

AN AYURVEDIC DIETARY APPROACH IN PREGNANT WOMEN - A REVIEW ARTICLE

*Sanwariya Rahul Kumar*¹

*Mishra Pramod Kumar*²

*Sharma Indumati*³

¹MD Scholar PG Department of KayaChikitsa University College of Ayurveda, Dr. S. R. Rajasthan Ayurveda University Jodhpur Rajasthan, India

²MD Ph.D(Ayu.), Associate Professor & HOD PG Department of KayaChikitsa University College of Ayurveda, Dr. S. R. Rajasthan Ayurveda University Jodhpur Rajasthan, India

³MD Ph.D(Ayu.), Associate Professor PG Department of KayaChikitsa, Madan Mohan Malaviya Govt. Ayurved College Udaipur, Rajasthan

ABSTRACT

Pregnant women have special dietary needs. Eating a balanced diet before, during, and after pregnancy is one part of good health. Pregnancy and childbirth have great importance in every woman's life. The proper dietary care of pregnant women imitates on the excellence and wellbeing of offspring. According to *Ayurvedic* prospective *Garbhini paricharya* refers to antenatal care which recommends *Ahara* (specific dietary regimen), *Vihara* (Normal daily activities and modifications in psychological behavior and therapeutic procedures). After conception, A monthly regimen is recommended containing certain types of nutrients and herbal medicines for nourishment and wellbeing of mother and fetus. It will also help in natural labour. In each month of pregnancy certain type of drugs should be advised for nutrition, fulfilling, specific requirements and proper development of fetus. According to *Ayurveda* dietetics, throughout pregnancy milk, butter and ghee form an important part of the mother's diet. The food should be well cooked, palatable and with added spices like *Fennel*, *Jeeraka* etc. that aid in digestion (*Deepana*, *Pachana* & *Anulomana*). *Ushna*, *tikshana* (highly spicy), fried, excessive sweet and heavy food should be avoided. *Anuvasana basti* is advised in 8th and 9th month of pregnancy to pacify *Vata*, lubrication of reproductive tract for facilitating easy and natural labor. *Sattvic* food is advised as it will create more settled state of mind necessary for the healthy pregnancy and good mental and psychological development of the fetus. Good nutrition during pregnancy can help to keeping mother and baby healthy such as certain nutrients, iron, calcium, iodine and folate. *Ayurvedic* theories recommend easily digestible and pure foods that provide nourishment to the tissues of the fetus and the mother.

Keywords: *Garbhini Paricharya, Anuvasana basti, Deepana, Pachana*

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a gorgeous period in women's life. Life of women is not complete until and unless she gets pregnant and gives birth. Every mother dream's to have a healthy baby.

Pregnancy and childbirth have great importance in every woman's life. *Sagrbbhaavastha* is a special occasion for woman. In the *Ayurvedic* approach, preparing for a healthy

conception is compared to the process of farming. Just like the health of a crop depends on the quality of soil, seed, proper timing of sowing and water (containing nutrient matter) gets, the health of a baby depends on the health of its parents. For a healthy and successful pregnancy, a couple needs to take care of following four essential factors.⁽¹⁾

- Sperm/ovum – seeds
- Uterus – soil
- Nourishment (Water)
- Time for conception (Time of sowing)

The care of pregnant women reflects on the quality & health of the offspring. In *Charaka Samhita*, it is mentioned that, the pregnant women should be treated just like a pot filled with oil as the slightest oscillation of such pot can cause spilling of oil similarly slightest excitement to the pregnant women can initiate *Garbhapatana* (abortion).⁽²⁾ Birth should not be risky both for mother and child, however, extra care needs to be taken by woman during pregnancy.

