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*Review Article: Scope of Ayurveda in Antenatal Care WSR to  
Garbhini Paricharya*

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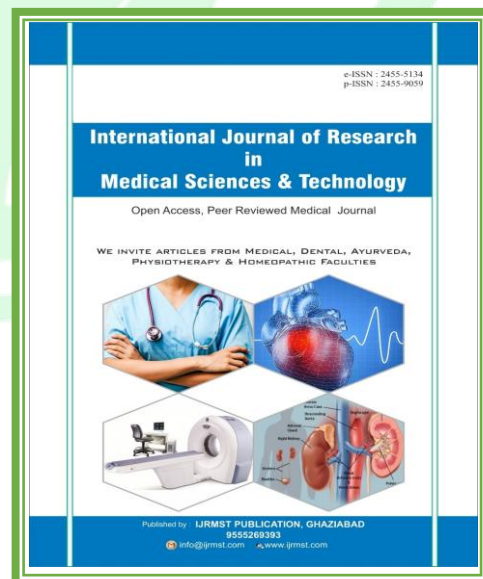
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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of reproductive and child health program of government of India is to get a healthy child from a healthy mother. The woman is considered as one of the most essential factors for the continuity of the human race.

*Garbhini paricharya* (Antenatal Care) means all round care of the pregnant women. According to modern science, antenatal care is a systemic supervision of the pregnant women. It should be started from confirmation of pregnancy to the delivery.

During *Garbhavastha* (pregnancy), she experiences lots of anatomical as well as physiological changes at the level of *Dosha* (body humors), *Dhatu* (Body tissues) and *Mala* (body waste products). During pregnancy women experiences features like edema, pallor, heartburn, vomiting, constipation, weakness, increase in weight and abdominal fundal height, etc such changes though physiological may turn in to pathology, so prevention of these must so she has to take a range of medicine.

These changes are nothing but maternal adaptation to the increasing demand of the growing foetus. The Growth and development of foetus requires more nutrition from mother. This causes increased workload on the maternal *Dhatu* (Body tissues), so she needs extra nutrition during *Garbhavastha* (Pregnancy).

Now a days due to change in life style i.e. sedentary and increased stress, strain due to this has increased incidence of pregnancy complications, abnormal labor that leads to surgical incidence in conducting delivery.

Aim of *Garbhini paricharya* (Antenatal care) is to develop all the *Dhatu* (Body tissues) of the pregnant women and foetus and decreases adverse outcome of pregnancy. Ancient Indian physicians were very much aware of this fact and various diet recipes and regimens have elaborately mentioned in our *Samhitas* (Ayurvedic Texts) under the heading of *Garbhini paricharya* (Anti natal care). According to all *acharyas* the commonly used drugs in *garbhini paricharya* (Antenatal care) are *brumhana* (nourishing), *Madhura* (sweet), *Snigdha* (unctuous) these drugs help in achieving the good health, energy, strength, complexion of the child.

*Ayurveda* has suggested a very good protocol *Masanumasika Garbhini Paricharya* (month wise antenatal care) i.e. *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (lifestyle), *Vichara* (psychological aspect) to be followed during pregnancy with respect to each month. This article describes an *Ayurveda* perspective of *Ahara- Vihara* (Diet and Regimen) W.S.R to *Masanumasika Garbhini Paricharya* (month wise antenatal care).

**Keywords:** *Garbhini*, Antenatal care, *Garbhini Paricharya*, *Aahara*, *Vihara*, *Vata*, *apitta*, *Kapha* (three humors or Bio active principles)

## INTRODUCTION

*Ayurveda* is a science of life and one fundamental principle of *Ayurveda* on promotion of health is

**“Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam Athurasya vikara Prasamanam”.**<sup>1</sup>

To maintain *Swasthya* (health) of pregnant woman, *Garbhini Paricharya* (anti-natal care) is most important. Antenatal care is a systemic supervision of the pregnant women.<sup>2</sup> Fetus is dependent on mother for its nourishment and oxygen. The care of the pregnant woman reflects on the quality and health of the offspring. Health of the pregnant women is maintained through proper *Garbhini Paricharya* (antenatal care) right from first day of pregnancy till delivery.<sup>3</sup>

The care of pregnancy mainly involves:

1. Month wise dietary regimen (*Masanumasika Pathya*)
2. Consideration of activities and substances which may cause harm to the fetus (*Garbhopaghathakara bhavas*)
3. Consideration of medicinal substances which are beneficial during pregnancy (*Garbhasthapaka Dravyas*)

## *GARBHINI PARICHARYA* (Ante natal care)

Pregnancy is one of the milestones of woman's life. It is a delicate state in which mild derangement can cause life-threatening situation for both mother and baby. Hence, extreme care is necessary during pregnancy.

