

• **32- FRUITS AND VEGETABLES IN AYURVEDA**

- As most of us know, [Ayurveda medicine](#) pays great attention to **nutrition and the relationship with nature**. Since according to Ayurveda there are vegetable foods present in nutrition, Ayurveda's focus is naturally on fresh vegetables, fruits, seeds, nuts, legumes and spices.
- **Is it healthy, however, to switch to a completely raw vegetal food?**
- There is no exact answer to this question, because each organism is different and what helps one person can harm another. There is no doubt, however, that switching from Western-style of eating mostly processed foods and a small amount of natural food to a completely **natural and environmentally-friendly diet** does not only make us feel better, but also strengthens our health.
- Ayurveda believes that **all diseases come from the stomach**, and our health depends not only on what type of food we eat, but also on the ability of our body to digest and absorb these foods. This digestive ability is called the **digestive fire Agni**.
- According to Ayurveda, the nature of raw vegetables and fruits is cold, light, dry, rough and they are **raja sic**. That is, they have a stimulating effect on the sensory tastes and activate the body as a whole, raja sic food are also chocolate, coffee, spices and tomatoes.
- **Excessive consumption** of such foods reduces the strength of the digestive fire, especially in people with weak Agni, and leads to poor absorption of nutrients by the tissues and correspondingly to health problems. That is why Ayurveda recommends a **balanced diet**, including natural food processed with heat treatment in order to strengthen our Agni.
- **Ayurveda and Fruits**
- From Ayurveda's point of view, fruits are an **easily digestible food** compared to other foods. When combined with other food, digestion is difficult and the fruit stays in the stomach for as long as it takes to digest the slowly degradable food.



- This process of long- term **remaining of the fruit attacked by the gastric juices** leads to its fermentation. If this type of diet continues, it will have a negative impact on the body as fruit fermentation disturbs the absorption of nutrients from the cells and the disposal of the waste products called with the common name Ama. This creates conditions for the development of a disease.
- **Accumulation of toxic substances** is caused not only by poorly digested fruits but also by contaminated environment, for example. That is why Ayurveda advises **fruits to be eaten separately** from vegetables and other foods.
- When a person stops consuming fruits for one reason or another, this **cycle of contamination of the body** will be interrupted. They will **harmonize their digestive system**, feel no swelling, burning in the abdomen, gas, and body tissues will better digest nutrients and metabolism will improve, which will help to lose weight.
- **Well-nurtured tissues** are a guarantee for a strong immune system. Also, the body will produce better quality tissues, prevent inflammation, improve the condition of the skin, nails, hair, bones and teeth.
- Ayurveda medicine offers a particular diet that follows the natural processes in nature and our body, which contributes to the normal function of our organism and accordingly improves the health. Ayurveda way of feeding would help people suffering from stomach swelling, gas formation, and other types of digestive system problems.
- Various pieces of evidence suggest that a diet based mainly on raw fruits and vegetables and freshly squeezed juices makes people feel more energized, feel better concentration and mental clarity, less ill, they lose weight more easily, suffer less inflammations and their skin looks better. This diet is also believed to be able to fight **chronic diseases such as heart disease and even cancer**.
- One of **Ayurveda's** most important **nutrition rules** is to eat fresh fruits separately from other more digestible foods, especially foods such as dairy and cereal products. When we eat a fruit, it is good to wait half an hour before we eat another.
- **When to eat according to Ayurveda**
- In Ayurveda diet, the time when we eat fruits or vegetables is also important and there are some established food intake rules to follow if we want to achieve balance. These established by Ayurveda hours correspond to **natural processes in nature** such as ripening of fruits, vegetables or seeds, solar and lunar energy in products that affect our mood and processes in our body.
- The established hours correspond to the natural cycles: ***in the morning – the sun's rising, at noon – the sun is at its peak, in the afternoon – the sunset, in the evening – lunar energy.***
- The best **time to eat a fruit is in the morning**, and the most inappropriate time is in the evening; all fruits such as **bananas, apples, peaches, pears, apricots, mango, kiwi** except citrus are recommended for breakfast on an empty stomach.
- Citruses such as lemon, grapefruit, pomegranate, mandarin can be eaten between 10 AM and 3 PM. The watermelon is eaten separately between 11 AM and 5 PM. Melon is also eaten separately between 9 AM and 4 PM.

