

ROLE OF AYURVEDA TOWARDS ANTENATAL CARE

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ABSTRACT :

Ayurveda has given due importance to each phase of human life, it emphasizes the responsibility of physician towards pregnancy before conception up to postnatal care. Mainstreaming the Ayurveda practice in women health care appears to be the most effective remedial measures to promote maternal health. In Ayurveda Classics there are certain rules and regulations mentioned for antenatal care for healthy progeny in which *Masanumasika Paricharya* (Month wise lifestyle modifications) is one of them. The main aim of this article is to explain the rationality behind *Masanumasika Paricharya* according to Ayurveda as well as modern point of view. For this review, the materials collected from different Ayurveda classics, scholarly articles published in different journals and information from internet also referred. Antenatal care in Ayurveda includes standard dietary pattern with life style modification in the form of medicated milk preparations along with different procedures like *Abhyanga* (oil massage), *Basti* (medicated enema) and *Pathyapathya* (do's and don'ts) also advised to woman throughout the period of pregnancy. These specific measures may be helpful for the proper nourishment of mother and foetus and also to prevent *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* (harmful factor for growth of fetus), increase placental circulation, strengthens muscles tissue which are involve in delivery and to remove the waste metabolic products (feces, urine and flatulence). So we can implicit that Ayurveda acting a vital role in antenatal care and the present review highlights the same.

Keywords: Antenatal care, *Masanumasika Paricharya*, *Basti*, Pregnancy etc.

INTRODUCTION: Ayurveda Science places an enormous emphasis on the suggestion of caring for the mother before, during and after pregnancy. Ayurveda prescribes specific nutritional measures for the growth and shelter of the woman and her fetus to keep her vital and pure. Ayurveda compares human conception to the germination and sprouting of a seed and its transformation into a sapling.¹ When the male and female seeds fuse and the soul enters the union, an embryo (*Garbha*) is formed.² Ayurveda gives great importance to the quality of the seed (ovum). In addition

to the female seed, the mother also provides the 'ideal terrain' (i.e. the uterus) into which the seed is to be planted.³ Guiding principles for correct sexual intercourse are also generally outlined.⁴ Young women less than sixteen years of age and boys under twenty should not bear children. Nature and also family does not support pregnancy during the *Brahmacharya* (Non child bearing age) period. The universal rules of pre-natal care are also given in classics and modern science perhaps the most stimulating of all. The husband, parents, siblings, and other family members are advised to administer

the pregnant woman's diet and plead with activities that are healthy and enjoyable to her and valuable for the child developing in her body. Similarly its approach to encourage longevity, the Ayurveda become perceptible towards motherhood, that is pregnancy and childbirth, is really a holistic one. The wisdom regarding the general supervision of pregnancy is found in both the Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita under the subject of "*Garbhini Vyakarana*". There are separate chapters for general management, specific management, diseases in pregnancy and their treatment and many other practical pieces of opinion. Guidelines regarding diet, activities, manners and mental commotion (*Ahara, Vihara, Achara* and *Vichara*, respectively) are also given in detail.⁵ The physician is cautioned to be very vigilant during the running of pregnancy. "If a cup filled with oil right up to the brim is to be carried without spilling even a single drop, every step has to be taken with care."⁶ According to modern science Antenatal care is the care you receive from healthcare professionals during your pregnancy.⁷ Ayurveda advises the same degree of care and awareness in the management of a pregnant woman.

The aim is to care for and encourage the growing fetus and the mother. The contemplation that improper decisions and lifestyle are held responsible for the genesis of disease is a well-known Ayurveda idea. Crowded urban living in particular has been cited in the Charaka Samhita as causing

disease and shortening lifespan.⁸ From the moment the pregnancy is inveterate, the woman is advice to follow certain strategy of living. The Ayurveda physician gently offers control from the very beginning, even before the actual conception of the child, so that the pregnancy can come to an end in a normal delivery after a normal period of gestation. Especially when she approaches full term, critical care is necessary. Complete and healthy delivery includes delivery of the placenta. If the delivery is not absolute and normal, the woman is likely to be affected by one or the other of a list of 64 maladies, which are describes in detail in *Garbhini Vyakarana*.⁹ For a couple to produce healthy offspring, both the partners should be vigilant about their diet, activities, behavior and emotional status before as well as after conception. One has to keep this in mind throughout the period of pregnancy. Which are described in detail in *Garbhini Vyakarana*.¹⁰ In Astanga Hrudaya *Garbhini paricharya* is described in detailed manner. Acharyas explain, *Garbhini* from the first day after the conformation of pregnancy should be happy, clean, without makeup, she should wear white apparels, be calm and every day she should involve in religious procedures and read some holy scriptures. She should not touch any dirty things and should not see any obscene things.¹¹ She should not talk at very high pitch and laugh loudly and should not sleep in uneven places, should take proper diet which is unctuous, palatable and liquid consistency.

