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Preservation of health through dietary measures: A Review

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Abstract

Diet is a substance that supplies nutrients and acts as a substitute for organ deterioration; therefore, essential for every living thing.¹ In the Unani system of medicine, there are some dietary guidelines that are suggested in order to promote health and prevent disease. The traditional Unani book describes dietary intake in terms of quality, quantity, time, combination, temperament, sequence, and seasons, among other factors. The author of this brief review essay will talk about how diet affects maintaining good health.

Methodology: Classical unani text, journals, articles, review papers were reviewed for data collection.

Keywords: Preventive care, diet, principles of diet, unani medicine, ghiza, prevention

Introduction

Diet is the kind of food that a person, animal or community habitually eats. It is a substance that provides nutrition and replacement for dissolution of body organs^[1]. Therefore, it is necessary for us. Without food we cannot imagine our life. The survival of our life and the growth of our body depends on the food and nutrition. So, the applicability of this principles regarding diet can guarantee better health, while the consumption of unsuitable food can cause various diseases. We will discuss here the principles of diet, which are useful for health. When it comes to health and illness, Unani doctors stress the importance of a personalized diet. For the purpose of preservation & promotion of health and prevention of the disease we need to follow this principle.

Diet is the type of food that an individual, an animal, or a group regularly consumes. It is a substance that supplies sustenance and acts as a replacement for organ systems that are vanishing^[1]. As a result, it is essential for us. We are unable to imagine a life without food. Our body's ability to grow and sustain life depends on the food we eat. Therefore, following these dietary guidelines can ensure greater health, however eating inappropriate foods can result in a number of ailments. Here, we'll talk about dietary guidelines that are good for your health. Unani doctors emphasized the need of following a personalized diet depending on one's health and sickness state. We must adhere to this idea in order to maintain, preserve, and promote good health, as well as to prevent disease.

According to the Unani physician *Ibn Abbas Majosi*, when talking about diet, it's vital to consider six factors

1. The quality of food
2. Quantity of food,
3. Timing of food
4. Order of food,
5. Condition of appetite.
6. Food according to organs.^[2]

Apart from this *Ibn Sina* advocated twenty-three principles of diets.

1. The food that will be consumed should not contain any drug-like elements.
2. Food should be consumed when one is truly hungry, and

3. When consuming food, one should take into account its condition (means food should be eaten hot or cold).
4. When eating, the amount of food should be taken into account.
5. Different foods should be considered in the correct order.
6. The temperament of the person's stomach should be taken into account.
7. It is important to take into account the person's residence and nation.
8. Body fatness should be considered.
9. Temperament needs to be considered.
10. Habit needs to be considered.
11. It is important to consider the person's humoral temperament.
12. The type of food consumed before.
13. It is recommended to eat various foods independently or in combination.
14. How long should you eat for.
15. There is a tendency toward or aversion to food
16. The moods of various organs should be taken into account.
17. The recommended frequency of eating.
18. The recommended amounts of alcohol and water to be had with meals.
19. Advice regarding sweet meals.
20. Foods categorized by age.
21. Dietary guidance based on movement and rest of the body.
22. Guidelines for eating fruits with meals.
23. Guidelines to unhealthy eating^[3].

All of these are very beneficial for health promotion and prevention. Here, a few of them will be discussed.

Quality of food

The level of excellence of a variety of food characteristics, such as flavour, presentation, nutritional content, etc., can be referred to as food quality. According to Unani doctors, if the body's temperament is hot, cold food should be supplied, and if the body's temperament is cold, hot food should be given. Similar to this, if your body has a dry temperament, you should recommend moist food, and if your body has a moist temperament, you should recommend dry food^[2].

If it is not possible to prepare food with a temperament that is the opposite of that of the body, then another food should be added to make the dish's temperament more moderate. For instance, adding *Kahu* to *Karafs* will lessen their spiciness. Similarly, as all fish have a cool temperament, fish should also be prepared with spices.^[2]

In addition, it should be remembered that *Ghiza kaseef* (viscous nourishment), such as beefs, is appropriate for people who work hard and are heavy because these foods are well digested and offer the most nutrition for heavy workers. People who prefer a comfortable existence are more suited for *Ghiza lateef* (light nutrition), which includes chicken, partridge, and other sorts of meat^[2,3].

Quantity of food

Dietary intake should be within normal ranges. It shouldn't be either too much or too little. When there is no heaviness or soreness in the stomach after eating, no trouble breathing or lying down, the amount of nutrition is regarded as normal. The amount of food we require is influenced by a variety of variables, such as our height, age, sex, general health, occupation, physical activities, genetics, body size, and

environmental circumstances etc.

