

Pak Viruddha Aahara: A Conceptual Study

Dr. Priyanka Yadav¹, Prof. Ashok Kumar Sharma², Dr. Ankita³

¹P.G. Scholar, Dept. of Kriya Sharir, M.M.M. govt. Ayurvedic College Udaipur, Rajasthan.

²Professor & HOD, Dept. of Kriya Sharir, M.M.M. govt. Ayurvedic College Udaipur, Rajasthan.

³Lecturer, Dept. of Kriya Sharir, M.M.M. govt. Ayurvedic College Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Corresponding author: Dr. Priyanka Yadav

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20250231>

ABSTRACT

In Ayurveda, the concept of Pak Viruddha Aahara focuses on dietary incompatibilities arising from improper cooking and food preparation methods. Derived from the Sanskrit terms "Pak" (cooking) and "Viruddha" (incompatible), it emphasizes how cooking practices can influence the qualities of food, potentially leading to health imbalances. Improperly prepared food—such as overcooked, undercooked, reheated, or burnt items—can impair digestion, produce toxins (Ama), and disrupt the balance of the body's Dosha (Vata, Pitta, Kapha). This article explores the classical Ayurvedic understanding of Pak Viruddha Aahara, provides examples, examines its effects on health, and highlights its modern relevance. With the rise in processed and reheated foods, the principles of Pak Viruddha Aahara offer valuable insights for preventing lifestyle diseases and promoting holistic well-being through mindful cooking and dietary practices.

Keyword: Ayurveda, Viruddha Aahar, Aahara, Samhita

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda, the ancient science of life, places significant emphasis on diet (Aahara) as a cornerstone of health. Along with Nidra (sleep) and Brahmacharya (regulated lifestyle), it forms the Trayopastambha or three pillars of life¹. As long as one refrains from any harmful health behaviour, these regimens, when correctly maintained with Yukti, provide vigor and improve complexion till the end of one's life, laying the groundwork for the body's nourishment and growth. One of the critical dietary guidelines in Ayurveda is avoiding Viruddha Aahara, which refers to incompatible foods that can harm the body. A specific subset of this is Pak Viruddha Aahara, focusing on food incompatibilities arising from improper cooking or processing methods. This article delves into the concept, examples, and health

implications of Pak Viruddha Aahara while exploring its modern relevance.

METHOD AND MATERIAL

Ayurvedic texts such as Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita describe the concept of Viruddha Aahara and its potential to cause disease. Pak Viruddha Aahara falls under this broader category and is specifically concerned with how food preparation influences its compatibility with the body. Examples include excessive heating, undercooking, or reheating.

Aim

To explore the Ayurvedic concept of Pak Viruddha Aahara, its examples, mechanisms of harm, and modern relevance, while emphasizing its role in promoting health and

preventing diseases caused by improper cooking and food preparation practices.

Objectives

1. To define Pak Viruddha Aahara and its significance in Ayurveda.
2. To provide examples of dietary incompatibilities caused by improper cooking methods.
3. To outline Ayurvedic guidelines for proper cooking and food preparation.

Understanding Pak Viruddha Aahara

The term Pak Viruddha Aahara is derived from two Sanskrit words: “Pak” meaning cooking or preparation, and “Viruddha” meaning incompatible. Pak Viruddha Ahara highlights the incompatibilities that occur due to improper cooking techniques, unsuitable combinations during preparation, or incorrect processing methods. These practices can alter the food’s qualities, making it harmful to the body.

Examples of Pak Viruddha Aahara

1. **Overcooked Food:** Excessive cooking destroys essential nutrients, reduces vitality (Prana Shakti), and makes food heavy (Guru) and indigestible.
 - Example: Overcooked vegetables lose their natural enzymes and fiber.
 - The Food Standards Agency (FSA) in the UK has warned about the risk of acrylamide if we cook food with extremely hot flames, especially starchy meals.²
2. **Burnt Food:** Charring food creates carcinogens and toxins that disrupt digestion and harm overall health.
 - Example: Burnt toast or excessively grilled meat.
3. **Undercooked Food:** Raw or partially cooked food can harbor pathogens, leading to infections and digestive issues.
 - Example: Undercooked pulses can cause bloating and indigestion due to anti-nutritional factors like lectins.

4. **Reheated Food:** Repeatedly reheating food alters its chemical composition, making it toxic and difficult to digest.

