

REVIEW ARTICLE

Management of Anemia through Ayurveda and Diet

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ABSTRACT

Iron Deficiency Anaemia (IDA) is one of the most widespread nutritional disorders globally, particularly affecting women and infants. In women of childbearing age, the physiological demands of menstruation, pregnancy, and breastfeeding often deplete iron stores, making them especially vulnerable. While only about 3% of men are iron deficient, the prevalence rises to around 20% in women and up to 50% in pregnant women.

IDA is a pressing public health issue, especially in developing countries like India. Iron, particularly in its heme-based form, is vital for numerous metabolic functions, including oxygen transport via hemoglobin. It also plays a critical role in enzymatic processes, such as those involving cytochromes essential for energy production and cellular metabolism. Iron exists in two key states ferrous (Fe^{2+}) and ferric (Fe^{3+}) enabling it to participate in redox reactions. Most of the body's active iron is found in hemoglobin, with additional amounts in myoglobin and cytochromes.

Despite various public health efforts, IDA remains highly prevalent in India, impacting health, productivity, and development across generations.

KEYWORDS

• Anaemia • Diets • Haemoglobin • Iron Deficiency anaemia

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INTRODUCTION

Iron malnutrition, inactive iron absorption, increased iron requirements due to repeated pregnancy and lactation, iron deficiency at birth, nausea, the timing and type of intake of the diet, the frequency of infections in children, and the loss of body mass during adolescence and pregnancy are some of the factors contributing to the high prevalence of Anaemia in India. In addition, there are many other system and organizational problems.

Ayurvedic concepts of diet and dietetics are essential in managing metabolic disorders. Anaemia treatment can also be achieved with Ayurvedic medicine and diet control measures. Ayurved says Ahara, Nidra and Brahmacharya are considered tripodes of life. Ahara plays a significant role in physiology and health status. Food is an essential thing in life. If there is no fuel, no engine will work.

The Vedas, the first written records of Indian literature, contain countless dietetic references. In Rigveda, Purusha is said to be the ruler of Atma and is portrayed by Anna. At Taittiriya Upanishad, Anna is considered 'Brahma'; life is maintained by Anna. At Bhagavad, Geeta food is also accepted as a source of energy.¹

Continuing to achieve success in yogic activities, there is a clear emphasis on proper nutrition, as well as other activities and lifestyles. In Charaka Samhita, according to the context of the origin of Purusha (man) and diseases cited as 'Ahara' as the cause. In Sushruta Samhita, a detailed description of Lord Dhanwantari's dietetics about the function and importance of food in human life is sufficient to prove its historical significance. At Kashyapa Samhita, Ahara is called "Mahabhaisajya".

FOOD CATEGORIES

Ayurvedic diet can be categorized as:

By taking – Animal Origin and Plant Background, with the result – healthy and unhealthy.

With variety – drink, edible, chewing gum, and lehya, made with Pancha Mahabhutas - five types namely. Akasheeya, Vayavya, Agneya, Apya and Parthiva. Bhojya, Bhakshya, Charvya, Lehya, Chusya and Peya.

Ayurveda recommends that all six of your favourites be included in all foods to improve complexion or immunity.

Madhura Rasa (Delicious taste), Amla Rasa (Sour flavour), Lavana Rasa (salty taste), Katu Rasa (Hot Taste), Tikta Rasa (Bitter taste), Astringent taste.

These six rasa directly affect Tridosha and contribute to nutrition and tissue regeneration.

Apart from the fundamental constitution of eating various dietary rules and other things like Matra (plural), Kala (time or season), kriya (method of preparation), Bhumi (place of residence or climate), Deha (human constitution), Desha (body jokes & and location) etc. it also plays a vital role in the reception of healthy food. Ayurveda recommends Prakriti, when considering the diet.

Three primary doshas: Vata, Pitta and Kapha, make seven types of Prakriti. In this world, each person is unique, with unique genetic makeup, unique environment, unique chemical composition, and unique attitude. For this reason, all-natural and healthy foods cannot be effective for all people at the same level. Everyone should eat the proper nutrition for their Dosha in the constitution to balance the different seasons.

