



**ORIGINAL RESEARCH
ARTICLE**

Received : 25 June 2026

Revised : 30 June 2026

Accepted : 10 July 2026

Published : 14 July 2026

**THE INTERPLAY OF AYURVEDIC DIET AND
LIFESTYLE IN CANCER PREVENTION: A
HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE**

Dr. Sachin Aru^{1*} Dr. Sarika Aru²

1. Associate Professor, Agad Tantra Department, Matoshri Ayurved College, Dhanore, Yeola, Maharashtra 423401, Sleep apnea, Myofunctional therapist (Udemy), ORCID Id - <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-3677-2929>

2. B.H.M.S. (MUHS), C.C.C.N. (MUHS)

ABSTRACT

As defined by World Health Organization (WHO), cancer is an umbrella term for various diseases characterized by the uncontrollable growth and spread of abnormal cells in nearly any part of the body. They can either invade nearby tissues or spread to distant places in the body. Cancer is thus among the leading causes of morbidity and mortality all around the world. According to WHO, in the 21st century, 3 out of 10 people suffer from cancer. The diet rich in fats, fast food, and processed food in addition to a sedentary life style, stress, drinking alcohol and smoking are either direct or indirect causes in the vast majority of cancer patients (Nidan). As much progress has been made in the treatment of this disease, the interest in preventive measures has grown in recent years, especially those based on traditional medical approaches. One of the oldest systems of medicine in the world – Ayurveda is based on the holistic approach to health care and includes diet, lifestyle, and mind-body practices. The paper discusses the role of Ayurveda-based dietary and life style suggestions in cancer prevention. According to Ayurvedic literature, cancerous conditions were termed as 'Arbuda', which is defined as uncontrolled, progressive and non-movable growth of hard, painless tissue masses. The condition 'Arbuda' results due to the imbalance of all the three doshas, especially the Kapha along with the weak Agni and accumulation of Ama. Some of the fundamental principles of Ayurveda include the consumption of fresh, seasonal and Sattvic foods according to the person's Prakriti. Apart from these, the use of Rasayana herbs such as Ashwagandha, Turmeric, Guduchi and Amalaki that possess antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and help in boosting immunity. Apart from these, the use of practices such as the daily and seasonal routines including yoga, meditation and pranayama are recommended in order to keep the mind and body in good health. The Aahar and Vihar plays a crucial and influential role. There are some findings that suggest that the application of Ayurveda practices including the use of polyherbal formulation and the practice of maintaining the Agni may help in decreasing the risk of cancer.

Keywords: Ayurveda, diet, lifestyle, cancer prevention, Arbuda, Aahar, Vihar.

Corresponding Author

Name: Dr. Sachin Aru,
Associate professor, Agad Tantra
Department

Institution: Matoshri Ayurved
College, Dhanore, Yeola, Maharashtra
423401

 drarusachin@gmail.com

 **Phone:** 9923099006

AIM AND OBJECTIVE:

1. To assess the effects of certain dietary approaches from Ayurveda, like using special foods and herbs, on cancer prevention and treatment.
2. To assess the influence of certain aspects of lifestyle according to Ayurveda (Dinacharya, Ritucharya) on the balance of energies in the body and immunity to cancer.

INTRODUCTION:

The origin of the term Cancer lies in Greek language where its literal meaning is 'CRAB'. More than 200 types of cancers have been identified till date which affect human beings. Survival rates in cases of cancers are comparatively lower in developing countries because of the two reasons – one, diagnosis of cancers usually comes at a later stage and second, lack of timely treatment.[1]

The standard cancer therapies like chemotherapy and radiotherapy are often associated with side effects and in some cases, cure becomes impossible. Cancers are often triggered by modifiable risk factors associated with the lifestyle and environment of the person, thus, making them preventable.[2,3]

Traditional medical practice of India called as Ayurveda has been successfully applying several natural therapies for many centuries to prevent and cure different kinds of tumor through various methods. [4,5] Ayurveda being about 5000 years old is an art of maintaining well-being of the person physically, mentally as well as spiritually. According to Ayurvedic medicine, most of the diseases and disorders occurring within the body are attributed to an imbalance of three types of elements called as vata, pitta and kapha. In Ayurveda system, the major causes for the majority of psychophysical and pathological diseases occur due to the imbalance in the functions of the Vata, Pitta, and Kapha.