Table no.1 Month-wise antenatal care According to Charaka and Sushruta Samhita.^{12,13}

S.No.	Month	Medication and Diet(Charaka Samhita)	Medication and Diet(Sushruta Samhita)
1.	1 st Month	Non processed cold Milk in adequate quantity regularly	Sweet, cold and liquid diet
2.	2 nd Month	Milk processed with sweet taste drugs like- <i>Vidari</i> (Pueraria tuberosa), <i>Ysathimadhu</i> (<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>)	Same as first month
3.	3 rd Month	Milk with honey and Ghee	Same as first month
4.	4 th Month	Milk should be taken along with butter (12 gm dose)	Cooked <i>Shasthika Shali</i> (variety of rice grown in 60 days) with curd, desired and liked food with milk and butter, meat of wild animals
5.	5 th Month	Take Ghee prepared with butter extracted from milk	Cooked <i>Shastika</i> rice (variety of rice grown in 60 days) with milk, meat of wild animals along with desired food mixed with milk and ghee.
6.	6 th Month	Ghee obtained directly from butter and processed with sweet taste drugs should be consumed	Ghee or gruel medicated with <i>Gokshura</i> (<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>)
7.	7 th Month	Same as sixth month	Take ghee processed with <i>Prithakaparni</i> group of drugs
8.	8 th Month	Gruel prepared with milk mixed with Ghee	<i>Asthapana basti</i> (decoction enema) with decoction of <i>badara</i> (<i>Zizyphus mauritiana</i>) mixed with <i>bala</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i> Linn.), <i>atibala</i> (<i>Abutilon indicum</i> Linn Sw), <i>satapushpa</i> (<i>Anethum sowa</i>), <i>patala</i> (<i>Stereospermum suaveolens</i> DC.) etc., honey and ghee. <i>Asthapan</i> is followed by <i>Anuvasana basti</i> (unctuous enema) of oil medicated with milk and sweet category drugs.
9.	9 th Month	<i>Anuvasana basti</i> (unctuous enema) with oil prepared with drugs of <i>Madhura</i> (sweet) group, vaginal tampon of this oil	Unctuous gruels and meat-soup of wild animals up to the period of delivery

DISCUSSION: *Garbhini paricharya* is very well documented in Ayurvedic classics starting from Vedic period up to Samhita period. Ancient Ayurveda physician knew the significance of women health for a hale and hearty progeny. In this regard scholars have prescribed monthly dietary regimen and life style practices for whole pregnancy according to the need of mother's health and foetal growth and well being.¹⁴ Nausea and vomiting are the main complications experienced by widely held of women during pregnancy. Due to this, there is a possibility in pregnant women to get dehydrated and malnourished. Physician has advised liquid diet instead of heavy and solid food in first trimester to stay away from such type of complications. Use of cold and sweet liquid diet and milk will prevent dehydration and supply required nourishment. In addition to this, the drugs of *Madhura* group being anabolic will help in safeguarding of proper health of mother and foetus. *Garbhini paricharya* considers milk an ideal element of diet for pregnant women as it is a source of calcium, lactose and butter fat. Milk also has moderate amounts of protein with anabolic properties that give strength and it also having property *Shramahara* (removes fatigue).¹⁵ Pregnant women should not get constipated, therefore mild laxatives and enema is recommended, if there is a tendency to constipation, it is found that usually, milk alone is sufficient to cope with the constipation. Fourth month onwards muscular tissue of foetus grows sufficiently requiring more protein which is supplied by use of meat soup. By the end of second trimester most women suffer from oedema of feet and other complications of water retention. Use of *Gokshura (Tribulus Terrestris)*, a good diuretic, in sixth month will prevent retention of water as well as its complications.¹⁶ Being diuretic, *Gokshura* is also helpful in pregnancy induced hypertension and related other

complications.¹⁷ The drugs of *Prithakaparnyadi* group are also diuretic, anabolic, relieve emaciation and suppress *Pitta* and *kapha Dosha*, their regular use in 7th month might help in maintaining health of mother and foetus. Most women experience constipation in late pregnancy due to pressure of engaged head in pelvis over the bowel and rectum. Use of *Basti* (medicated enema) in eighth month will relieve this constipation, besides this may also affect the autonomous nervous system governing myometrium and helps in regulating their function during labour.¹⁸ Tampon of oil may destroy pathogenic bacteria of vaginal canal and prevent puerperal sepsis, besides this tampon may also soften vaginal passage so that delivery of baby becomes easy in comparatively less effort as well as there is minimum possibility of tear of birth canal.¹⁹ It is just possible that the regular use of tampon might influence autonomic fibers governing myometrium and help in its relaxation during labour. *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* (diets and harmful lifestyle and diet pattern for mother as well as foetus) are resulting either in abortion or intrauterine death of foetus. *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* also cause congenital anomalies in fetus. So, these all *Garbhopaghatakara bhavas* are absolutely avoided from starting of pregnancy up to end of the pregnancy.²⁰ Acharya Charaka and Kasyapa have described certain *Garbhashthapaka* drugs which are mainly considered as treatment for abortion and maintenance of pregnancy successfully.²¹

CONCLUSION: Ayurveda physicians were very much conscious about necessitate of maternal care throughout pregnancy. *Garbhini Paricharya* mentioned in *Samhita* period is very much scientific and useful for maternal care. Use of milk with milk products with other liquid diet in first

trimester of pregnancy is necessary to avoid malnutrition, dehydration and other complications of pregnancy. *Ikshugandhika* (*Tribulus terrestris* Linn.) and drugs of *Prithakaparnyadi* group help in preventing swelling and also it improves the digestion, strength and immunity, relieving abdominal pain and nourishment to body which is very important after second trimester. Use of

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