Anaemia is a lack of quality or amount of haemoglobin (Hb) in circulation, leading to a decrease in oxygen (O₂) that carries blood volume to the organs and tissues. Anaemia is a disease that is associated with many problems. RBC's oxygen-carrying capacity decreases with anaemia, and that is why many people today fail to get enough iron in their diet.

Many things can cause anaemia. It may be because of a vegetarian diet that lacks the proper diet, which includes plant protein or to live a busy life so that mealtimes are fast and have a lot of junk food.

Ayurveda considers anaemia linked to the subdosha of pitta: writes pitta. Sitting on the stomach helps in the process of adequately digesting digested food. When this process does not work correctly, minerals in food, such as iron do not pass through the bloodstream.^{5,6,7}

Anaemia can be divided into three distinct types in Western and Ayurvedic types:

1. Iron deficiency anaemia is a type of data.

2. Sick-cell anaemia and anaemia caused by blood loss due to haemorrhoids and bleeding gums are a type of pitta.
3. Hypo-proteinemic anaemia and inflammation are a form of Kapha.

Finally, it does not matter which vitamins or minerals may be deficient in the patient. If you look at anaemia from the perspective of Ayurveda, it is essential to look at how anaemia manifests itself in an individual.

Vata-type anaemia may be manifested by rough, dry skin and cracked joints. The person may be pale or thin and have shortness of breath, constipation or dark bowel movements.

Pitta type anaemia may be manifested by yellowing the eyes, dizziness, sensitivity to light and high urine, passing black or yellow stools.

Kapha type anaemia is often characterized by inflammation (oedema), and the skin feels cold and clammy.

Below are some of how a person can treat anaemia:

Massage (Abhyanga)

To get rid of toxins in the body through lymphatic massage on the go.

Proper nasal breathing (Surya Bhedan / pranayama)

This pranayama helps the liver, builds blood and carries oxygen to the body and mind.

Exercise

Although the patient will be experiencing fatigue, simple and regular exercises such as walking and Yoga will promote prana flow in the body.⁹

Food

Dietary supplements include beetroot juice and carrot and spinach cumin; all green leafy vegetables and cruciferous (of their chlorophyll); dried currants and berries; citrus fruits; days; nuts; lightly cooked apples or pears with prunes, fresh figs, grapes and pomegranates; and onions, an edible vegetable with succulent branches and spices like fenugreek.

Cook in a metal pan

Eating a cup of plain yoghurt and one teaspoon of turmeric before lunch and dinner

can be beneficial for iron deficiency anemia. Filling a cup of copper with tap water at room temperature, letting it stand overnight and drinking it in the morning will help increase the intake of essential minerals.⁸

Remedies

The high content of vitamin C in Triphala will help absorb iron, as well as aid in the process of detoxification. Shatavari ghee or bitter ghee may be beneficial, depending on whether the anaemia is manifested as a type of pitta or a type of data, respectively. Getting back into control of body and mind by doing these exercises should relieve time. Fatigue will subside, emotions will rise, and a clear mind and strong body will result.

Anuradha Roy (2014), in a study, revealed that Dhatri Lauha has a high concentration of anaemia (IDA), which was evidenced by the significant results obtained by most of the parameters in this study.²

In a review study, it was determined that a total of 293 compounds containing iron nanoparticles (Lauha Bhasma) were specified, and 85 formulations were found to have metal components in 55 diseases. The highest form of Lauha Bhasma is found in Jvara (Fever), Pandu (Anemia), Arsha (Piles), Sotha (Inflammatory Diseases) etc. The high iron content of the composition is found in the form of Vati (tablet form). The design of iron ions is often associated with Amalaki (Emblica Officinalis), a rich source of ascorbic acid to improve absorption.³

CONCLUSION

Ayurved has immense potential for the management of the diseases like anaemia. The Ayurvedic principles rely on curing diseases rather than only controlling the disease. The Ayurved with naturopathic diets and Yoga will cure many ailments, including anaemia. As alternative therapeutics, it is now attracting the patients to change their lifestyle dietary habits for a healthier life.

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