In the Atharva Veda, the disease is referred to as "Apachit," which later became related to swelling of various body parts.[6] As per the views of Sushruta, the primary cause for the occurrence of Arbuda disease is pathogens affecting the entire body. Sushruta has mentioned a skin layer called "Rohini" (epithelium), which is extremely susceptible.

Ayurvedic perspective of cancer:

As it can be seen from the descriptions of the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita, cancer is a kind of swelling either inflammatory or non-inflammatory Granthi (minor neoplasm) or Arbuda (major neoplasm) [7,8]. As stated in Ayurveda, the origin of cancer is due to poor personal decisions like improper nutrition, neglecting body care or doing something harmful, or it can be due to injuries. Granthi is a compact, spherical, raised swelling which is caused by the aggravation of Vata and Kapha and deranging of muscle, blood, and fat tissues functions. Arbuda is a huge, spherical, firm swelling which is firmly attached, motionless, and grows slowly. It occurs due to the disharmony of the doshas disturbing muscle, blood, and fat tissues. In the case of Tridoshaja disease, there is a particularly risky situation when three main bodily systems cannot organize their activity, and the body loses its protective tissue function. In that case, very serious and even lethal changes take place in the body. [9] It should be highlighted that in Ayurveda, the name of the disease is determined only based on the symptoms.

Factor responsible for cancer According to Ayurveda:**1. Tridosha Dushti it can lead:**

- Kapha forms lumps,
- Pitta forms heat and inflammation,
- Vata aids the spread of the disease.

2. Weak Digestion (Disturbed Agni):

When digestion is weak, food cannot be digested.

As a result, toxic materials (Ama) are produced and accumulate in the body, impacting healthy cells.

1. Ama:

Due to poor digestion of food, toxic material named Ama accumulates in the body. This blocks the channels in the body and lowers its immunity, thus having an impact like some harmful substances causing diseases.

4. Pragyaparadha:

Engaging in activities that one knows are not good for the body—smoking, eating in excess, or not getting enough rest—may upset the body's equilibrium.

5. Dhatu Dushti:

Poor development of the body tissues may lead to abnormal development of the cells.

6. Mithya Ahara-Vihara:

Consumption of junk food or processed foods, eating heavy meals, having a sedentary lifestyle, excessive stress, and lack of a daily regimen will make the body prone to illness.

8. Pollution and Harmful Environment

Polluted air, exposure to chemicals, and being in an unhygienic environment may lead to illness.

9. Beeja Dosha

There are some individuals who have an increased likelihood of suffering from diseases such as cancer because of an imbalance that is carried from their maternal and paternal beejas.

DIET AND CANCER PREVENTION:

Dietary practices can significantly contribute to the onset of cancer. Approximately 30–35% of cancer deaths result from unhealthy diets, lack of exercise, and obesity.[10] A diet rich in salt increases the risks of gastric cancer, aflatoxin B1, found frequently in contaminated foods, increases the risk of liver cancer, while the habit of chewing betel nut is related to oral cancer.[11] Cancer prevention dietary practices often include a higher consumption of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fish, along with reduced consumption of red meats, animal fats, and refined sugars.[12] The role of food preparation practices and proper dietary practices in the prevention of disease has long been discussed by many religions and cultures over thousands of years.[13] Vegetarianism has been shown to reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer.[14]

Natural products are composed of three main groups of chemicals such as phenylpropanoids, isoprenoids, and alkaloids. These chemical compounds are present in foods and herbal medicines that come from plants and have an important role in human nutrition and well-being. Consuming vegetables in the family of Cruciferae, such as cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflower is believed to help protect from cancer both in humans and experimental animals.[15] Lycopene is another natural antioxidant that can be found mainly in tomatoes and is believed to possess anticancer qualities. Indian gooseberry, or amla, is one of the most important medicinal plants in Ayurveda. It was shown experimentally that amla and some of its phytochemicals, including gallic acid, ellagic acid, pyrogallol, some norsesquiterpenoids, corilagin, geraniin, eleocarusin, and prodelphinidins B1 and B2, have antineoplastic activity.[16] Triphala shows cytotoxic action only on tumor cells and does not damage healthy ones.[17]

