

Qualities of Milk, Curd, Ghee and Buttermilk --- Part 1

In this episode, we are going to look into the qualities of milk, curd, ghee and buttermilk as said by **Atreya Muni** in the book “**AshtAnga hRdaya sangraha**”. In general, there are 8 types of milk namely., cow milk, buffalo milk, goat milk, camel milk, mother’s milk, sheep milk, elephant milk and horse milk. Each milk has its own characteristics/qualities. It’s good for our health if we take the milk according to their qualities and type. Swami DEshikan has also mentioned this in “AhAra niyamam”.

The common qualities of all types of milk are:

Tastes sweet, sticky, raises the mineral contents in the body, decreases the elements of air(vAta) and heat(pitta)in the body, natures masculinity, increases phlegm and gives coolness.

Cow Milk :

This is very important for our living. It prevents from ageing and diseases and has medicinal value. If there is any internal injury in the heart and if the mineral strength is less in the body, cow milk is a very good medicine. Very good for brain, for body, gives colour to the body, natures mother’s milk, relieves constipation. Cow milk also rectifies the diseases caused due to tiredness, dizziness, agitation due to excess heat in the body, respiratory problem, cough, dryness in the tongue, hunger, chronic fever, fluid retention, wrinkled urine(condensed form) and blood disorders.

Buffalo Milk :

This milk is good for those who have excessive hunger and sleeplessness. Gives strength and cooling effect.

Goat Milk:

Goat being a cattle keeps running here and there, drinks less water, eats green leaves and hence it’s milk has less characteristics. It controls bone degeneration, fever, respiratory issues, blood disorders and diarrhea.

Camel Milk:

This milk gives dryness and heat. Tastes salty and it is a good appetizer. It is also very good for air and movement related issues in the body(vAta), phlegm, abdominal bloating, diseases caused due to germs, body swelling, colon related issues and piles.

Mother’s Milk:

In general, mother’s milk has a medicinal value for everything. This is used as medicine that can be administered through nose. This milk is also very good for eye boils/lumps, air and heat related issues in the body(vAta and pitta), blood disorders and wounds/injuries caused by being struck.

Sheep Milk :

This milk gives heat and strength but not pleasant to heart and if consumed, will affect it. It controls diseases caused due to air and movement related issues in the body(vAta). It creates hiccups, phlegm, respiratory and bile problems.

Elephant Milk triggers violence/cruelty

Horse Milk :

Horse comes under the category of monogastric animals(those that have only one stomach chamber). This milk also has less qualities. Increases the heat in the body and removes air related issues. It gives a tangy-salty combined taste and creates arrogance in the body.

Raw Milk/Boiled Milk :

Other than mother's milk, all other milk if taken raw, creates phlegm. It is always good to take boiled milk. The fresh cow's milk (milk that has just been milked from the cow which has warmth) when consumed immediately is equivalent to nectar.

There are two types of milk namely., milk that has less quality and the milk that has more quality.

The milk from animals which eat food that tastes sour, sesame seeds, coconut, groundnuts and oil cake(leftover fibrous mass of groundnuts) is of high quality, but causes phlegm and since they are tied to one place, the milk from such animals has more quality when taken in the morning than in the evening. Whereas the milk from animals that move about and are short bodied has less quality compared to big sized animals.

Curd:

By nature, curd gives a sour taste after digestion. Creates constipation, has hot potency, removes air related issues in the body. It causes fat, semen, stool, phlegm, blood disorder, digestive fire and swelling. But it gives good taste. Curd also gives taste to the tongue if there is no sensation and it is a good medicine for coolness, chronic common cold, wrinkled urine(condensed form) and recurrent fever. The creamy layer of curd is a very good cure for digestive disorder disease.

Following are the points to be taken care of while consuming curd :

It should not be consumed at night, should not heat it before taking, should not be consumed directly and in large quantity during the Tamil months of Chitirai, Vaikasi, Ani, Adi, Aippasi and KArthigai. It should be taken only along with any of these – moong dal, honey, ghee, sugar crystals(kalkaNdu) and gooseberry. It should not be consumed in large quantity daily. Consumption of unseasoned curd will lead to fever, blood disorder, akki(like measles), skin diseases, anemia and dizziness.

Buttermilk:

Buttermilk has mild characteristics and has astringent (tuvarppu) and sour taste. It increases the digestive fire which in turn triggers hunger. Removes phlegm and air and movement related issues. Buttermilk also removes swelling, diseases caused due to stomach bloating, piles, digestive disorder, urinary obstruction, ill health, tastelessness, spleen disease and diseases caused due to consumption of lots of ghee and anemia.

Buttermilk should not be consumed if there is any wound or injury, in summer, when there is weight loss, at the time of faintness, dizziness, when there is burning sensation in the body and blood disorder.

The watery part that separates from curd, also known as **buttermilk water** or **whey** has same qualities like buttermilk. It regulates or normalizes the stool, cleans the body glands and pores, removes constipation and has mild characteristics.

To be continued.....

Transcription by Smt Vasanthi Sampath