

# EXCLUSIVE: The significance of Poshtik Aahar in Ayurveda ahead of World Nutrition Week

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Pinkvilla Desk

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## EXCLUSIVE: The significance of Poshtik Aahar in Ayurveda ahead of World Nutrition Week

Ayurveda provides a logical explanation of how to balance food according to one's dosha and physical needs. It is considered not only a comprehensive medical system but also a way of life. According to Ayurveda, in order to live healthily, one must live in harmony with his or her surroundings and this involves formulating the right diet for oneself to maintain the balance between one's doshas.

In contrast to western dietary understanding, Ayurveda states that a diet can be vegetarian (plant-based) and portion size can be unique for each individual according to one's needs, body constitution (prakriti) and agnibal (digestive power). Further, the quality and properties of food, like heavy, light and oily should be taken into consideration. The quality and quantity of food that is to be part of the diet will be determined by how quickly or slowly the food will be digested. The diet therefore should be wisely formulated, based not only on the physical condition of the person but also the type of his/her body (vata, pitta or kapha).

Ayurveda delineates certain qualities of food, like rasa (taste), virya (potency), vipak (post-digestive effect) and prabhav (pharmacological effect).



Further, classification of food and food groups are developed according to taste or rasa, of which, there are six types that correspond to six stages of digestion. This is because each taste stimulates an important digestive or immunity function.

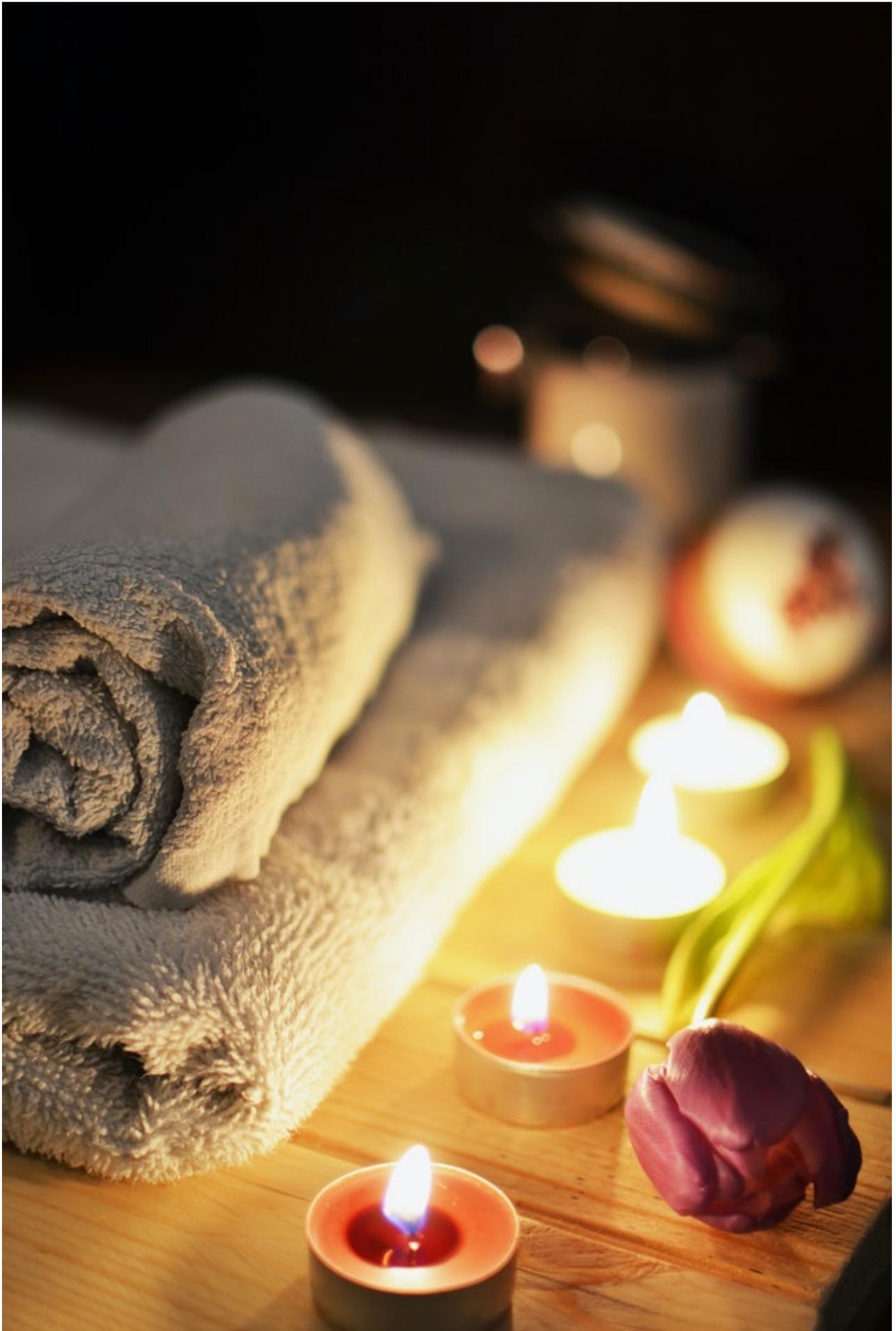
Sweet or madhu is perceived by the tip of the tongue and is related to the thyroid gland and apical areas of the lungs.

Pungent or tikta relates to the stomach and the head.

Bitter or katu relates to the pancreas, liver and spleen.

Astringent or kasaya relates to the colon.

Sour or amla relates to the lungs and Salty or lavana relates to the kidneys.



According to Ayurvedic principles, the food products that make up our diet have a strong influence on our physical and mental states. To have proper digestion, it is recommended that one shouldn't consume too many raw foods and avoid eating leftovers. Fresh, homemade food is the best way of maintaining the nutritional balance of the body. Warm food stimulates digestive enzymes. Therefore, food must be consumed when warm. Besides adding flavour to the food, spices also help in the digestion process.

About the author: Dr Partap Chauhan, Director, Jiva Ayurveda

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