The word *pari* means all around i.e.; before, during and after conception

*Charya* – in medical science *charya* refers to service of nursing

Broadly, this can be classified under - *GARBHINI AAHARA VIHARA* (Diet and Regimen for pregnant woman)

The women from very first day of pregnancy should remain in high spirit, wear clean white garments and perform religious rites, do auspicious deeds. She should use palatable liquid, sweet substance treated with appetizing things. This mode of life should be continued till the delivery<sup>4</sup>.

Pregnant women should use desired congenial diet and proper mode of life avoiding factors likely to harm the foetus. Pregnant women are fit for the use of *Brumhana* therapy (Nourishing therapy).<sup>5</sup>

Pregnant woman is advised external and internal use of the *Jeevaniya*

(Nutritive) group of drugs. She should always use *navaneeta* (butter), *Ksheera* (milk), *Ghrita* (ghee)<sup>6</sup>.

She should use hot water, milk and meat. Milk provides nourishment and stability to the foetus. Meat helps in achievement of pregnancy and provides nourishment to foetus, suppresses the *Vata* in pregnant women.<sup>7</sup>

*Yoga Ratnakara*<sup>8</sup> gives a list of *dravyas* (materials) that can be used by *garbhini* (pregnant woman),

Those are-

- *SastikaShali* Rice (red rice): Due to its *Madhura* (sweet), *Snigdha* (unctuous), *Sheeta* (cold) properties, it helps in nourishment of foetus and also helps in body metabolism.
- *Mudga* (moong dal) and *Wheat*: Acts due to its *Madhura* (sweet), *Sheeta* (cold), *Sandhana* (binding) and *Jeevana* (nutritive) properties.
- *Saktu* (Flour of parched rice) – Acts as *shaman* (palliative) in thirst, vomiting, and diarrhoea and also as appetizer.
- *Navaneetha* (butter), *Gritha* (Ghee) and *Ksheera* (Milk) – it provides nourishment and stability to the foetus.

- *Amalaki* (Indian Gooseberry): Mild laxative & provides immunity.

- *Draksha* (*Vitis Vinifera*): *Vrishya* (aphrodisiac), *Vatasamana* (subsides vata), *Madhura* (sweet), *Snigdha* (unctuous) *guna*.

- *Ksheera* (Milk): A good wholesome diet, Improves nourishment and gives stability to the fetus.

Different *Acharyas* have prescribed more or less similar dietetics for *Garbhini* (pregnant woman). Milk & *madhura* (sweet) group drugs for entire pregnancy.

*Bhavaprakasha text* follows the principles of *Susruta Samhita*.<sup>9</sup>

### **IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT IN ANTENATAL CARE**

Mother's psychology is supposed to affect the psychic development of foetus. Born child possess the similar characters in the thoughts of woman during fertilization. *Acharya Sushruta* says that whatever diet, behavior and conduct the couple follow, child born will also possess similar characters. This implies that Parental Psychology, particularly mother's, affect the psychological development of the foetus during fertilization. Since baby shares endorphins, which are chemicals that produce an



enormous sense of well-being, child can sense and share emotional sensations. So, it is important to be happy, peaceful.

### SPECIAL WATER FOR PREGNANT WOMEN'S BATH—

Cold decoction prepared by pulp of *bilva* (Aegle marmelos), *karpasa* (Gossypium herbacium), *agnimantha* (Premna serratifolia), *jatamansi* (Nardostachy Jatamansi), *eranda* (Ricinus Cuminis).<sup>10</sup>

Cold decoction of leaves of drugs capable of suppressing the *vata* is used for bath by the pregnant women.<sup>11</sup>

### AMULETS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN—

Wear the amulets made of *trivrt* (*Operculina turpethum*) in her waist.<sup>12</sup>

### MONTH WISE AHARA VIHARA (DIET AND REGIMEN) AS PER AYURVEDA DURING PREGNANCY<sup>13,14,15</sup>

**For 1<sup>st</sup> month:** Milk processed in *Shaliparana* (*Desmodium gangeticum*) and *Palasha* (*Butea monosperma*) twice a day.

