

Yoga and Positive Psychology for Managing Career and Life
Prof. Ashish Pandey
Management Studies and Psychology
Shailesh J. Mehta School of Management
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

Food as the First Intervention for Managing Self
Lecture - 66
Contemporary Knowledge about Food and Mental Health

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What Contemporary Knowledge says about Food and Mental Health because we are talking about happiness, well being. If you look at this work of Firth and his colleagues and this is a very comprehensive review paper. Review paper, we all know is the one which captures lot of research studies and summarize those, identify a pattern in those.

What they have suggested is the healthy fat, limited fast food, fruits and vegetable, high fiber food – these are most important and best quality of food. That has impact on the physical health as well as mental health. Insulin sensitivity, cardiovascular risk, healthy weight all this can be achieved by having the combination of food which has healthy fat, limited fast, food fruit and vegetable and high fiber. And, multiple biological pathways are there which are explained in many studies and summarize in this review paper.

Good quality food also has impact on hormonal and inflammatory neural pathways as well and because of that they also govern better mood less stress lower risk of illness and cognitive function. So, psychological and social factors are also deeply connected with food. If we take opposite of this, then it increases craving and that increases many physiological problems and that ultimately result into psychological problems as well.

So, here comes the last and very important characteristic of food [FL]. Ahar is medicine. In the TED talk of Julia Rucklidge she is very accomplished researcher and she again in this talk gives the reference of at least epidemiological studies and many many review based studies and establishes that nutrients have deep connection with the mental health.

She mentions some of the experiments where people suffering from severe anxiety and stress when they were put on the medication and as an experiment and some people were put on the chain nutritional supplements, they found that impact of nutritional supplements was much more and much more long lasting than the impact of medication.

Actually, that has economic benefits as well because the nutritional supplement were coming at the fraction of the cost of the medicine used for this for these mental ailments. And, she concludes that those nutritional elements which were found to have the preventive impact and in fact, the curative impact on some of the mental ailments are available.

The rare their source of the source of their those nutrition is in the diet which our grandmother used to consider the diet which is full of fruits and vegetable, high fiber, whole grain, less processed food, certainly natural sugar, but not processed sugar and healthy food and healthy fat.

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What to Eat: Time Tested Wisdom



- ❖ **Eat Seasonal and Local food**
because it is produced in same ritu and part of the same climate
- ❖ **Eat freshly cooked food** instead of packaged food
because it may be edible stuff not really the food
- ❖ **Food intake to be regulated by self** and not by diet plan
because self mastery starts with senses
- ❖ **Check if system is stressed out**
because our system might be overburdened with of input
- ❖ **Not weight loss but being fitter, stronger and joyful to be the objective**
because wholesome life and wholesome living is sustainable

IIT Bombay 

So, what is in the summary? We can say about what to eat. So, time tested wisdom are endorsed by the modern research as well and that is pursued in the Yoga and Ayurveda for many centuries it says that eat seasonal and local food because it is produced in the same ritu and part of the same climate. So, it has a harmony with the with your body. The where my body is where I exist if I eat food from that area there is a natural harmony in that food because that food eventually becomes part of my body.

Eat freshly cooked food instead of packaged food because the packaged food might be edible, but it may not really be the food. Packaged foods are consistently found to be not only used less, but they are found to be harmful and many of those are found to be responsible for the increasing problem of obesity. Even in India a large percentage of population is suffering from obesity.

So, in India and country like India is suffering from two type of problem at one level enough nutrition is not available, at another level there is some part of the of the population is suffering from the obesity. This all is because very highly package foods this is also because very high carbohydrate components and less of the micro nutrient component in the diet.

Food intake must be regulated by self, not by the diet plan only. Diet plan can be good indicators, but ultimately, I have to exercise power on the choice of my food, then only I can consistently

choose the right food. My choice of food is a day to day matter which has to be exercised that choice has to be exercised throughout my life.

If I do not develop capacity to judge and reflect on the suitability of the food for my body protocols or diet plans cannot help for very long time. We are going to discuss one method how we can develop the insight how we can develop the interoception of the choice of right food and right amount of food.

We also need to check we also need to check out whether my system is stressed out because of food or because of the lack of food. Many a time our system suffer our bodily system that suffer because it is overburdened with the food input. So, what do I do to check that? I will share one diet plan or one weight loss plan developed by the yoga master.

You can follow that plan for maybe 3 days. Then you can figure out whether my system was under stress just to digest the food or I can make the modification to unburden my system in certain way, not weight loss, but being fitter stronger and joyful must be the objective of food.

Only weight is single and a very limited indicator of health, other than that our own experience of strength and our experience of joy these are also important aspect of health and these both are deeply connected with food. We looked at the definition of health in the beginning in the session where we discussed about the definition of health given in Ayurveda that applies and that must be put at front of us while making the choice of food as well because wholesome life and wholesome living are sustainable.

If we are able to eat wholesome food, we will be taking more steps to realize the wholesome life and wholesome life and wholesome food only are the sustainable things on this planet.