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**BENEFITS OF YOGA AND WHOLESOME DIET TO MAINTAIN THE HEALTH****Avdhoot Pandit\*<sup>1</sup>, Mrunmayee Dixit\*<sup>2</sup>, Prachi Damle\*<sup>3</sup>, Saloni Jadhav\*<sup>4</sup>,****Dr. Manoj Joshi\*<sup>5</sup>, Prof. Dr. Abhijit Joshi\*<sup>6</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

Yoga is a spiritual science that focuses on bringing harmony between the mind and body. It is an art of healthy living whereas a wholesome diet is a part of Ayurveda which helps in preventing and curing many diseases. It is favourable, conducive, and agreeable to the body and when combined with yoga helps to improve the physical and mental performance of an individual. The present study was undertaken to portray the benefits of a wholesome diet and yoga on health. Both yoga and a wholesome diet has many benefits, as they promote long life, increase grasping power, reduce stress, enhance immunity, activate cells of the body and prevent the onset of diseases. The study highlights the foods which are considered as beneficial in Ayurveda and the yoga poses which are considered to be beneficial among all asanas and must be included in the daily regime of an individual.

**Keywords:** Wholesome Diet (Pathya), Unwholesome Diet (Apathya), Yogasanas, Health.

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**I. INTRODUCTION**

Yoga is the science of practicing physical postures (asanas) to maintain a perfect balance between the mind and body. India has a rich tradition of yoga. With the increasing scientific research in yoga, its therapeutic aspects are also being explored. Regular practice of yoga promotes good health, increases concentration, strength, flexibility, calms the mind and body. Consistency in the practice of yoga may lead to advantageous outcomes such as changes in life perspective, self-awareness and an improved sense of energy to live life fully with genuine enjoyment. [1]

There is a strong relation between diet and yoga. Diet plays an important role in maintaining good health by reducing the symptoms of disease & thus the need for medication use. According to Ayurveda, wholesome diet is considered as a healthy diet because it promotes longevity and good health. Ayurveda defines wholesome diet as the diet which is favourable, agreeable and conducive to the mind and body. The diet which is not favourable and suitable to the mind and body is known as unwholesome diet.

**Significance of Yoga**

Yoga has numerous benefits on physical and mental health if practiced under the guidance and supervision of the teacher (guru). It is the science of healing diseases naturally. There are two main pillars of yoga they are Yogasanas and consistency in their practice. The ultimate goal of yoga is to achieve Samadhi (Self resolution). Following are the general benefits of yoga on mental and physical health-

1. Yoga increases flexibility of the spine and improves body's posture.
2. It helps in improving respiratory capacity, energy, and vitality.
3. Yoga is useful in treating the symptoms of frequently causing illnesses such as stiffness, malaise, fatigue, and weakness.
4. Children with attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity can learn to get relaxed by practicing yoga daily.
5. Regular yoga practice may help to cure insomnia and promote better and deep sleep. [3]
6. Yoga can be recommended as a second-line or third-line treatment after medication and psychotherapeutics. [2]

7. Every exercise must be practiced slowly, coordinating with the breath, pausing motionless in each position, and always with full concentration. Yoga teaches you to focus on breathing while you hold the poses. [3]

#### **Yoga postures to be performed daily**

As per Swatmarama in Hata Yoga Pradipika (1999), one must include the following asanas in their daily routine-

