



## CONCEPT OF DIET IN SIDDHA FOR IDEAL HEALTH

K.Rajeswari <sup>1</sup>, V.Ramadass <sup>2</sup>, S.Manjula Devi <sup>3</sup>, T.Sasipriya <sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Medical Officer, Narpavi Siddha Healthcare Centre, Vandavasi.

<sup>2</sup>PG Scholar, Govt Siddha Medical College, Chennai.

<sup>3</sup>PG Scholar, Govt Siddha Medical College, Chennai.

<sup>4</sup>Residential Medical Officer, Cure Siddha Clinic, Tirunelveli

---

### Abstract

Food plays a major role in healthy living. Food materials we consume should give energy for the vital organs to function properly by strengthening the body constituents and biological humors. The concept of food in siddha is not only based on the food ingredients used but also temperament of the person taking the food. Food should vary according to the seasonal and geographical regions. One should consume the food agreeable or suitable to the geographical conditions and six division of days (Sirupozhuthu) and the six season (perumpozhuthu). Classification of certain foods, increase or decrease the strength of the body immediately. For example milk, tender coconut water, meat soup etc. gives instant strength. The foods are also classified into two types based on gunam and to body constitution. As per siddha literature, health begins with food. Thiruvalluvar also explains in his kural under the heading “medicine”, “no medicine is needed for the body if one eats after knowing that all food already eaten has been totally excreted”.

*Keywords : Diet concept in siddha, Six taste, Ideal health, Gunam, Body constitution*

---

### Introduction

Food plays a major role in healthy living. Food materials we consume should give energy for the vital organs to function properly by strengthening the body constituents and biological humors.<sup>[1]</sup> Food should also be easily digestible and compatible. Food with a balance of the six tastes is essential for the body to perform various activities, and build immunity. Tastes in food are the natural phenomena of various nutrients. The concept of food in siddha is not only based on the food ingredients used but also temperament of the person taking the food. Food should vary according to the seasonal and geographical regions. One should consume the food agreeable or suitable to the geographical conditions and six division of days (Sirupozhuthu) and the six season (perumpozhuthu). Traditionally people have knowledge to combine substance, which gave a good taste to the food. Our ancestors have clearly identified such food substances and listed them. Some of them are unpalatable, some have other defects and some are hard to digest and to overcome these things they prepared the food by adding salt, spices and condiments, which balances the three humors, act as antagonist to certain undesired substances and also make the food palatable. This article deals with the concept of diet in siddha for ideal health.

**Classification of food**

Certain foods, increase or decrease the strength of the body immediately. For example milk, tender coconut water, meat soup etc. gives instant strength. Wandering in the sunlight, taking oil bath and sexual activity decreases the body strength immediately

*“Thiripathartham balam cheyyum udane*

*Thiripathartham balam cheyyum – therimuraiye*

*Seethavam punarhi oorenu surinarumpa*

*Aathavam punarchi thailam ”<sup>[2]</sup>*

The foods are also classified into two types

According to the gunam<sup>[3]</sup> –

Sathuva gunam,

Raso gunam,

Thamasa gunam.

According to body constitution

Vaatham

Pitham

Kabam

**Food based on gunam**

Vegetarian food promotes sathuvam character. The non vegetarian food destroys the sathuva gunam and promotes raso character. The food which is not easily digestible like *Erumai thayir* (Buffalo Curd) Causes thamasa character to individual.

**Food based on individual body constitution**

Vaatham individual should avoid dry and light food items. More lubricating substances like oil and sweet, sour and salty items are advised.

Pitham individual should prefer cold items which have sweet, bitter and astringent tastes and needs to eat more kabam increasing rice and wheat items.

Kabam individual should avoid sweet foodstuffs and prefer hot and spicy foods and need more vegetables.

**Nature of food intake according to age**

Food intake differs on the basis of nature of person, sex, age, physical work and the physique<sup>[4]</sup>. Table 1 shows the nature of food intake according to the age.

Table 1 - The Nature of Food intake according to the Age.

Age	Nature of food
0-6 months	Breastmilk

Infant and toddler	Food substances which are simple and have fat contents and which are sweet should be given.
Adulthood	Hard foods, oily substances with heat qualities and the food enriched with six tastes should be given
Above 60 years	Avoid heavy and oily foods. Easily digestible foods should be given

Those who do hard manual work like laborers may have more hunger and thirst. Therefore they can take more of raso gunam foods i.e., carbohydrate, rice cereals and pulses and little more of the thasam character food greesy, heavy, hard oily foods compared to others, but in moderation. They can also take as cool food. If the food is not hard or heavy, their body heat may affect the seven physical constituents and make them emaciate gradually.

