

• **95 - Rules for good digestion in Ayurveda**

- Ayurveda's rules for maintaining optimal digestion and hence for **good metabolism** stem from two main points. The first is a consideration of the natural processes in the body. The second is **Ayurveda's universal principle of balance**.
- For good digestion in Ayurveda, a person should to eat only when they are hungry. However, this is one of the most frequently violated rules in Bulgaria. We eat when we are worried, when we are nervous, "take a bite" while watching a TVs show or a game of football, etc.
- Thus we "do not allow" our body to optimally absorb and exchange the substances. Because if we are not hungry but "take a bite", then we are adding new food for digestion before the digestion of the previous eating has been completed. This interrupts the absorption and supposes remains which form toxins. And toxins are the base of diseases.
- For good digestion in Ayurveda it is a strict rule that eating should not be done by the way – while we are walking down the street, in front of the computer while we are reading the newspaper, while we are driving. When we are eating, we must disregard everything else, be calm and focused on eating, and chew well.
- Thus, we will realize, in a timely manner, when we've had enough and avoid overeating, and it will be easier for us to keep the balance that Ayurveda has formulated. For optimal digestion in Ayurveda, it is believed that 25 percent of the stomach should be left empty, 25 percent should be liquid food, e.g. soup, and the remaining 50 percent should be solid food. The dishes themselves must include each of the six tastes because they all have a role in the full value digestion in Ayurveda. For example, spicy foods stimulate digestion and metabolism; tart foods decompose fat; sour foods have a cleansing effect and support the absorption of minerals, and so on.
- The six tastes – sweet, bitter, salty, sour, tart, spicy can be achieved with the help of condiments and not with types of food. For good digestion the food should be warm because cold food is digested harder.



- **Food takes energy from the environment!**
- Ayurveda views food mostly as **a source of vital energy for the body** – its existence and development. This does not mean that gustatory qualities are neglected. On the contrary, it is a basic idea that the dishes should be delicious. Otherwise they do not benefit the body even if the products from which they were prepared were useful. For Ayurveda, 40 percent of the energy required by the body is taken from food. The rest is taken from **breathing, yoga and meditation**. Ayurveda practitioners therefore pay particular attention to food.
- Food itself brings energy through the substances that the body absorbs from it. **Products have taken this energy from the nature**. The energy is as strong as the natural conditions in which the products were grown.
- The longer the products are conserved, the more their energy is reduced. Ways of processing are also important – they can conserve energy as much as possible and can greatly reduce it. For Ayurveda practitioners the **canned and semi-finished products are dead food** that does not have useful energy.
- Along with all of this, food can take energy from the surrounding environment. Therefore, besides the rules for **optimal digestion in Ayurveda**, there is also an orderly theory on how to prepare the dishes.
- Requirements apply for the premises where the food is prepared, for the people who prepare the dishes and for those who consume it.
- The premises should have lighted and clean not only because of hygiene but also in order not to have any bad energy in them. This is because the products will absorb it and transfer it to those who consume them. Thus, healthy food will become harmful.
- For the same reason the people who prepare and serve the food should do it with **light emotions**, with love. These requirements apply also to the person eating. Every **negative emotion** – anxiety, anger, anger, depressive thoughts, etc. during meals **kills the energy of the food**.
- **In harmony with nature**
- **Ayurveda's basic understanding** is that one must be in harmony with **Nature and the Cosmos** – they were created to exist under the same laws.
- From this principle of consonance with Nature comes the understanding of **the cycles in the body**. According to Ayurveda, there are three phases in human everyday life related to the Sun's activity and change every 4 hours. Eating and the general routine should be in compliance with them.

- **The first phase** is from sunrise to 10 a.m. The body is not active, it's relaxed and feels heavy. The digestive fire is not strong, breakfast should be up to 9 a.m. and be light – *fruit, milk, honey, hot water*.
- **Between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.** the sun rises high, the body activates fire Agni at maximum; this time slot is for the main meal – vegetables, soup, cereals, etc. It is then that the body can take the heaviest type of food for the day.
- **In the next 4 hours** – until 6 p.m., the body is activated the most for work. The digestive fire has however gone weak same as the power of the Sun. The dinner should be at around 7 p.m. and be light – *walnuts, fresh milk, lime honey*. Thus changing the cycle of body activity over 4 hours continues in the same sequence.
- **The time for socializing, reading and chores is until 10 p.m.** Going to bed should not be after 10 p.m.; the main part of sleep is until 2 a.m. when **the life forces are restored**. Sleep, of course, goes on afterwards as the Ayurveda practitioners get up at sunrise for personal hygiene and **spiritual activities**. At 6 a.m. it's time to start a new active day.