- 1. Siddhasana (Adept's Pose)-** Siddhasana is an ancient seated asana which is suitable for meditation. It stimulates the Agnya Chakra, controls nerve impulses from Mooladhara and Swadhistan Chakra. It is used to prevent nerve depression that occurs during meditation. It maintains the blood pressure from falling low. It also regulates the production of male testosterone and helps to maintain core body temperature. [4]
- 2. Padmasana (Lotus Pose)-** This is another posture performed during meditation and religious activities. Padmasana specifically balances prana, maintains blood pressure, balances the pranic and mental forces. It brings about changes within the metabolic structures, brain patterns and therefore helps to create balance within the whole system. Moreover, it tones the sacral and coccygeal bone nerves by providing them with an increased blood flow. [4]
- 3. Simhasana (Lion Pose)-** Simhasana is also known as Simha Mudra. It is a facial expression of the practitioner that resembles the lion so called as Simhasana. It alleviates throat, mouth, nose, and ear diseases. It is particularly good for toning throat muscles. It clears the throat by expelling excessive mucus from the mouth. It is more effective if performed in the presence of the sun's light. It also helps to externalize introverted people. [4]
- 4. Bhastrika Pranayama (Bellows Breath)-** Bhastrika Pranayama is more effective in treating brain and heart disorders. It stimulates circulation of cerebral fluid and increases the compression and decompression upon the brain, by creating a rhythmic message. It generates heat in the nasal passage, clears excessive mucus from the mouth and builds resistance to common cold and other respiratory disorders. Therefore, it is useful in the yogic management of chronic sinusitis, asthma, bronchitis & also improves digestion, increases appetite, accelerates the metabolic rate and strengthens the nervous system. People with tuberculosis, constipation, sciatica, spondylitis, arthritis, rheumatic problems, cancer, physical and mental tension can practice Bhastrika. Pranayama must be performed under the guidance of a Yoga instructor. [4]

## **II. IMPORTANCE OF WHOLESOME DIET**

Wholesome diet has great significance in Ayurveda for its preventive and therapeutic benefits. It is considered as 'Prana' in Ayurveda and plays an important role in maintaining health. It has numerous benefits like- it provides energy, promotes good health, longevity, strength and radiance to the individual. [5] Wholesome diet acts as 'Anupana' (Drug enhancer) which enhances the properties of the medicine used during treatment of a disease. Charaka stated that 'when channels of circulation become hard because of aggravated & vitiated Doshas, wholesome diet helps to alleviate the Tridoshas and softens the tissues. [6]

For attaining good physical and mental health, one must follow the rules of eating, include healthy food in the diet and do exercise regularly. This study aims to portray the benefits of including wholesome diet and yoga to maintain physical and mental health of an individual.

#### **Benefits of Wholesome Diet**

Following are the benefits of Wholesome diet as per Charakacharya-

1. It nourishes our body.
2. It provides strength, complexion, and happiness to the individual.
3. It promotes and enhances the growth of tissues.
4. It provides radiance and clarity to the skin.
5. It helps in improving vocal function.
6. It enhances immunity and prevents diseases.
7. It promotes long life.
8. It promotes good intellect and also sharpens memory.

Wholesome foods act as preventive medicine for various diseases. It may differ as per the prakruti of an individual as Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

Listed here some general wholesome dietetic foods along with their health benefits–