Garbhini Paricharya (Anti Natal Care) – Antenatal care refers to the regular medical and nursing care recommended for women during pregnancy.⁽³⁾ The main intent behind advising *Garbhini Parivharya* is *Paripurnatva* (provide proper growth of the fetus and mother) *Anupaghata* (Uncomplicated pregnancy),⁽⁴⁾ *Sukhaprasava* (Normal delivery) and healthy child of desired quality and longevity.⁽⁵⁾

The monthly regimen is broadly discussed under three headings:-

- a) *Masanumasika pathya* (month wise dietary regimen)
- b) *Garbhopaghathakara bhavas* (Activities and substances which are harmful to fetus)
- c) *Garbhashthapaka dravyas* (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy)

According to Ayurvedic prospective *Garbhini paricharya* refers to antenatal care which rec-

ommends *Ahara* (specific dietary regimen), *Vihara* After conception, A monthly regimen is recommended containing certain types of nutrients and herbal medicines for nourishment and wellbeing of mother and fetus. Health and wellbeing of a baby in the womb depends up on the health and nutrition of mother. Eating balanced diet before, during, and after pregnancy is one part of good health.

Objectives of Garbhini Paricharya-

- To facilitate a healthy growth & development of the fetus
- To promote, protect & maintain the health of the mother.
- To minimize the complications during labor.

An Ayurvedic Dietary Care in Pregnant Women –

Nutrition is defined as the science of food and its relationship to health. *Ayurveda* consider food to be best source of nourishment as well as medicine for the pregnant women. Pregnant women have special dietary needs. The *Ahara* should be *Hridya*, *Dravam*, *Madhuraprayam*, *Snigdham*, *Deepaniyam*, & *Samskritam*.⁽⁶⁾ The diet during pregnancy should be adequate to provide for

Maintenance of maternal health, The needs of the growing fetus, The strength the vitality required during labor, Successful lactation

In each month of pregnancy certain type of drugs should be advised for nutrition, fulfilling, specific requirements and proper development of fetus. It will also help in natural labor. A good nutrition is essential at the time of implantation and early fetal growth. Dietary regimen described in *Ayurveda* is beneficial if followed properly and can be modified as per the lifestyle of an individual accordingly.

1st Month pregnancy care- Pregnant woman should take medicated/non medicated milk in

proper quantity as per her digestive power. Medicated with *Shalaparni*, *Palash* & *Garbhasthapak dravya*.

- *Charaka Samhita*- Non medicated milk⁽⁷⁾
- *Sushruta Samhita*- Sweet, cold and liquid diet⁽⁸⁾
- *Astanga Sangraha*- Medicated milk⁽⁹⁾

2nd Month pregnancy care – To take fluid diet which is cool and Sweetened milk medicated with Madhur Group of *kakoli*

- *Charaka Samhita*- Medicated milk with *madhura* drugs⁽¹⁰⁾
- *Sushruta Samhita*- Same as 1st month⁽¹¹⁾
- *Astanga Sangraha*- Same as *Charaka*⁽¹²⁾

3rd Month pregnancy care - To take sweet cool and fluid diet. Milk with honey and *ghrita*, *shastik shali* & *Krisara*.

- *Charaka Samhita*- Milk with honey and *ghrita*⁽¹³⁾
- *Sushruta Samhita*- Same as 1st month⁽¹⁴⁾
- *Astanga Sangraha*- Milk with honey and *ghrita*⁽¹⁵⁾

4th Month pregnancy care - *Ksheer* + *Navneet*, Cooked *shasti* rice with curd

- *Charaka Samhita*- Milk with butter⁽¹⁶⁾
- *Sushruta Samhita*- Cooked *shasti* rice with curd, pleasant food mixed with milk and butter and meat of wild animals.⁽¹⁷⁾
- *Astanga Sangraha*- Milk with 1 *Aksa* of butter.⁽¹⁸⁾

5th Month pregnancy care- *Ahara* with adequate quantity of *Kshira sarpi*, *Yavagu*, *Payas* and food similar to the 4th month.

- *Charaka Samhita*- *Ghrita* prepared with butter extracted from milk.⁽¹⁹⁾
- *Sushruta Samhita*- Cooked *shastika* rice with milk, meat of wild animals along with dainty food mixed with milk and *ghrita*.⁽²⁰⁾
- *Astanga Sangraha* - Same as *Charak*⁽²¹⁾

6th Month pregnancy care –

- *Charaka Samhita*- *Ghrita* medicated with *madhura* drugs (*Sariva*).⁽²²⁾

- *Sushruta Samhita*- *Ghrita* or rice gruel medicated with *Gokshura*.⁽²³⁾

- *Astanga Sangraha*- Same as *Charaka*⁽²⁴⁾

7th Month pregnancy care –

- *Charaka Samhita*- Same as in 6th month⁽²⁵⁾

- *Sushruta Samhita*- *Ghrita* medicated with *prithakaparnyadi* (*Vidarigandhadi*) group of drugs⁽²⁶⁾