- Examples:
 - Refried oil- Numerous health risks among people are caused by the frequent use of this deep-fried oil for frying. On repeated frying, physical changes including colour changes might influence the cooking oil's fatty acid makeup. These techniques reducing the frying oil's natural antioxidant content and producing dangerous reactive oxygen species. Consuming dishes made with warmed oil over an extended period of time can seriously impair one's antioxidant defense system, resulting in diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and vascular inflammation.³
 - Reheated rice can lead to bacterial contamination (*Bacillus cereus*).
 - Fried food, such that seen at fast food restaurants, is typically prepared in heated oil that has been used repeatedly. A portion of fried chicken or French fries prepared at a fast-food restaurant contains 100 times the amount of aldehydes that the World Health Organization considers safe. Even fumes are so harmful that they raise the chance of developing cancer.⁴
5. **Improper Fermentation:** Incorrect fermentation can produce harmful by-products that disrupt gut flora.
 - Example: Poorly fermented batter for idli or dosa.

6. **Excessive Use of Oils or Spices:** Overuse of oils or spices during cooking can make food too heavy or irritant to the gastrointestinal tract.

7. **Nonstick pan Teflon covering on food pan:** Although residues of PFOA were discovered in some Teflon-coated cookware, the majority of manufacturers believed that PFOA burned off during the manufacturing process. According to a 1999 research, PFOA was present in the

blood of 98% of Americans. This resulted from the chemical's exposure in the environment. Consequently, the US EPA established a plan to phase down PFOA use by 2015. Teflon is normally safe; however, it can be harmful to your health if heated above 300 degrees Celsius (570 degrees Fahrenheit). Teflon-coated utensils provide a number of health hazards.⁵

- 8. Cooked food in cooker:** According to some research, pressure cooking may even destroy nutrients or substances that prevent the body from absorbing and using nutrients. Pressure cooking kills more nutrients than boiling.⁶

Diseases Caused by Pak Viruddha Aahara
Ayurvedic literature links Pak Viruddha Aahara to various diseases, including:

- Gastrointestinal disorders (acid reflux, bloating, indigestion).
- Skin diseases (eczema, psoriasis).
- Metabolic disorders (diabetes, obesity).
- Allergic reactions.
- Cardiovascular conditions.

Ayurveda prescribes specific cooking methods to enhance the nutritional and therapeutic properties of food:

- 1. Freshly Cooked Food:** Always consume freshly prepared food to preserve its vitality and nutrients.
- 2. Proper Heating:** Cook food at moderate heat to retain its natural qualities.
- 3. Avoid Reheating:** Reheating food alters its Gunas (qualities) and generates toxins.
- 4. Use of Compatible Combinations:** Combine ingredients that harmonize with each other to enhance digestibility.
- 5. Hygiene and Purity:** Maintain cleanliness in the cooking process to avoid contamination.
- 6. Suitable Cooking Vessels:** Use cookware made of materials like clay, iron, or stainless steel that do not leach harmful substances.

Modern Relevance of Pak Viruddha Aahara

The principles of Pak Viruddha Aahara are more relevant than ever in today's fast-paced lifestyle. Common practices such as consuming processed foods, reheated meals, or improperly cooked fast foods mirror the harmful effects described in Ayurveda. These practices are linked to the modern epidemic of lifestyle diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disorders.

CONCLUSION

Pak Viruddha Aahara serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of proper cooking methods and food combinations in maintaining health. By following Ayurvedic principles, one can optimize digestion, prevent disease, and promote overall well-being. In a world increasingly reliant on convenience foods, adhering to these ancient guidelines offers a sustainable and health-focused approach to modern dietary challenges.

Declaration by Authors

Ethical Approval: Not Applicable

Acknowledgement: None

Source of Funding: None

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

1. Yadhava T., editor. Charaka Samhita of Agnivesha, Sootra Sthana. Ch. 11, Ver. 12. 3rd edition, Varanasi: Chaukamba Surabharati Prakashana; 2008. p.67.
2. Dietary Acrylamide and Human cancer: A Systemic review of literature, Mandeep K. Viirk-baker, Tim R. Nagy and John Groopman, 2014.
3. Effect of repeated heating cooking oil on antioxidant content and endothelial function, Xin Fang Leon, Chung Yi Ng, Kamsiah Jaarin: April 2015. www.wjpr.net | Vol 12, Issue 3, 2023. | ISO 9001:2015 Certifie
4. Csallany AS, Han I, Shoeman DW, Chen C, Yuan J. 4 Hydroxynonenal (HNE), a toxic aldehyde in french fries from fast food restaurants. Journal of the American

- Oil Chemists' Society. 2015; 92:1413-1419.
5. <https://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/is-teflon-coating-safe>.
6. Reade, C. (2002). The best cooking techniques & utensils: Why the wrong kitchen equipment or cooking method can reduce the amount of nutrients you glean from even the healthiest meals. (Foods). IDEA Health & Fitness Source, 20(4), 23+.
- How to cite this article: Priyanka Yadav, Ashok Kumar Sharma, Ankita. *Pak Viruddha Aahara: a conceptual study*. *Int J Health Sci Res*. 2025; 15(2):237-240. DOI: [10.52403/ijhsr.20250231](https://doi.org/10.52403/ijhsr.20250231)