1. **Rakhta Shali (Red Rice)**- Rakhta Shali comes under the category of Shukadhanya (Awned Grains). It is considered best among all types of rice mentioned in Ayurveda. It imparts strength and complexion, treats vitiations of tridoshas, improves vision, is diuretic, enhances voice, increases the quantity of semen, mitigates thirst and cures fever. It is sweet, light, unctuous, strengthening, imparts taste, stimulates the digestive fire and rendered wholesome, treats afflictions of pitta, burning sensation, Vata, and blood. [7]
2. **Moong Dal (Green gram Dal)**- Green gram Dal is considered best among all pulses as it is sweet, astringent, rendered pungent after metabolism, constipating, dry in nature, imparts strength and promotes healthy vision. It is efficient in treating urinary ailments, bleeding disorders and vitiated Kapha. [7]
3. **Cow's Milk (Bovine Milk)**- Bovine milk is wholesome, an excellent promoter of taste, sweet and unctuous. It treats disorders caused by vitiation of Pitta and Vata, evidently imparts luster, wisdom, intellect, retentive power, nourishes the limbs and increases the quality of semen. [7]
4. **Jivanti Shaak (Leptadenia Reticulate)**- Among all the leafy vegetables, Jivanti is considered as wholesome as it is sweet in taste, cold in potency, treats bleeding disorders, vitiation of Vata, consumption, burning sensation, fever, aggravates Kapha and virility. It treats psychiatric diseases caused by possession and quickly regulates the taste. Another type of Jivanti which is golden in color is aphrodisiac, promotes ophthalmic health, sweetness, cold, treats vitiation of Vata, pitta, blood and burning sensation. It is strengthening. [7]
5. **Til Oil (Sesame Oil)**- The oil derived from the sesame imparts beauty to hair, is sweet, bitter and astringent in taste, hot in potency, quick in action, strength-promoting, treats vitiation of Kapha and Vata, worm infestation, itching, wounds, pruritus and invests the skin with complexion. [7]
6. **Cow's Ghee (Gau Ghruta)**- Freshly prepared ghee derived from cow's milk is considered as wholesome as it imparts wisdom, complexion, memory, strength, retentive power and nourishment. It alleviates Vata and Kapha, removes fatigue, treats vitiated pitta and cleanses the system. It is aphrodisiac, stimulates the digestive fire, is sweet in its post- metabolic effect, stabilizes the body, has several meritorious properties and is the best oblation for offering in fire. [7]
7. **Ginger (Ardrak)**- The fresh wet ginger is crunchy (imparts taste), aggravates Vata, treats vitiation of pitta and rakta. Wet ginger when mixed with jaggery is strengthening, alleviates Vata and Kapha, and stimulates the digestive fire. It loosens the stools, is cardiogenic, very hot in potency, nourishes the dhatus and cures loss of voice. Wet ginger is pungent in taste, aphrodisiac, becomes cold and light after metabolism. It promotes the formation of urine, is nourishing in nature & good for throat. It is used in the treatment of gulma, bloating of the abdomen, liver diseases, fever, vomiting and heart diseases. [7]
8. **Mrudvika (Black Raisins)**- These are considered as wholesome according to Charaka as it is sweet, unctuous, cold in potency, post digestion transforms into sweet vipaka, balances Vata, pitta, and nourishes Kapha. It is used in the treatment of bleeding disorders, fever, burning sensation and is aphrodisiac. [7]
9. **Sitakhanda Sharkara (Candied Sugar)**- Candied Sugar is wholesome because it is sweet, good for eyes, treats vomiting, cures skin disorders, wounds, vitiation of Kapha, dyspnoea, hiccups, vitiation of pitta and blood. [7]

This shows that yoga and wholesome diet has great significance in maintaining health and has numerous benefits in improving physical and mental state of the body. Wholesome diet acts as a secondary line treatment along with the medications and yoga helps to recover the normal state of the body after disease.

### III. CONCLUSION

Yoga and Ayurveda are the ancient medical sciences that were developed for the prevention of disease as well as promotion of the body's capacity for maintenance and balance. Eating a well-balanced diet naturally brings balance to the mind and body and makes your yoga practice more effective. Ayurveda helps us to understand the importance of incorporation of right nutrition and yoga to convert that nutrition into greater energy and vitality. Ayurveda combined with yoga can improve physical and mental performance of an individual by promoting good health, improving focus, enhancing immunity and promoting longevity. These are the most effective manuals and tools to prevent any disease, to cure the disease and to maintain health in a good condition. As research in modern science increased our ancient medical science got buried. Therefore, penning

this article is a small attempt to highlight the significance of our indigenous knowledge within the community. Moreover these ancient sciences might be sufficient to cure any disease and thus reduce one's need for medication. It helps to cure the disease from its origin where as other medical treatments only lessen the symptoms. This review is purely focused on the significance and advantages of implementing traditional healing system. It depicts the importance of ancient medical sciences.

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