AYURVEDIC LIFESTYLE PRACTICES AND CANCER PREVENTION:

Identification of the cause of any illness is the most important goal of the Ayurvedic treatment process. It has mentioned six separate stages through which any disease moves: disruption, accumulation of imbalance, dissemination of imbalance, relocation to other parts of the body, stabilization of imbalance at new locations, and finally development of symptoms that form a unique disease. In the case of treating cancer by the Ayurvedic system of treatment, the most important aspect is.

Ayurveda focuses on all of these for good life style:

1. Prakritisthapan Chikits,
2. Roganashani Chikit,
3. Rasayana Chikitsa,
4. Naishthiki Chikitsa. [18]

PRAKRITISTHAPANI CHIKITSA:

Prakritisthapani Chikitsa refers to therapeutic measures aimed at maintaining or restoring the natural state of an individual's prakriti.

Key Concepts in Cancer Prevention:

1. Dosha Balance:

- Practices that promote Vata, Pitta, and Kapha in their natural state prevent cells from becoming dysfunctional and developing tumors.
- It includes Ritucharya, Dinacharya, and dietary and lifestyle planning for individuals.

2. Agni Deepana and Ama Pachana:

- Agni (metabolic fire) is the basic foundation of well-being; imbalance of agni results in production of toxins known as Ama and causes sickness.
- The essence of cancer prevention lies in healthy agni and prevention of Ama formation.

3. Rasayana Therapy:

- The Rasayana therapy is used to rejuvenate, stimulate immunity (Ojas), tissue repair, and longevity.
- Some herbs, such as Guduchi, Amalaki, Ashwagandha, and Haridra, have been proven to possess anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory.

4. Satvavajaya (Mind-Body Balance):

- The emotional health of a person is extremely important for the prevention of chronic disease conditions.
- Meditation, yoga, pranayama, and satvic diet aid in maintaining mental equilibrium and avoiding any sort of psychosomatic disorders such as cancer.

5. Shodhana (Detoxification):

- Panchakarma treatment must be done periodically in order to get rid of the toxins present in the body.
- The different Panchakarmas are Vamana, Virechana, Basti, Nasya, and Raktamokshana.

6. Nidanas parivarjan:

- Identifying and eliminating nidanas such as poor eating habits, lifestyle issues, carcinogens, or psychological stressors is an essential aspect of Ayurvedic preventive treatment.

Dincharya:^[19]

Daily habits like waking up early, using oil pulling, practicing meditation, and eating meals at regular times help maintain hormone balance and lower stress levels.

Dantadhavana

Ama, that is, toxins may be formed due to negligence in oral hygiene leading to irritation, infections and ultimately to the formation of lesions and even cancer in the mouth. This practice of Dantadhavan removes all remnants of food, toxins and germs and prevents any sort of irritation to the cells that might lead to mutation.

Anjana

Use of Sauveeranjana & Rasanjana is Advised

Dhoomapana, Gandusha

Purpose of Dhoomapana therapy:

It is performed to remove the Kapha and Vata Dosha from the upper part of the body, i.e. from the head, nose, throat and mouth.

Some herbs that are used in Dhoomapana Therapy include Haridra, Yashtimadhu, and Guggulu, which have anti-oxid.

Abhyanga

Daily Abhyanga is needed as it is Jara-Shrama-Vatahara, Pushtikara, Tvachya.

Vyayama

vyayama should be done to improve immunity

Snana

Bathing with appropriate water temperature based on the individual's Prakriti and season helps balance Pitta, Vata, and Kapha:

Ritucharya:^[20]

Modifying the diet and habits to suit seasonal changes is an essential process of maintaining the harmony in the body and improving its immunity. As Kapha builds up during the winter and spring, Pitta increases during the summer, while Vata reigns during the autumn and early winter. Neglecting seasonal changes will result in dosha malfunctions, which in turn can cause carcinogenesis.

