

## General Ayurvedic Dietary Recommendations

### Specific Foods

Eat foods which are appropriate to your doshas.
Eat foods which are appropriate to the climate, season, and activities you do.
Favor fresh cooked sattvic foods.
Include all six tastes in each meal.
Include a variety of colors, textures, and tastes in each meal.
Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, legumes, etc in each meal.
Avoid tamasic foods like meat, fish, eggs, garlic, onion, watermelon, alcohol, and narcotics, fried foods, an excess of sweets, stale foods, old foods, chemical foods and medicines
Avoid rajasic foods like garlic, onion, radish, horseradish, vinegar, fermented foods, yeast breads, coffee, tea, stimulants, nicotine, an excess of spicy foods, preservatives, additives
Favor natural organic and local foods whenever possible.
Be very careful to avoid genetically modified foods.
Be very careful to avoid hidden meat products like eggs, rennet, or gelatin.
For dairy be very careful to select high quality, humane, and organic sources.
Avoid leftover food.
Avoid microwaved food.
Avoid frozen food.
Avoid canned food.
Avoid stale or rotten foods.
Avoid very hot foods, or boiling water, hot beverages (allow them to cool to 115 degrees)
Avoid very cold foods like ice, ice water, ice cream etc. (allow these foods to warm to 65 degrees)
Avoid incompatible food combinations.
Do not take fruits with other foods (eat them 15-30 minutes before a meal or 1 hour after).
Do not take milk with salty foods (cooked sweets with a little milk are ok).
Do not eat yogurt at night or in large quantities (ayurveda recommends 1 – 2 TBS per meal).
Avoid excess refined sugars and flours.
Avoid sugary drinks.
Drink plenty of water about 8 or 9 cups per day.
Avoid artificial sweeteners.

### Specific Eating Habits

Eat only when you are hungry.
Take digestive herbs to increase appetite if needed (see bellow).
Eat when the previous meal has been digested (at least 3 hours after the last meal).
Avoid snacking.
Avoid emotional eating. Be aware of emotional eating.
Eat only until you are full. Do not overeat.
Do not eat too little. When you are hungry eat!
Eat regular meals (same time, same amount etc. each day)
<b><i>Avoid snacking.</i></b>
Avoid incompatible food combinations.
Do not eat foods which taste bad to you. This will be upsetting and hurt the appetite.
Eat foods which are tasty and fulfilling to encourage contentment, appetite, and digestion.
Do not eat while distracted or emotional.
Do not eat just after abhyanga (oil massage), naasya (nasal administration of herbs)
Do not eat in a rush or while doing other things.
Minimize talking and mentally stimulating activities when eating.
Do not rush back to work or activity after meals, but sit for a few minutes.
Do not exercise excessively after eating or do yoga, meditation, puujaa, or pranayama just after eating.
Do not bathe or do abhyanga just after eating.
Eat consciously, pay attention to your food and how it makes the body feel. It will become impossible to eat foods which are bad for you when you learn to really pay attention to how you feel as you eat.
Pray before meals. Eat food as an offering to the Jatharaagni (the Sacred Fire of Digestion).
Do not watch TV, listen to music, read, email, or talk excessively when you eat.
Do not eat while walking, traveling, or driving. Stop and take time to enjoy your meal.

Do not eat too slowly.
Do not sit too long after meals.
Do not sleep after eating (It is best to wait 3 hours after a meal to sleep).
Eat a number of meals suitable for your doshas; 3 – 4 for vata; 2 – 3 for pitta and 1 - 2 for kapha
Take digestive herbs before meals if the appetite is weak to increase hunger (agni).
Do not fast / diet excessively. Fasting from all foods for more than a day should not be done without the guidance of a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner. A mono fast of kichari is ok though.
Do not skip meals.
Cook foods freshly for each meal whenever possible. (get your family to help, it is fun for kids to learn to cook and it set good patterns for them in their lives.)
Do not eat a lot of sweet food after a meal. This weakens agni (digestion)
Start a meal with sweets (these are digested first).
End a meal with bitter foods (which are digested later) or sour foods (which increase digestion).
Chew some toasted fennel seeds (for pitta) or betel-supari / paan leaves (for kapha & vata)

