person may be different, the quality and appropriate quantity of food are necessary for a healthy life. Food taken in proper quantity provides strength, vigour, good complexion and nurtures the health of the tissues. Food has been given the prime importance since *Vedic* period. It is considered as *Brahma* in *Upanishad*. All the beings originate from food, food is responsible for life of all beings. Kashyapa gives it the name *Mahabahishajya*. This is responsible growth, development and enhancement of *ojas*. *Ahara* is one among the *trayopastambha* that supports life, the other two being *nidra* and *brahmacharya*. *Ayurveda* asserts that every food is a medicine, so there is no good or bad food and provides a logical approach to designing balanced foods for optimal nutrition by formulating food groups that work in harmony, induce proper digestion and promote maximum absorption of essential nutrients. When food is similar to one's *dosa*, it will aggravate the *dosas*. *Ayurveda* recommends minimal consumption of raw food, knowledge of foods and their effects prior to use and to avoid food combinations that are antagonistic to each other. *Ayurveda* asserts that the mind is directly influenced by the quality of food eaten, food preparation, appearance, aroma and freshness of the food. These factors influence all the five senses and regulate proper digestion. *Ayurveda* has classified the food category in three basic groups: *Satvika*, *Rajasika* and *Tamasika*. *Poshana* should be ensured in all levels of life, that is *garbha*, *bala*, *madhya* and *jara*. An *Ayurvedic* diet provides guidelines that encourage mindful eating and consuming foods that are appropriate for our *dosa* or *prakriti*.

**Keywords:** Ayurvedic diet, *Poshana*, Nutrition, *Ahara*.

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