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### MEDICINAL IMPORTANCE AS PER AYURVEDA OF SOME PLANT COMMONLY KNOWN FOR THEIR DIETARY USE

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#### ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is a highly respected form of health care in India today. According to this system, everyone has a unique combination of physical, mental and emotional characteristics. Disturbance of these combinations due to any reasons may lead to disease. Foundation of ayurveda involves five elements ether or space, air, fire, water and earth. These elements responsible for the basic contents of Ayurveda doshas: vata, pitta and kapha. These doshas promote the normal functions of the body and maintain overall health. Improper food combination also imbalance the system thus ayurveda suggest that optimal health can be maintained by eliminate toxins and reestablish constitutional balance. To achieve this, Ayurveda emphasizes the importance of proper nutrition through proper food combination as well as herbal nutrition. This article describes ayurvedic properties of some foods which can boost the biological balances of body to maintain normal health function as per ayurveda principle.

#### KEYWORDS

Ayurveda, Rice, Papaya, Banana and Coconut.

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#### INTRODUCTION

In ayurveda food is considered medicine. Herbs are also used for their nutritional and nourishing qualities. In Ayurveda foods are categorized according to their taste, their effect on the doshas, as well as their effect on the tissues. This is why when choosing foods it is important to understand nutritional and ayurvedic properties of food. There are various foods having different pharmacological; effect as per ayurveda like; Vata is balanced by sweet, sour and salty tasting foods, Pitta is balanced

by bitter, sweet and astringent tastes. Kapha is decreased with pungent, bitter and astringent tastes. Many of the foods material also used in Ayurvedic such as turmeric, ginger, cumin and cardamom. Now a days it has been well proven that the many herbs are beneficial as food and as well as ayurvedic medicine. In Ayurveda not all foods are compatible. Heavy foods such whole grains, should not combine with light foods such as fruit, which digest quicker. Ayurveda places great emphasis on the art of food combining to achieve their maximum benefits.

Ayurveda encourages appropriate changes in diet and lifestyle to maintain normal health function. Balanced diet can prevent imbalance doshas described as per ayurveda since food play vital role as nutritional and as well as ayurvedic medicine. Harmony of the doshas can be control by proper diet thus the understanding of ayurvedic properties of food material are also very essential thus this article describes pharmacological effect of some foods. An Ayurvedic clinician can provide dietary guidelines, as well as herbal nutrition to the individual doshic imbalance of each person<sup>1,2</sup>.

Some plant commonly employed as dietary food source, this review article provides a scientific rational of using these plant in ayurveda as drug by elaborating their medicinal importance.

## **RICE**

Rice, *Oryza sativa* belonging to the family Gramineae and subfamily Oryzoides is the second most important cereal crop and staple food for more than half of the world's population. Rice is a grain belonging to the grass family. Rice native to tropical and subtropical southeastern Asia and to Africa Rice as nutritional food Rice is very nutritious. Rice is a great source of complex carbohydrates which are broken down to glucose, most of which is used as energy. Rice also a good source of vitamins and minerals such as thiamine, niacin, iron, riboflavin, vitamin D, calcium, and fiber.

Rice also contains resistant starch, which is the starch that reaches the bowel undigested. This encourages the growth of beneficial bacteria, keeping the bowel healthy. Ayurvedic importance of Rice In Ayurveda the medicinal values of rice have been described: rice is considered to be acrid,

oleaginous, tonic, aphrodisiac, fattening, diuretic and useful in biliousness (Figure No.1)<sup>3</sup>.

## **MEDICINAL USES OF RICE**

### **High Blood Pressure**

As rice is low in sodium, it is considered best food for those suffering from high blood pressure and hypertension. Cancer Prevention: Rice contains insoluble fiber that can protect against many types of cancers.

### **Dysentery**

Husk part of rice is considered as an effective medicine to treat dysentery.

### **Alzheimer's disease**

Rice contains high levels of neurotransmitter nutrients that can prevent Alzheimer's disease.

### **Heart Disease**

Rice oil has antioxidant properties that promote cardiovascular strength by reducing cholesterol levels in the body.

## **PAPAYA**

The papaya is the fruit of the plant *Carica papaya*, the only species in the genus *Carica* of the plant family Caricaceae. It is native to the tropics of the Americas. Papaya is rich in iron and calcium; a good source of vitamins A, B and G and an excellent source of vitamin C (ascorbic acid). Papaya contains several unique protein-digesting proteolytic enzymes including papa in and chymopapain. Papaya has an abundance of cancer fighting lycopene. Papaya is a rich source of threes powerful antioxidant vitamin C, vitamin A and vitamin E; the minerals, magnesium and potassium; the B vitamin pantothenic acid and folate and fiber (Figure No.2).

## **MEDICINAL USES OF CARICA PAPAYA**

They showed high antifungal Activity.

### **Laxative**

Ripe papaya fruit is laxative which assures of regular bowel movement.

### **Muscle Relaxant**

Papaya oil can be used as nourishing, refreshing and relaxing agent; it can also work as a pain reliever and muscle relaxant.

