



GARBHINI PARICHARYA: ROUTINE CARE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN THROUGH AYURVEDA

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ABSTRACT

Care during nine months of pregnancy is termed as Antenatal care or *Garbhini Paricharya*. Ayurveda classics give importance to caring of mother before, during and also after pregnancy. This refers to care with recommendation of *Aahara* (specific dietary regimen), *Vihara* (normal daily activities) & *Yoga* and *Pranayama*. It can be studied under three sub-headings: *Masanumasika Paricharya*, *Garbhopghatakara Bhava* (Activities and substances which are harmful for foetus), *Garbhasthapaka Dravya* (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy). Attempt has been made to understand the physiological significance of *Garbhini Paricharya* in detail.

Keywords: Antenatal care, *Garbhasthapaka Dravya*, *Garbhini Paricharya*, *Garbhopghatakara Bhava*, *Masanumasika Paricharya*, *Yoga*.

INTRODUCTION:

In any community, mothers and children combinedly constitute a priority group which comprises approximately about 71% of the population. In a developing country like India, women of the child bearing

age (age group 15 to 44 Yrs.) constitute about 22.2 % and children under 15 yrs. age constitute about 35.3 % of the total population. Both of them together constitute nearly about 57.5 % of total population¹.

Ayurveda classics give importance to caring of mother before, during and also after pregnancy². Woman health is very much important as womanhood represents the bearing capacity of foetus inside the womb and its delivery in a healthy status. She contributes to overall health of the society by bringing up the child properly. A woman has to manage the dual role in the society, both as a house wife and also as professional in the present era. Due to this reason, health of women becomes very important. This elegant phase of pregnancy and delivery brings about adaptation changes in bio-physiological as well as psychological parameters in puerperium, which may adversely affect her health in absence of proper care.

Both mother and child are considered as a single unit, because during this Antenatal period, foetus acts as a part of mother for a period of about 280 days. During this span of life, foetus gets all the building material and oxygen from mother's blood.³ Therefore, it is said that, child health has close relation with maternal health. If a mother is healthy, she brings forth healthy baby, the chances for a premature birth, still birth or Abortion are rare.⁴ Antenatal period is very important phase of life of both mother and child and is also known as *Garbhini Paricharya* in Ayurveda classics.

Birth and growth of *Purusha* occurs from *Ahara Rasa*. Therefore, this should be maintained healthy. *Garbha* (foetus) is considered as a small form of *Purusha*, the birth as well as growth of a child depends upon the diet and deeds of the mother.

The food consumed by a pregnant woman gives:

- Nourishment to foetus and help in growth of foetus.
- Nourishment to the mother's own body.
- Nourishment to the breasts by which the breast milk formed maintains new-born baby.

It is very important for pregnant woman to follow a careful regimen of food and also behaviour during the whole course of pregnancy. This whole regimen is termed as “*Garbhini Paricharya*” in *Ayurveda*.

DISCUSSION:

GARBHINI PARICHARYA

Garbhini Paricharya can be easily studied under three sub-headings:

1. *Masanumasika Paricharya* (i.e., monthly dietary regimen).
2. *Garbhoghatakarā Bhava* (Activities and substances which are harmful for foetus)
3. *Garbhashtapaka Dravya* (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy)

1. *Masanumasika Paricharya*:

During pregnancy period, nutrition is supplied to foetus from mother with the help of placenta. For constant as well as proper growth of embryo an adequate amount of nutrition is required month-wise. This requirement varies according to each developmental stage of foetus. *Masanumasika Paricharya* can be studied under two headings:

- a. *Aahara* and *Aushadha* (Month wise dietary and medicinal regimen) according to *Masanumasika Vriddhi of Garbha*
- b. *Vihara* (daily routine activities) and *Ayurveda* procedures according to *Masanumasika Vriddhi of Garbha*.

a. *Aahara and Aushadha* (Month wise dietary and medicinal regimen) according to *Masanumasika Vriddhi of Garbha*