## Tips for Increasing Appetite, Digestion, and Absorption

(In addition to the above recommendations)

<b>Make Changes Slowly.</b> Quick, dramatic changes will aggravate the doshas (even if they are “for the better”) and they will not be sustainable. Gradually make small changes you are capable of maintaining. As your health improves it will become natural to make even more changes.
<b>Introduce the foods which are good for you gradually based upon what you find reasonable.</b>
<b>Reduce unhealthy foods gradually.</b> When you do this with conscious awareness it will make you feel better. Then it will be natural to reduce even more.
<b>Do not deny cravings altogether.</b> You may find healthier substitutes (like mangos to replace chocolate cake or a veggie burger to replace a hamburger) which are acceptable to help curb cravings.
<b>Cravings occur to protect us from experiencing repressed emotions.</b> Overcoming cravings and addictions will only be possible when we have looked at the emotional issues.
<b>If the emotional issues are deep and difficult, the assistance of a Guru or spiritual counselor should be sought.</b>
<b>Women (or men) who are underweight or who feel too fat or unattractive should work to build up a positive self image by standing naked in a mirror and affirming “I love you, You are beautiful.”</b>
<b>Emotional Eating:</b> Be mindful to differentiate between emotional appetite and real hunger. Real appetite will be increased but emotional appetite will be decreased by the following: 1) Drinking very warm water. 2) Eating a small piece of fresh ginger. 3) Walking around the block.
<b>If you are very emotional when you are getting ready to eat:</b> take some time to meditate. Paying attention to what you are feeling (not thinking about it, but observing your thoughts and feelings) can help reduce the emotions which will distract from proper digestion. If the appetite is emotional, easing the emotions may reduce the appetite.
<b>If you meditate and emotions persist:</b> Take some calming uplifting tulasi tea. You could add some brahmi and ashvagandha for their soothing effects. Eventually you must eat. All you emotions will not be resolved in a day, but if you take a little time to work with them before eating, they will reduce in time. Never wait too long to eat.
<b>Amount to Eat:</b> If you cup your hands keep a heaping pile in them, your stomach is said to hold three of this amount. For ideal digestion 1 of this measure should be filled with food, 1 with water, and one left empty for digestion.
<b>Overeating may be reduced by:</b> 1) drinking all you water before eating food 2) meditating regularly to help resolve emotional issues 3) by eating consciously paying attention to your body
<b>If you are not hungry at meal time:</b> Take one small slice of fresh ginger. Add a pinch of black pepper, black salt and lemon juice. Chew this and wash it down with warm water. This will increase the appetite. (or take hingvashtak powder with warm water.)
<b>Take dosha specific herbs after meals to increase absorption :</b> 1/4 <sup>th</sup> tsp Hingvashtak for vata; ¼ tsp avipattikar for pitta and 1/4 <sup>th</sup> tsp trikatu or ½ tsp hingvashtak for kapha
<b>Take 1 tsp triphala steeped in one cup of boiling water in the evening (or morning) to encourage proper elimination:</b> warm with ghee and honey for vata: cool with ghee for pitta: and very warm with ginger and for kapha
<b>Take a “tea” of equal parts fennel, coriander, and cumin to increase digestion.</b> This is good for all three doshas.
<b>Take tulasi “tea” to increase digestion, ease stress, and calm the mind.</b> With ashvagandha and cardamom for vata; with rose petals and fennel seeds for pitta; and with ginger and cloves for kapha.
In the morning, if there is a coating on the tongue, drink warm water or cumin, fennel, coriander tea; scrape the tongue: and wait until the previous day’s foods are digested to eat. (vata should not wait too long)
If there is no bowel movement in the morning, take warm water or triphala tea: squat to relax the colon or massage the lower abdomen with oil (sesame for vata, coconut for pitta, and mustard for kapha); and do not eat until there is a bowel movement (vata should not wait too long).