### **Anti-Inflammatory**

Protein enzymes found in papaya; reduces the risk of the conditions such as asthma, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

### **Anticoagulant Effect**

Papain extracts increases prothrombin and coagulation. It is also claimed that the enzyme eliminates necrotic tissues in chronic wounds, burns and ulcers.

### **Indigestion**

The enzyme papa in used as remedies for indigestion.

### **Anti-Cancer**

Papaya is lycopene-rich fruits prevent risk of cancer, especially prostate cancer.

### **Free Radical Scavenging Activity**

Papaya has many phenolic groups which may scavenge free radicals. Aqueous extract of papaya leaves shows anti-oxidant activity promptly.

### **Help in Sunburn**

The vitamin A of Papaya helps to restore damaged skin. Papaya peel used as skin lightening agent. Peel when mixed with honey then it can provide soothing and moisturizing effect on skin<sup>4</sup>.

## **BANANA**

Banana (Figure No.3) is the common name for herbaceous plants of the genus *Musa* and for the fruit they produce. Bananas are an excellent source of potassium. Potassium can be found in a variety of fruits, vegetables, and even meats, however, a single banana provides you with 23% of the potassium that you need on a daily basis. Potassium benefits the muscles as it helps maintain their proper working and prevents muscle spasms. In addition, recent studies are showing that potassium can help to decrease blood pressure in individuals who are potassium deficient. Potassium also reduces the risk of stroke Bananas are also an excellent source of vitamins, including: A, B<sub>6</sub>, C,

## **MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF BANANA**

### **As nutraceutical**

Due to its nutritional value, it can be added in the diets of children suffering from malnutrition and diarrhea.

### **Anti-diarrheal**

It is used to cure diarrhea and dysentery due to its nutrient contents. The fruit is used to recover from the intestine lesions occur due to the intestinal infections.

### **Diabetes**

It also controls diabetes and useful in controlling metabolic dysfunction occurs due to the persistence of diabetes.

### **Anti-worm**

The fruit is believed to reduce the worm problems in the kids and control intestinal infection and motility.

### **Laxative**

The fruit has a mild laxative property. It is used as a remedy of constipation in children.

### **Kidney dysfunction**

It is useful in dissolving the stones in the kidney and urinary bladder and reducing the chances of kidney dysfunction due to the stone.

It also promotes brain health and helps the body to absorb calcium<sup>5</sup>.

## **COCONUT**

The coconut (*Cocosnucifera* L.) (Figure No.4) is an important fruit tree in the tropical regions. The edible part of the coconut fruit (coconut meat and coconut water) is the endosperm tissue. Endosperm tissues undergo one of three main modes of development, which are the nuclear, cellular and helobial modes. Coconut milk has tremendous importance especially in Ayurvedic traditional medicinal purposes. Nutritional value. Coconut contains vitamins B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B7 and B9. The B vitamins are required as coenzymes for enzymatic reactions essential for cellular function. Coconut also contains vitamin C, micronutrients such as inorganic ions Other components found in coconut water include sugars, sugar alcohols, lipids, amino acid and enzymes.

## **MEDICINAL PROPERTIES OF COCONUT**

Coconut water, being a refreshing beverage, provides important health benefits. It is generally used to maintain the electrolyte balance to recover from dehydration losses. Also, it is used for treatment of ulcers in the mouth. Coconut milk has anti-microbial properties in the gastrointestinal tract, hyperlipidemic balancing qualities and useful for topical applications. Coconut milk also elevates high

density lipoprotein cholesterol levels in blood due to the lauric acid. Coconut contains vitamins, which prevent inflammation and renal dysfunction. Coconut water contains folate which required reducing anemia during pregnancy. Coconut water also contains vitamin C which is an important dietary antioxidant. It can be used as anticancer due to the presence of cytokinins.

#### **Other medicinal applications**

- Antiseptic properties provide antibacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal agents to purify blood.
- Useful for emergency transfusions due to being close in composition to human plasma.
- Used to prevent vomiting, nausea and replace lost fluids in cases of malaria, typhoid, and influenza.
- Dissolves kidney stones alkalizing urine pH.
- Used as a natural cleanse, coconut water mixed with olive oil eliminates intestinal parasites.
- Inhibits parasite growth such as tapeworm, liver flukes.
- Enhances proper bowel function.
- Stabilizes blood sugar and insulin production.
- Regulates thyroid function.
- Relieves symptoms of chronic fatigue syndrome.
- Reduces incidence and intensity of epileptic seizures.
- Stabilizes female hormones reducing hot flashes and vaginal dryness during menopause.
- Forms a chemical barrier on skin to protect and heal infections.
- Reduces bags, puffiness and wrinkles under eyes.
- Soothes sunburned skin and promotes healing of burns and blisters.
- Heals psoriasis and eczema lesions. Heals diaper rash and removes cradle cap on babies<sup>6,7</sup>.



**Figure No.1: Rice Plant**



**Figure No.2: Papaya Plant**



**Figure No.3: Banana Plant**



**Figure No.4: Coconut**

## CONCLUSION

This review work is useful for future development research work.

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