In *Ayurveda* classics, a month-wise dietetic regimen has been mentioned in detail for women starting from the first month up to the ninth month of pregnancy. Requirement of nutrients get increased during pregnancy period. Therefore, the dietetic requirements of the mother also get changed month wise according to

Masanumasika Vruddhi of Garbha. By following the diet according to the foetal development, its proper growth occurs and also in good manner. Dietary regimen for maintenance of good nutritional requirements month-wise is described as:

First month of pregnancy

Garbha Sthiti: During the first month of gestation, embryo takes jelly form because of the intimate mixture of all the five *Mahabhuta*. During this month, there is no particular form of embryo and its organs are both manifested and latent⁵.

Diet: Cold milk in a small quantity but frequently. *Madhura* (sweet), *Sheeta* (cooling to the body) and liquid diet is preferred in this month for maintenance of foetus.

Madhura, *Sheeta* and *Drava Susanskrit Aahara* (sweet, cold and liquid diet) is easy to digest, *Agni Dipaka* (i.e., appetizers), prevent dehydration and supply optimum nourishment which is required. *Madhura rasa* is excellent for formation of *Dhatu*, it is *Vata Shamaka* and anabolic in nature. This helps in maintenance of proper health of mother and also growth and development of the foetus.

Milk helps in providing proper nourishment and gives stability to the foetus⁶. It also prevents abortion. Milk is congenial, increase intellectual level (*Medhya*), strength (*Bala*) and is lactogenic⁷.

Medicine: *Yashtimadhu* with white sandalwood powder, red sandalwood powder in cow's milk. *Ksheerkakoli*, *Devdaru* (*Cedrus deodara*), milk⁸.

Second month of pregnancy

Garbha Sthiti: The molecules of the primary elements being acted upon by *Sheeta*, *Ushma* and *Anila* are condensed in second month. A lump-like appearance indicates male sex, an elongated like shape of the matter denotes that the foetus belongs to female sex whereas its tumour like shape predicts absence of any sex⁹. According to *Garbhopanishad*, *Shira*(head) is formed in second month.

Diet: Frequent intake of cold milk in small quantity. Intake of *Madhura*, *Sheeta* and liquid diet like milk, coconut water, fruit juices, *Peya*, *Kanji* (which has not become sour).

All these food products should be given in small quantity but taken frequently. Fruits to be avoided are Pineapple, Papaya and Sugarcane.

Medicine: *Ashmantaka*, *Tila*, *Pippali*, *Manjishtha*, *Shatavari* to be taken. These are taken in same quantity and a *Kashaya* (decoction) is prepared and then taken with milk and sugar. Lotus stem, *Nagakeshar* milk, or butter-milk, lotus, *Bilva* fruit, Camphor and Goat milk can also be used¹⁰.

Third month of pregnancy

Garbha Sthiti: During the third month, five limb- like protuberances appear at the places from where the five organs- namely two hands, two legs and the head are to be developed and the minor limbs and organs of the body are to be formed in the shape of extremely small papillae. As *Mana* gets manifested, there is feeling of happiness & sadness. Heart beat is also felt¹¹.

Diet: Honey and *Ghrita* (clarified butter) in unequal quantity with milk and the fruits which are given in previous month. *Madhura*, *Sheeta* and liquid diet is given.

Medicine: *Vrikshadani*, *Ksheerkakoli*, *Priyangu* and *Sariva* to be used. Sugar, *Nagakeshara* milk, Sandalwood powder, *Khus*, lotus, cold water with milk can also be used.

Fourth month of pregnancy

Garbha Sthiti: During the fourth month of gestation, clear differentiation of all body parts and sub parts occurs. Foetal heart is manifested, so woman is termed *Dauhrudini*. *Chetna*/consciousness arise & desires are expressed via mother¹². The foetus gets stabilized. Therefore, pregnant woman specifically gets excessive heaviness in her body¹³. According to *Garbhopanishad*, there is appearance of digits, *Jathara* (GI-tract) and *Kati Pradesh* (pelvic region).