According to the Unani System of Medicine, food intake should be based on each person's needs. We shouldn't overeat because this can make our stomachs feel heavy and aggravate indigestion. Therefore, overeating will result in the production of poor blood and the accumulation of morbid matters in the body, which will lead to a variety of ailments. If the meal has a hot temperament, eating too much will result in protracted fevers and serious illnesses. Excessive eating will result in joint disorders, gout, asthma, hardening of the liver, and hardening of the spleen if the food temperament is *Har* and *Ghaleez* (hot with viscous nutrition). The organs will become obstructed if the food is *Har* with *lazozat* (hot and sticky). If the diet produces *Mirra Sauda*, it will result in melanic disorders including cancer and jaundice. It is best to vomit and take a break from eating if you have consumed too much food and are experiencing heaviness and discomfort in your stomach^[2,3].

Sequence of diet

When more than one type of diet needs to be followed, the order of the diet should be taken into account. Because various diets have different digestive process from one another, it is best to avoid consuming multiple nutrient kinds at once. The order of eating must be taken into account if more than one type of nutrient needs to be consumed at one meal. For instance, *baji ul hadm* (slowly digestible) foods like fatty diets and *sari ul hadm* (quickly digestible) foods like partridge, chick, and wheat meat. *Sari ul hadm* foods should be consumed before *bati ul hadm* foods if these items must be had in a single meal. Soft foods should be consumed before dry and hard foods in this manner^[2-4].

Timing of food

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are traditionally the three meals consumed each day in Indian culture. According to a large cohort study, eating more than six meals per day lowers the risk of obesity compared to eating less than three meals per day. In addition, frequent eaters had smaller waist circumferences after controlling for food and lifestyle [5]. Lunch and dinner should be lighter than breakfast. Late breakfast alters the body's ability to retain energy, and a heavy dinner generates abnormal accumulation of primarily poorly digested metabolites in the body. Food should only be consumed during cold periods and should be avoided during hot periods since during these times the body's internal heat lowers and the food cannot be properly digested because the *Hararat Ghareezia* is inclined to the exterior of the body. Because of this, food digests more easily in the winter than it does in the summer. For this reason, it is preferable to eat breakfast in the morning during the heat. It is best to avoid eating right away after doing strenuous activity, exercising, or taking a bath^[2,3].

Diet according to appetite

Meal digestion and appetite are closely related. For instance, if two food varieties are available at the same time and are both of similar quality and excellence, one should choose the one that the *Tabiyat* is more drawn to. Because *Tabiyat* has a stronger tendency to digest this particular food. If there are two foods present at once-one excellent and the other junk-and the *Tabiyat* has a preference for junk food, it is best not to disregard this type of junk food because the stomach will accept and digest it just well. In everyday life, it has been seen that if *Tabiyat* detests the meal, one will quickly vomit it up

after eating it. Because medicine and doctors are also servants of *Tabiyat*, the physician should not priorities his rules over the temptation of *Tabiyat*^[2].

Combination of food

Fruits, melons, sour fruits, and bananas should not be consumed with milk because doing so can result in leprosy. Chicken, radish, and curd shouldn't be consumed together. *Ghee* should be consumed if it is kept in copper containers, however there are some combinations that are harmful if sweets are present, such as vinegar, sour pomegranate, *sikanjabeen*, etc. Similar to how you should use honey with sour dishes if you are sensitive to them. *Sikanjabeen bazoori* lessens the negative effects of hot-tempered foods and Honey, maul asl, and wines lessen the negative effects of cold-tempered food^[6].

Diet according to body organs

There is a situation where diet should always be chosen in accordance with the bodily part or organ that is impacted. For instance, even though the entire body is not in need of the food, it should be consumed if there is any pain in any portion of the body. For instance, if someone suffers from headaches frequently, it would be wise for him to steer clear of foods like walnuts, milk, garlic, onions, etc. that induce vapors to flow towards the brain. In the same way, someone with indigestion should stay away from foods like ghee, sesame seeds, etc. If there is a lot of phlegm buildup in the stomach, the person should avoid eating things that cause phlegm and instead take things that thin it out, like honey, *sikanjbean*, etc. Foods that create bile, such as honey, onions, garlic, etc., should not be consumed by someone who has excessive bile production in their stomach^[2,3].

Diet according to age

The food for the kids should be made with *cumin* and *satar* once the breastfeeding phase is finished. Avoid *Ghiza Ghaleez* at all costs. Children should be fed in little portions, should not develop the habit of eating a lot at once, and should be allowed to play for a time after waking up in the morning before being given something to eat^[7].

Conclusion

A few dozen specialized food dishes are recommended in USM to have the intended effect on both health and illness conditions. A healthy lifestyle can be attained in addition to the prevention of numerous metabolic illnesses and NCDs, which have been on the rise for decades, by incorporating USM diet concepts into daily practice, preservation and promotion of health. Even for treatment purposes, Unani diets are employed.

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