Food for women must be less in quantity but rich in nutrition and fat content.

### Food for morning

*“Kaalaik karikkaung kaara maniulunthu*

*Thoolak katalaithuvarai ellu-kolamochai*

*Thattai chirupayaru thazhvil kadugukari*

*Ittachukku kaya mivai”<sup>[2]</sup>*

As per the above verse pulses like Bengal gram (*Cicer arietinum*), pigeon pea dhal (*Cajanus indicus*), ulunthu (*Phaseolus mungo*), thuvurai (*Vigna catjang*), ellu (*Sesamum indicum*), kadugu (*Brassica juncea*), milagu (*Piper nigrum*), dolichos (hyacinth bean), chukka (*Zingiber officinale*) and perungayam (*Ferula asafoetida*) are suited for morning breakfast.

### Food at noon

*“Kantha varukkang kanivarukam vaathamezhu*

*Mantha varukkamaantha maamvarukkang – kanthamuru*

*Thandaivarukkanthathi mori vaiyenna*

*Luntaiyath thodamaru more”<sup>[2]</sup>*

Tubers, fruits, vaatham natured food, heavy foodstuffs, greens, buffalo's curd and butter milk may be taken. Any ill- effect of these substances gets neutralized by the day heat and by manual labour.

### Food at night

*“Avaraippinj chathikaa yaapaan murungai*

*Thuvaraip parupatruth thoni – yevaraiyumo*

*Kanta lizhukung karitha thuthunamivaiya*

*Muntalzhukumilai yun”<sup>[2]</sup>*

The food stuffs suited for the night time are tender avarai pinju (*Dolichos lablab*), athi (*Ficus glomerata*), murungai pinju (*Moringa oleifera*), kantankathri (*Solanum xanthocarpum*), thuthuvalai (*Solanum trilobatum*), thuvarai (*Cajanus cajan*)

Nothing should be consumed in between particularly during dawn, dusk and midnight. Any food stuffs can be made suitable for consumption, provided those food stuffs with harmful effects are neutralized with their antagonists and then consumed.

### Relationship between Taste and its Action

As per siddha literature the relationship between taste and its action and common sources of food<sup>[5]</sup> are listed in the below table 2

**Table 2- Relationship between Taste and its Action**

Taste	Primary Action	Common Sources
Sweet ( <i>Inippu</i> )	Builds tissues Calms nerves	Fruit Grains Natural sugars Milk
Sour ( <i>Pulippu</i> )	Cleanses tissues Increases absorption of minerals	Sour fruits Yogurt Fermented foods
Salty ( <i>Uppu</i> )	Improves taste to food Lubricates tissues Stimulates digestion	Natural salts Sea vegetables
Bitter ( <i>Kaippu</i> )	Detoxifies and lightens tissues	Dark leafy greens Herbs and spices
Pungent ( <i>Kaarppu</i> )	Stimulates digestion and metabolism	Chilli peppers Garlic Herbs and spices
Astringent ( <i>Thuvarpu</i> )	Absorbs water Tightens tissues Dries fats	Legumes Raw fruits Vegetables Herbs

### Conclusion

As per siddha literature, health begins with food. Thiruvalluvar also explains in his kural under the heading “medicine”, “no medicine is needed for the body if one eats after knowing that all food already eaten has been totally excreted”<sup>[6]</sup>. The health of the body, the health of the mind and health of the intellect, all in harmony is the wholeness of health. Health is a feeling of well-being, ease and joy.

### Reference

1. Dr Thirunarayanan, Introduction to Siddha Medicine, Centre for Traditional Medicine and Research, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2016, p167.

2. Arpudha Chindhamani enum Pathartha Guna Chindhamani, Thirumagalvilaasa Achchianthira saalai, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1932, p 361, 362.

3. Dr Venugopal, Udal thathuvam, Department of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2016, p 245, 246.
4. Dr Duraiswamy, Siddha Hygiene and Preventive Medicine, Department of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1993, p 155, 156.
5. Dr Venugopal, Thottra Kirama Araichiyum Tamil Maruthuva Varalaarum, Department of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1993, p 339-347
6. Dr. Sanmugavelu, Noi Naadal Noi Mudhal Naadal Thirattu part 1, Department of Indian Medicine and Homeopathy, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2006, p 117, 118.