Diet: milk with butter, rice with curd, pleasant food mixed with milk & butter, fruit juice, coconut water, *Hrudya* fruits i.e., Mango, Watermelon, white pumpkin, yellow pumpkin, snake gourd (*Chichinda*) Berry (*Badara*), pomegranate, *Amrataka*.

Ghrita has property of pacifying *Pitta-Anila*. It is beneficial for *Ojas* causes *Varnaprasadana*¹⁴.

Medicine: Use of *Sariva*, *Rasna*, *Bharangi* or *Yashtimadhu* decoction. If pregnant woman feels thirsty, burning and pain abdomen, then milk boiled with banana root, lotus, *Khus* is given in the same quantity. For Thirst: *Shunthi*, *Musta*, sandalwood powder to be given¹⁵.

Fifth month of pregnancy

Garbha Sthiti: On comparison to other months, there is an excessive increase in flesh and blood of the foetus during fifth month of gestation. Therefore, at that time the pregnant woman grows excessively thinner¹⁶. *Mana* becomes more enlightened.

Diet: Cooked *Shastika* rice with milk, *Jangala Mamsa* along with dainty food mixed with milk and *Ghrita*. *Mamsa Vardhaka* (foods which promote bulk in foetus), i.e., meat soup, black gram; *Rakta Vardhaka Aahara* (which increase blood), i.e., Pomegranate, *Chikoo*, Apple, spinach, beetroot, *Amlaki*, Guava etc. to be given.

Mamsarasa provides nourishment to the growing foetus and also pacifies *Vata*¹⁷. *Jangala mamsa* (meat) is considered to be the excellent source of proteins, vitamins, fats, minerals (iron and other minerals) and is also a source of a range of endogenous antioxidants¹⁸.

Shali and *Shashtika* rice, *Mudga* (i.e., green gram), wheat, flour of parched rice etc. and the fruits which are sour and sweet like *Panasa* (Jack fruit), *Kadali* (banana), *Amalaki*, *Draksa* etc. are easy to digest and are nutritive for pregnant women¹⁹.

Medicine: Pomegranate leaves, Sandal wood paste mixed with curd and honey. *Brihati*, *Kantakari*, leaves of *Ksheeri* trees like *Ashwatha*, *Vata*, *Udumbara*, *Plaksha*- powder with milk²⁰.

Sixth month of pregnancy

Gabha Sthiti: On comparison with other months, there is excessive increase in the strength and complexion of the foetus during sixth month of gestation. Therefore, during this time, the pregnant woman loses her strength and complexion considerably²¹. There is more enlightenment of *Buddhi*/intellect.²² According to *Garbhpanishad*, ear, face, nose & its bone formation occurs.

Diet: *Ghee*, Rice, *Gokshura*, *Siddha ghee* (processed *ghee*).

Gokshura (*Tribulus terrestris*) has diuretic as well as nephroprotective property. *Ghrita* which is medicated with *Prithakparnyadi* (*Vidarigandhadi*) group has properties like diuretic, anti-inflammatory, *Balya*, *Brihana* (anabolic), *Vata* and *Pitta Dosha* pacifying²³.

Medicine: *Prishnaparni* (*Uraria picta*), *Bala*, *Gokshura*, Drum stick, *Yashtimadhu* decoction²⁴.

Balya (Strengthening): *Eranda*, *Gorakshakarkati* (papaya), *Vidarikanda*, *Shatavari*, *Bala*, *Atibala*, *Ashwagandha*, *Mashaparni*.

Varnya (for complexion): Sandalwood power, lotus, *Usheera*, *Sariva*, *Manjishtha*, White *Durva*, *Vidarikanda*, *Yashtimadhu*.

Seventh month of pregnancy

Garbha Sthiti: There is an all-round development of the foetus during seventh month of gestation. Therefore, pregnant woman becomes exceedingly deficient in all aspects of her health²⁵. According to *Garbhpanishad*, foetus becomes viable during this month.