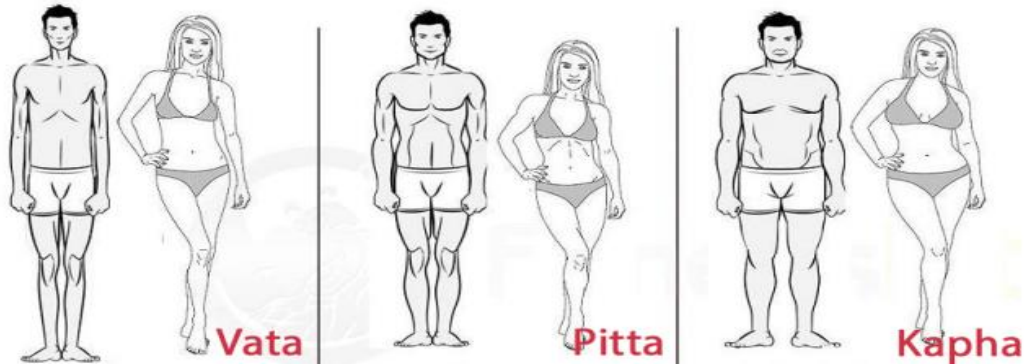
- All kinds of **berries** such as cherries, grapes, blueberries, raspberries, except strawberries, for example, can be eaten in the morning, but cannot be served in the evening, except for grapes. Between 10 AM and 4 PM in the afternoon is the time for eating strawberries.
- **Dried fruits** such as raisins, figs, apricots, prunes, dates are also a good option but are only recommended for breakfast and during the cold season. They can be eaten **in combination with nuts and seeds**, but not with fresh fruit. People with Pitta constitution can eat fresh fruit in every season, as they have more digestive fire Agni.
- We just have to eat fresh fruit as a snack, after which it will take a few hours before our next meal.

- **Ayurveda and Vegetables**

- As for vegetables, at lunchtime we can
- eat all kinds of vegetables except **carrots**.
- After 10 AM and before lunch, it is
- allowed to eat cucumber, zucchini, red beet, and
- radish. Tomatoes, potatoes,
- red cabbage, eggplant, dill, radishes are
- not suitable for dinner. Carrots, red beets, peppers,
- green cabbage, cucumber, parsley, turnip, lettuce,
- yellow zucchini are suitable in the hours between 5 PM and 7 PM.
- For those with the Pitta constitution a great dinner choice is a fresh salad of raw vegetables, and heat-treated vegetables for the Vata and Pitta constitution.
- Although some of the supporters of **healthy eating** deny the heat treatment of vegetables because they think it destroys valuable nutrients and enzymes and they are somewhat right. Research shows, however, that **plant enzymes in raw vegetables** and fruits are degradable by our own enzymes in our body. By being destroyed, they do not contribute much to our digestion and body tissues.
- But there are some foods such as tomatoes and carrots, which once cooked increase the amount of **useful nutrients** like lycopene, carotene, vitamins and minerals. Moderate baking, stewing or steam preparation makes vegetables **more easily digestible by the body**. There are even some natural foods that contain substances whose effect is to **block the absorption of valuable nutrients**. Cooking processes stop the action of these substances enemies of the good **absorption of nutrients**.



- If we eat relatively regularly **unprocessed homemade food**, we will ensure our proper digestion. It is important not to cook the vegetables or bake for too long, as we will thus destroy a huge portion of their **nutritional value and their Prana** (translated from Sanskrit it means vital energy).



- **Suitable fruits for every Ayurvedic constitution**
- **Vata constitution (Air and Ether)**...People with this type of constitution have a *slim figure; they are prone to dry skin, poor blood circulation, swelling and stomach gases and are sensitive to cold*. For them, sweet and sour fruits are beneficial but they should avoid tart fruits.
- **Dried fruits** can be consumed if they are soaked. Beneficial fruits are baked apples, prunes and raisins, apricots (soaked), mature bananas, avocados, cherries, coconuts, figs, dates, grapes, grapefruit, kiwi, lime, mango, orange, papaya, melon, pineapple, rhubarb, tamarind.
- **Pitta constitution (Fire and Water)**...People with Pitta constitution have medium weight and average body structure, have **strong appetite and fast digestion**. They hardly tolerate high temperatures. They may suffer from problems such as **stomach burning and reflux**. Sour fruits are not suitable for them. For them, **sweet and tart fruits** are beneficial and it is very important that they are mature and not sour. Appropriate for them are sweet apples, berries, apricots, avocados, figs, dates, coconut, pears, melon, watermelon, pomegranate, soaked raisins and plums.
- **Kapha constitution (Earth and Water)**...People with Kapha constitution usually have a **large and heavy body**, they easily **gain weight and accumulate fat**. They are susceptible to **fluid retention** and are sensitive to cold. They have a **weak appetite, slow digestion, and often have a sense of heaviness** and lethargy after eating. People with Kapha constitution should avoid most of the fruit, especially sweet and sour fruit, **tart or dried fruit** being the most suitable for them and it is best to eat them in moderate amounts.
- The best fruits for Kapha are ripe apples, dried apricots, cherries, cranberries, raspberries, lemon, pear, pomegranate, persimmon, dried figs, raisins and soaked prunes. If you are one of those people who have a dual constitution, combine the fruits appropriate for both types of constitution. Sweet fruit balance Vata and Pitta, and the tart ones are suitable both for Pitta and Kapha. It is good for Vata and Kapha to emphasize on warming fruits, as their nature is cold.