Yoga and Meditation:^[21]

Stress contributes to cancer development and metastasis. The Ayurveda way of life comprises yoga and meditation that reduce stress hormone levels and increase immune system function against abnormal cells.

Stress Management:^[22]

Chronic stress affects the balance of hormones in the body and weakens the immune system. According to Ayurveda, yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises may help deal with stress and enhance mental health.

Long-term stress and poor lifestyles are the factors that can be the cause of many types of cancers; therefore, Ayurvedic methods dealing with people's psychological state may play a key role in the prevention of cancer.^[23]

Adequate Sleep:

A consistent sleep schedule is important for proper recovery both physically and mentally. According to Ayurveda, sleep at night is necessary for the body's self-healing and detoxification.^[24]

ROGANASHANI CHIKITSA:

some ayurvedic herbs having anti cancerous effect are

Basil (*Ocimum basilium*) [25]

Ginger (*Zingiber officinalis*) [26]

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*) [27]

Green tea (*Camellia sinensis*) [28]

Anti-cancer activity of cow urine. [29]

Aleovera, saffron and tomatoes (*solanum lycopersicum*)
Herbs and Spices: There are various herbs and spices found in the Ayurvedic diet which possess anti-cancer characteristics.

Turmeric (*Curcuma longa*): It contains curcumin, which has been proven to suppress cancer initiation, promotion, and metastasis.[30]

Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*): It has immunomodulatory and antiproliferative actions.[31]

Guduchi (*Tinospora cordifolia*): It is known for its antioxidant and detoxifying actions.[32]

Triphala: This polyherbal combination triggers apoptosis of cancerous cells.[33]

The dietary recommendations of Ayurveda encourage consuming un.

Triphala: This polyherbal combination triggers apoptosis of cancerous cells.[33]

The dietary recommendations of Ayurveda encourage consuming un.

NAISHTHIKI CHIKITSA:

Naishthiki Chikitsa (or Daivavyapashraya Chikitsa or Spiritual Therapy) is one of the three primary therapies of Ayurveda (according to Charaka Samhita) while the other two are Yuktivyapashraya (Rational Therapy) and Sattvavajaya (Mind Control Therapy). Naishthiki Chikitsa is spiritually-based therapy that includes elements of faith, surrender, mantras, prayers, meditation, and spiritual training. With respect to cancer (Arbuda), an illness associated with psychosomatic and karmic factors, Naishthiki Chikitsa has an essential role.

PROGNOSIS OF CANCER:^[34]

Classification of Arbudas based on prognosis described in Ayurvedic literature is as follows:

1. Sadhya (curable)

2. Asadhya (incurable)

Sadhya: vataj, kaphaj, medaj, sharkara rhabud

Asadhya: Masa Arbud, rakta.

PATHYA AHARA:^[35]

Air, kacang hijau, Shilajit, Guggulu dengan air lemon, air kelapa, tepung gandum, jus Giloy.... etc

APATHYA AHARA:

- Atiushna aahara and paana can affect the Rakta Dhatu and predispose to esophageal cancer.
- Chira siddha aahara (Stale, reheated, and leftovers) are not recommended because they cause Stambha (stiffness), Agnimandya (impairment of digestion), and formation of Ama (toxins).
- The consumption of highly refined and processed foods can lead to obesity and thus increase the chances of breast cancer.
- Parishushka (Over-dried) and Paridagdh (overcooked) meat should also be avoided since they are hard to digest.
- red meat, tobacco, alcohol, cold drinks, fast food, maida, starch rich vegetable

CONCLUSION:

In summary, the fundamental concepts of Ayurvedic nutrition and lifestyle provide for a holistic and preventive perspective on cancer care. Based on age-old traditional medicine, Ayurveda places great emphasis on the idea of balance that is crucial both for the body systems and for the relation between the person and his or her surrounding environment. Moreover, the Ayurvedic principles of personalized nutrition, detoxification, stress relief, and boosting of the immunity system fit perfectly into the contemporary notions of cancer prevention. Different herbs and practices described in Ayurveda proved their anti-cancer effectiveness.