Diet: *Ghrita* prepared from milk and medicated with *Madhura*(sweet) drugs

If there is itching in the area of lower abdomen, thigh or breast, then following medicines are used²⁶:

- *Badara Kashaya*: which is processed with sweet medicines, butter milk.
- Massage with *Kanher siddha* oil.
- *Yashtimadhu* decoction *Parisheka*.
- Excess use of salt and large quantity of water should be avoided. Take *Bala*, *Gokshura*, *Musta*, *Lajjalu*, *Nagkeshar* powder and honey.
- Use of *Shringataka* (*Trapa bispinosa*) lotus, grapes, *Musta*, sugar, *Yashtimadhu* decoction.

Eighth month of pregnancy

Garbha Sthiti: During the eighth month of pregnancy, the *Ojas* formed in the body of foetus moves inside the body of the mother and vice-versa with the help of the channels which carries nourishment from the mother to the foetus because of the immaturity of foetus. Therefore, at that time, the pregnant woman often has a wavering feeling of joy as well as sorrow. Similar is the condition with the foetus. It is because of this unsteadiness of *Ojas*, delivery of foetus during this month is dangerous. In view of this, experts advise that even the reckoning of eighth month of pregnancy should be avoided.

Diet: *Ksheera Yavagu* mixed with *Ghrita*.

Snigdha Yavagu helps in giving strength to the body, nourishes the body tissue and also pacifies the *Vata Dosh*²⁷.

Medicine: Take *Lodhra*, *Pippali* powder with honey and milk²⁸.

- Milk processed in *Kapittha* (*Eronia elephantum*) *Kantakari* and snake gourd, *Bruhati*, Cane Sugar.

Ninth month of pregnancy

Garbha Sthiti: From 1st day of ninth month to the end of the 10 month –it is period of labor. Beyond this, the intrauterine stay of foetus is abnormal.

Diet: Unctuous gruels and *Jangala Mamsarasa* up to the period of delivery.

During 8th and 9th month, there is pain in abdomen and sometimes bleeding also occurs through vagina. Therefore, pain killer and *Stambhana* medicine can be used.

Medicine: *Shunthi*, (*Zigiber officinale*), *Yashtimadhu*, *Deodaru* are pain killers. *Sariva*, *Yashtimadhu*, *Ksheerkakoli* are *Kashaya* medicines for *Stambhana*²⁹.

If pregnancy continues up to 10th month, then use of only *Shunthi*, *Ksheeridari Kashaya* or only milk *Siddha* with *Shunthi*.

b. *Vihara* (daily routine activities) and *Ayurveda* procedures according to *Masanumasika Vriddhi* of *Garbha*

Monthly regimen is very important to make pelvis, waist, sides of the chest and back healthy as well as flexible and also for *Anulomana* of *Vata*- all of these are necessary for normal delivery. Normalization of the urine as well as stool and their elimination become easy due to proper routine.

Vasti:

Most of the women experience constipation in pregnancy period due to pressure exerted by gravid uterus over the bowel and also due to effect of progesterone. For clearance of the retained faeces and *Anulomana Gati* of *Apana Vayu*, *Asthapana Basti* (i.e., administration of drugs through anus) should be given followed by *Anuvasana Basti*³⁰. This process facilitates the easy delivery without any type of complication. *Tail Picchu* (Vaginal tamponing) is helpful in destroying pathogenic bacteria of vaginal canal and prevention of sepsis. Along with this, tampon also softens vaginal passage, thus helping in normal labour. For this reason, *Vasti* is prescribed during these months:

Eighth month:

- *Asthapana Basti* (decoction enema)- with *Badara Kashaya, Bala, Atibala*, Milk, oil, salt, honey and *Ghee*.
- Then give *Anuvasana Basti* (Oil enema) of milk, *Madhura Aushadhi Siddha Kashaya* (decoction prepared with drugs of sweet taste) oil, so that pregnant woman maintains strength and soft vaginal passage and delivery becomes easy³¹.