*Ghee*, sweet, cool liquid and light food stuffs.

**For 2<sup>nd</sup> month:** Medicated sweetened milk and cold liquid diet.

**For 3<sup>rd</sup> month:** Milk processed with *Madhu* (honey) and *Ghritha* (ghee), *Shasthishali* (Red rice), sweet, cold and liquid diet.

**For 4<sup>th</sup> month:** Milk and butter, curd rice specially *Shasthishali* (Red rice) and meat.

**For 5<sup>th</sup> month:** *Ghee*, rice with milk, *Khichadi* (Salty Porridge) and *Payasa* (sweet pudding).

**For 6<sup>th</sup> month:** Medicated *ghee*, *Khichadi* (Salty Porridge) and sweetened curd.

**For 7<sup>th</sup> month:** *Ghritha* (Ghee) medicated with *Vidarikandadi* (*Pueraria tuberosa*) drugs for proper development of fetus.

**For 8<sup>th</sup> month:** *Yavagu* (Gruel) prepared in milk with *ghee*, *Asthapanabasti* (cleansing enema) with *Bala* (*Cidacardifolia*), *Atibala* (*Abutilon indicum*) and *Anuvasana Basti* (Nourishing Enema) with use of *Madhura Dravas* (Sweet substances).

**For 9<sup>th</sup> month:** *Yoni Pichu* (Vaginal suppository), *Anuvasana Basti* (Nourishing enema) and *Vataghana Drava Yukta Snana* (Bath with water which is medicated with *vata* alleviating substances); these all help for normal delivery.<sup>(4-10)</sup>

*Ayurveda* suggests use of nutrients and herbal medicines for nourishment and wellbeing of mother and fetus. *Ayurveda*

prescribes balanced and nutritional diet during pregnancy period. The *Ahara* (diet) for pregnant women must be *Hridya* (good for heart), *Dravam* (liquid), *Madhuraprayam* (mainly sweet), *Snigdham* (unctuous), *Deepaniyam* (that induces digestive power), and *Samskritam* (medicated). This type of balance diet during pregnancy boosts maternal health, fulfill needs of the growing fetus, improve lactation and offer normal delivery.<sup>16</sup>

❖ भोतिकंजीवनीयबृंहणीयमधुरवातहरसि  
द्धानांसर्पिषाम्पयसामामर्भणां ॥  
(सु.सु.३८)

All these *Jeevaniya* (Nutritive), *Bhruhaniya* (nourishing), *Madhura* (sweet), *Vatahara* (that subsides vata) drugs medicated with milk and *ghee* is having *Garbha vridhikara* (foetal nourishing) properties.<sup>17</sup>

Pregnant woman from first day of pregnancy should use palatable, liquid, sweet & unctuous substances treated with appetizing things. It should be continued till delivery. What so- ever eatables or drinkables are consumed by the pregnant woman same become congenial to the fetus. Advised to take milk, it provides nourishment and stability to fetus.

According to different *acharyas* (Authors), *Balya* (Strengthening), *Brumhaniya* (nourishing), *Jeevaniya*

(Nutritive) , *Garbha sthapaka* (foetal protective), *Prajasthapaka* (Fertility), *Medhya* (brain boosting), *Sapta dhatu vardhaka* (nourishing all 7 body tissues) drug are used for proper nourishment of mother and foetus ,proper development of foetus, to avoid complications of pregnancy and helps for *sukha prasava* (Normal labour).<sup>18</sup>

#### Aims and objective-

The main aim of *Ayurveda* towards the care of pregnant women revolves around three main objectives:<sup>18</sup>

1. *Paripurnatva* (proper growth of the fetus and mother)
2. *Anupaghata* (non-complicated pregnancy)
3. *Sukhaprasava* (normal delivery)

#### MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Literature:** *Brihatrayee*, all available *Ayurvedic* classics, Modern available texts, Magazines, Journals & Research papers.

#### DISCUSSION

Health of child is influenced by its proper growth and development during intra uterine life. We can say that growth of a child depends upon the health of mother.