Though the role of modern medicine cannot be ruled out when it comes to diagnosis and treatment of various diseases, combining Ayurveda may provide an excellent complementary way of reducing the risks of getting cancer and improving general health condition. Still, there is a need for scientific research to prove the value of traditional medicine in terms of modern oncology.

DISCUSSION:

In this research, an investigation was made into the part played by diet and lifestyle of Ayurveda in preventing cancer disease. The basic principle of Ayurveda is balance between the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha), achieved through personalized eating habits and living patterns. Based on the findings of this research, it can be said that following Ayurvedic dietary principles, involving the consumption of fresh and seasonal vegetables, using digestive spices such as turmeric, ginger, and black pepper, and avoiding overly processed or spicy foods can reduce inflammation, an essential cause of cancer.

There is also involvement of lifestyle regimens in Ayurveda, for example, practices of *dinacharya* (daily routine), *ritucharya* (seasonal changes), regular exercise like yoga and breathing exercises like *pranayama*, in helping to cleanse the body from toxic waste and to reduce stress levels. However, it should be noted that even though there is an increasing amount of research showing that Ayurvedic principles help maintain good health and prevent diseases, further scientific studies are still needed.

REFERENCES:

1. Jemal A, Bray F, Center MM, Ferlay J, Ward E, Forman D (2011) Global cancer statistics. *CA Cancer J Clin* 61(2):69–90
2. Wang JB, Jiang Y, Liang H, Li P, Xiao HJ, Ji J, Xiang W, Shi JF, Fan YG, Li L, Wang D, Deng SS, Chen WQ, Wei WQ, Qiao YL, Boffetta P (2012) Attributable causes of cancer in China. *Ann Oncol* 23(11):2983–2989
3. Anand P, Kunnumakkara AB, Kunnumakara AB, Sundaram C, Harikumar KB, Tharakan ST, Lai OS, Sung B, Aggarwal BB (2008) Cancer is a preventable disease that requires major lifestyle changes. *Pharm Res* 25(9):2097–2116
4. Balachandran P, Govindarajan R (2005) Cancer – an ayurvedic perspective. *Pharmacol Res* 51:19–30
5. Patel D, Mansoori A (2012) Cancer – an ayurvedic perspective. *IJARPB* 2(2):179–195
6. Prasad G.C. Concept of cancer in Ayurveda, Varanasi, Banaras Hindu University;221 005
7. Sharma PV. Charaka Samhita. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia;1985.
8. Bhisagrattha KL. Sushruta Samhita. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 1991.
9. Bhisagrattha KL. Sushruta Samhita. Varanasi: Chaukhamba Orientalia; 1991
10. Abdulla M, Gruber P (2000) Role of diet modification in cancer prevention. *Biofactors* 12(1–4):45–51
11. Park S, Bae J, Nam BH, Yoo KY (2008) Aetiology of cancer in Asia. *Asian Pac J Cancer Prev* 9(3):371–380
12. Cappellani A, Di Vita M, Zanghi A, Cavallaro A, Piccolo G, Veroux M, Berretta M, Malaguarnera M, Canzonieri V, Lo Menzo E (2012) Diet, obesity and breast cancer: an update. *Front Biosci (Scholar edition)* 4:90–108
13. Sinha R, Anderson DE, McDonald SS, Greenwald P (2003) Cancer risk and diet in India. *J Postgrad Med* 49:222–228
14. Rajaram S, Sabate J (2000) Health benefits of a vegetarian diet. *Nutrition* 16:531–533
15. Shukla Y, Pal SK (2004) Dietary cancer chemoprevention: an overview. *Int J Hum Genet* 4(4):265–276
16. Baliga MS, Dsouza JJ (2011) Amla (*Emblica officinalis* Gaertn), a wonder berry in the treatment and prevention of cancer. *Eur J Cancer Prev* 20(3):225–239
17. Sandhya T, Lathika KM, Pandey BN, Mishra KP (2006) Potential of traditional ayurvedic formulation, Triphala, as a novel anticancer drug. *Cancer Lett* 231(2):206–214
18. Thatte U, Dhahanukar S (1991) Ayurveda, the natural alternative. *Sci Today* 2001:12–18