Ninth month:

Anuvasana Basti with *Madhura Aushadhi Siddha* oil and put oil tampon in vagina³².

Yoga

Yoga provides a wide range of activity to unborn child and also to mother in numerous ways. It soothes the mind, refocus the energy and also prepare woman psychologically for labour process. Various *Asana* create more space in pelvis which makes expulsion of foetus easy.

Yoga during First trimester

Trikonasana (Extended triangle pose)- It strengthens the muscles of pelvic floor, thighs and calf muscles. It increases the flexibility of spine and improves digestion process³³.

Virbhadrasana (Warrior pose)- It stretches the groin area, strengthens the body and back muscles and tones up the lower body. Increases stamina and flexibility and relieves backache²⁵.

Vrikshasana (Tree pose)- It stretches the legs, back and arms which invigorates the body. It helps to improve concentration²⁵.

Yoga during Second trimester

Vajrasana (Thunderbolt pose)- This asana enhances digestive system which increases the energy uptake. Alters blood flow and nervous system impulses in the pelvic region. Relieves stomach ailments like hyperacidity and it is the only asana that can be practiced after taking meals³⁴.

Matsya kridasana (Flapping fish pose)- Stimulates digestion and relieves constipation. It relaxes the nerves of legs and this is an ideal asana for relaxed sleep. It improves blood circulation³⁴.

Marjariasana (Cat stretch pose)- Is very helpful in toning the female reproductive system and muscles of pelvis. This asana increases the flexibility of neck, spine and shoulders muscles which are essential for bearing down efforts during labour³⁴.

Tadasana (Mountain pose)- Stretches the entire spine and helps to clear the congestion of spinal nerves. It also helps in developing physical and mental balance. It stretches and strengths the rectus-abdominus muscle which an accessory muscle for bearing down³⁴.

Bhadrasana (Gracious pose)- This asana benefits the digestive system and helps in relieving various stomach ailments. It helps in toning the muscles of female pelvic region. Along with meditation, it relieves mental stress³⁴.

Kati chakrasana (waist rotating pose)- Tones up the muscles of waist, back and hips. It induces the feeling of lightness and relieves physical and mental stress³⁴.

Yoga during Third trimester

Ardha titaliasana (Half butterfly pose)- Is an excellent asana for loosening of hip joints, which enables fast and easy delivery³⁴.

Poorna titaliasana (Full butterfly pose)- Tones up pelvic girdle. It relieves the tension from inner thigh muscles and removes the tiredness of legs. This asana increases the stretching ability of perineum³⁴.

Chakki Chalanasana (Churning mill pose)- Is an excellent asana for toning the nerves and muscles of pelvis and abdomen and prepare them for delivery³⁴.

Utthanasana (Squat and Rise pose)- This asana strengthens the muscles of back, uterus, thighs and ankles. It tones up the pelvic girdle and this asana is equivalent to sweeping floor. Hence enabling fast and easy delivery³⁴.

Pranayama (Breathing technique):

Pranayama is not only helpful in pregnancy, rather it is a gift given by *Ayurveda* to human race for long and healthy life. Various *Pranayama* which can be practiced during pregnancy period include:

Anuloma - Viloma Pranayama

- It strengthens the body mentally and physically.
- During labour, breath holding for maximum duration can provide great help for pushing during labour.
- It provides more oxygen to the body; therefore, more oxygen is transferred to the foetus.

Bhramari Pranayama

- It is an effective breathing exercise for releasing agitation, anger and calming the mind.
- It is very useful for pregnant women as it eases the process of childbirth by controlling the breathing during the labour process.
- It improves concentration power and remove toxins from body.³⁵

2. Garbhoghatakara Bhava (Factors which harm the foetus):

Ayurveda is the science which also suggests avoiding some diet & mode of life which are contraindicated during pregnancy period and which are harmful for *Garbha* (foetus). These are termed as *Garbhoghatakara Bhava*. These factors may cause some congenital defects in the child and are not in the favour of the birth of a healthy child having all the good qualities. Various *Garbhoghatakara Bhava* according to different *Acharya* are mentioned in Table No.1.