The *upachita rasa dhatu* (Lightly nutritive chyle), circulating in the body of

the pregnant women simultaneously performs three functions such as

1. *Shareerapushti* (physical strength) of the mother.
2. The constant supply of *rasadhātu* (essence of food) to the *garbha* (foetus) thus maintains the proper growth of *Garbha* (foetus) inside the mother's womb. Meanwhile *rasadhātu* (essence of food) from the maternal body is transferred to the *garbha* (foetus) through the *nabhi nadi* (umbilical cord).
3. Formation of *Stanya* (breast milk). The pregnant woman desirous of producing healthy child should give up non-congenial diet & mode of life.<sup>19</sup>

### **First trimester**

Embryogenesis is an important moment during first trimester. *Kshira* (milk) and *Ghrita* (ghee) during first trimester provide energy for developing fetus. Medicated milk with *Madhura rasa* acts as rich source of energy. The classical text has explained *Madhura Rasa Ahara* (sweet taste foods) with milk which helps to increase liquid content and maintains hydration. *Madhura Rasa Ahara* (sweet taste foods) also possesses high nutritional value thus helps to maintain nutrient balance in body during pregnancy. *Vata* is responsible for cell division during embryogenesis. During

first trimester *Vata Dosha* is alleviated in pregnant woman. In dietary regimen *Ghrita* (ghee), milk, *Madhura Dravyas* (sweet substances) and *Siddha Ghrita* (medicated ghee) are suggested which offers *Vata shamaka* (subsides *vata*) properties. Milk provides nourishment, increases energy level and enhances bone formation. During this period uses of medicine need to be avoided.

### **Second trimester**

According to Ayurveda body requires more protein during second trimester. Milk and milk products are rich source of protein and calcium hence *Dugdha* (milk) & *Ghrita* (ghee) should be given to the pregnant women. *Shaali Shashtik* (Red rice) rice is advised in *Garbhini Paricharya* (Anti natal care) as sources of carbohydrates to supply energy. During second trimester pedal edema is observed. So *Gokshura Siddha Ghrita* (ghee medicated with *Tribulus terrestris*) is also advised. According to Ayurveda *Gokshuar* (*Tribulus terrestris*) has qualities of *Mutravirechak* (Diuretics), *Shothahara* (Anti-inflammatory) and antibacterial thus it helps to reduce pregnancy induce edema and also other complications of water accumulation in pregnant women.



**Third trimester**

During third trimester *Garbhini* (Pregnant woman) is advised to take medicated *Ghrita* (ghee) with *Puthaparnyadi* (*Alstonia scholaris*) group. This group contains drugs which act as diuretic & anti-inflammatory agents. Steroid is important for maturity of foetal lungs, *Brihati* (*Solanum Nigrum*) has steroidal constituent, thus given in seventh month to help lung maturation. *Khira* (milk), *Yavagu* (gruel) and *Ghrita* (ghee) are advised in 8th month to nourish body, they provide strength and help to pacify *Vata Dosha* due to their *Snigdha Guna* (unctuous). At 9th month *Mamsrasa* (meat) of wild animal is advised. *Mamsrasa* (meat) is rich source of proteins, vitamins, iron, minerals and fat, thus helps in formation of muscular tissue. Most of the women experience constipation during last trimester due to pressure of gravid uterus over bowel; *Basti* is explained as important *Chikitsa* (treatment) for constipation since it reduces *Vata Dosha*. At 9th month of pregnancy *Basti* is advised for *Vatanulomana* (Downward movement of vata). *Apanavayu* and *Vyanvaayu* play an important role in contraction and relaxation of uterus.

**CONCLUSION**

The consideration of *Masanumasika Paricharya* (month wise diet and regimen) for woman from first month to the ninth month of pregnancy plays significant role towards the health of mother and new-born.

Following this *garbhini parichaya* (antenatal care) the woman remains healthy and delivers the child with good health, strength, complexion and voice, compactness and superior to other family members. The woman's *kukshi* (abdomen), sacral region, flanks and back become soft. Vayu moves to its right path. Faeces, urine and placenta get expelled easily through their passages. Skin & nail becomes soft. Women gets strength and complexion and decreasing the adverse outcome of pregnancy, she delivers easily at proper time and without complications.

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