19. Tillu G, Joshi J, Vaidya A. Ayurveda and cancer: opportunities for integrative oncology. *J Altern Complement Med.* 2019;25(6):593–596.
20. Singh RH. Exploring larger evidence-base for contemporary Ayurveda. *Int J Ayurveda Res.* 2010;1(2):65–66.
21. Bower JE, Irwin MR. Mind–body therapies and control of inflammatory biology: A descriptive review. *Brain Behav Immun.* 2016; 51:1–11.
22. Carlson LE, Specia M, Patel KD, Goodey E. Mindfulness-based stress reduction in relation to quality of life, mood, symptoms of stress, and levels of cortisol, dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate (DHEAS) and melatonin in breast and prostate cancer outpatients. *Psychoneuroendocrinology.* 2007;32(3):309–318.
23. Thaker PH, Sood AK. Neuroendocrine influences on cancer biology. *Semin Cancer Biol.* 2008;18(3):164–170.
24. Cappuccio FP, Taggart FM, Kandala NB, et al. Meta-analysis of prospective studies of sleep duration and total mortality. *Sleep.* 2010;33(5):585–592.
25. Jeurissen, S.M., Punt, A., Delatour, T. & Rietjens, I.M. Basil extract inhibits the sulfotransferase mediated formation of DNA adducts of the procarcinogen 1'-hydroxyestragole by rat and human liver S9 homogenates and in HepG2 human hepatoma cells. *Food and Chemical Toxicology*, 2008, 46, 2296–2302.
26. Scharfenberg, K., Wagner, R. & Wagner, K.G. The cytotoxic effect of ajoene, a natural product from garlic, investigated with different cell lines. *Cancer Letters*, 1990, 53(2-3), 103.
27. Murphy, E.A., Davis, J.M., McClellan, J.L., Gordon, B.T. & Carmichael, M.D. Curcumin's effect on intestinal inflammation and tumorigenesis in the ApcMin/+ Mouse. *Journal of Interferon & Cytokine Research.* 2011;31(2):219– 226
28. Spinella, F., Rosano, L., Decandia, S., Di, C.V., Albini, A., Elia, G., Natali, P.G. & Bagnato, A. Antitumor effect of green tea polyphenol epigallocatechin-3-gallate in ovarian carcinoma cells: Evidence for the endothelin-1 as a potential target. *Experimental Biology and Medicine*, 2006, 231, 1123.
29. Dhama, K., Chauhan, R.S. & Singhal, L. Anti-cancer activity of cow urine: Current status and future directions. *International Journal of Cow Science*, 2005, 1(2), 1–25
30. Aggarwal BB, Kumar A, Bharti AC. Anticancer potential of curcumin: preclinical and clinical studies. *Anticancer Res.* 2003;23(1A):363–398.
31. Widodo N, Takagi Y, Shrestha BG, Ishii T, Kaul SC, Wadhwa R. Selective killing of cancer cells by leaf extract of Ashwagandha: identification of a tumor-inhibitory factor and the first molecular insights to its effect. *Clin Cancer Res.* 2007;13(7):2298–2306.
32. Saha S, Ghosh S. *Tinospora cordifolia*: one plant, many roles. *Anc Sci Life.* 2012;31(4):151–159.
33. Sandhya T, Lathika KM, Pandey BN, Mishra KP. Potential of traditional ayurvedic formulation, Triphala, as a novel anticancer drug. *Cancer Lett.* 2006;231(2):206–214.
34. Vaidya Y.G.joshi kaychikisa chapter 16(Granthi,Arbud) reprinted; august 2020 publish by sampada shyam kopdekar pune. pg no.187
35. http://www.ccras.nic.in/sites/default/files/viewpdf/IEC_Communication/ARBUDA%20CANCER.pdf