- *Astanga Sangraha*- Same as *charaka*⁽²⁷⁾

8th Month pregnancy care –

- *Charaka Samhita*- *Kshira Yawagu* mixed with *ghrita*⁽²⁸⁾

- *Sushruta Samhita*- *Asthapana basti* with decoction of *badari* mixed with *bala*, *atibala* *satapuspa*, *patala* etc., honey and *ghrita* *Asthapan* is followed by *Anuvasana basti* of oil medicated with milk *madhura* drugs.⁽²⁹⁾

- *Astanga Sangraha*- *Kshira yawagu* mixed with *ghrita*, *asthapana basti* with decoction of *badari*, *anuvasana basti* with oil medicated with *Madhura* drugs⁽³⁰⁾

9th Month pregnancy care – In the last crucial stage lighter food is advised such as rice soup with ghee, split moong bean soup.

- *Charaka Samhita*- *Anuvasana basti* with oil prepared with drugs of *Madhura* group, vaginal tampon of this oil.⁽³¹⁾

- *Sushruta Samhita*- Unctuous gruels and meat-soup of wild animals up to the period of delivery.⁽³²⁾

- *Astanga Sangraha*- Same as *Charaka*⁽³³⁾

10th Month pregnancy care – If pregnancy continues upto 10th month then only take –

- *Shunthi*
- *Ksheeridari Kashay*
- *Shunthi Siddha milk*.

In addition to the routine food products the *Garbhini* should be encouraged to add any of the following food items.

- Milk & Milk products which supply Calcium
- Food rich in Proteins such as Egg, Meat, Fish, Pulses.
- Food rich in Carbohydrates such as Grains, Cereals.
- Plenty of fruits & vegetables that supply Vitamins, Minerals & Fiber
- *Sattvic* food is advised
- The food should be well cooked, palatable and with added spices like *Fennel, Jeeraka* etc. that aid in digestion (*Deepana, Pachana & Anulomana*).
- Good nutrition during pregnancy can help to keeping mother and baby healthy such as certain nutrients, iron, calcium, iodine and folate.

Pregnancy harming factors (Garbhoghatakar Bhav) – It includes those *Ahara & Vihara* which are harmful to the *Garbha*. These may cause some congenital defect in the child & are not conducive to the birth of a healthy child with all the good qualities.⁽³⁴⁾

- Travel on irregular roads
- Wearing of red clothes
- Sitting on hard and irregular surface.
- Intercourse, smoking, narcotic drugs, wine or sedatives.
- Sleeping in supine position, lest the cord twists around the neck.
- *Ushna, tikshana* (highly spicy), fried, excessive sweet and heavy food should be avoided.
- Holding of natural urges
- Excessive exercise

CONCLUSION

Pregnancy and child birth are nature's gift. if proper dietary regimen and life style are not maintained during pregnancy; it may result in many complications to mother as well as to fetus leading to difficult *Prasava*. To get the fruitful outcome of nature, our *Acharya's* has

advised *Garbhini Paricharya* from the conception till delivery. Use of milk and other liquid diet in first trimester of pregnancy is essential to avoid dehydration and malnutrition and other complications of pregnancy. *Gokshura* and drugs of *Prithakapanyadi* group help in preventing edema which is very common after second trimester. Use of *basti* (enema) in last trimester is essential to relieve constipation, strengthen myometrium and helps in regulating their function during labor. *Anuvasana basti* is advised in 8th and 9th month of pregnancy to pacify *Vata*, lubrication of reproductive tract for facilitating easy and natural labor. *Garbhsthapaka* drugs are used during pregnancy to counteract any etiology of abortion or intrauterine death if present and results in healthy baby.

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CORRESPONDENCE AUTHOR

Dr. Rahul Kumar Sanwariya

MD Scholar

PG Department of KayaChikitsa

University college of Ayurveda

Dr. S. R. Rajasthan Ayurveda University

Jodhpur Rajasthan, India

Email: sanwariya.rahul@gmail.com

Source of support: Nil

Conflict of interest: None Declared