Table No. 1 Garbhoghatakara Bhava according to different Acharya

<i>Charaka</i> ³⁶	<i>Sushruta</i> ³⁷	<i>Astang Samgraha</i>	<i>Astang Hridya</i>	<i>Kashyapa</i>
Pungent drugs, Exercise, Coitus	Coitus, Exercise, Excessive emaciation, day-sleep and awakening in night, Grief, Riding on vehicle, fear, Squatting, Oleation, Bloodletting, Suppression of natural urges etc.	Pungent drugs, Exercise, Coitus, Emaciation, trauma, Conveyance causing excessive jerks, night awake, day sleeping, Suppression of natural urges, Indigestion, prolonged stay in hot sun or near fire, Anger, grief, fear, terror, fasting, squatting, looking or hearing disliked things etc.	Excessive coitus, Exercise, carrying heavy weight, covering with heavy sheet, untimely sleep, squatting, grief, anger, excitement, suppression of natural urges, fasting, excessive walking, use of pungent, hot, heavy, hardly digestible food, use of red garment, use of wine and meat, sleeping in	Erect or flexed posture for long time, shaking, excessive laughing, trauma, cold water, garlic, looking declining moon, setting sun, seeing solar or lunar eclipse, misbehave with guests, rough behaviour with beggars, perform oblation of <i>Ghrita</i> for pacification, oppose full ewer, <i>Ghrita</i> ,

			supine position, bloodletting, purifying measures and enemas etc.	garland, and pot filled with curd or <i>Ghrita</i> , tie anything from thread or rope, wear tight garments etc.
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3. *Garbhasthapaka Dravya* (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy):

Garbhasthapaka Dravya are the substances helpful in counter acting the effect of the *Garbhoghatakara Bhava* and help in proper maintenance of the *Garbha*. These drugs can also be used in the treatment as well as prevention of abortion. These are to be used in routine, since they are beneficial for the maintenance of proper health, growth and development of the mother as well as foetus. Some of the *Garbhasthapaka Aushadhi* are *Aindri* (*Bacopa monnieri*), *Brahmi* (*Centella asiatica*), *Shatavari* (*Asparagus racemosus*), *Sahasravirya* (*Cynodon dactylon*), *Amogha* (*Stereospermum suaveolens*), *Avyatha* (*Tinospora cordifolia*), *Shiva* (*Terminalia chebula*), *Arista* (*Picrorhiza kurroa*), *Vatyapushpi* (*Sida cordifolia*), *Vishwakankanta* (*Callicarpa macrophylla*)³⁸ etc. All these drugs should be taken orally as preparations in milk and *Ghee*. Bath with cold decoction of all of these drugs should be given during *Pushya Nakshatra*. These drugs should be kept in close contact with the mother and can be used as amulets around the right arm or on the head. Also, the drugs of *Jeevaneeya Gana* can be used in a similar way. *Acharya Kasyapa* has advocated that amulet of *Trivritta* (*Operculina turpenthum*) can also be tied in the waist of pregnant woman.

CONCLUSION

Health of the women is affected by all the factors including the social, family, and community context and beliefs during pregnancy either in a positive way or in negative way. Special foods and rest for pregnant women are suggested in some cultures of the society, but in others, pregnancy is not even acknowledged. In these such cases, women continue working hard and the nutritional taboos may deprive them of essential nutrients. This adds up to nutritional deficiencies, particularly the iron, protein, and certain vitamins.

Garbhini Paricharya as described in *Ayurveda* classics is very unique and specific. It saves the lives of mothers as well as babies not only by promotion and establishment of good health before birth of child, but also by normal healthy delivery. It is also beneficial to the mother in post-natal period. It can be considered as *Suputra Janana*.

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