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REVIEW ARTICLE

GARBHINI PARICHARYA: ANTENATAL CARE IN AYURVEDA

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Abstract

Systematic supervision (examination and advice) of a woman during pregnancy is called garbhini paricharya (antenatal care). Supervision should be of a regular and periodic nature and according to the need of an individual. The care should start from the beginning of pregnancy and till the birth of child. Antenatal care comprises of careful history taking and examinations and after that, proper advice given to the pregnant woman according to the need and complaint. The proper garbhini paricharya would result in the proper development of the fetus, its delivery, the health of the mother and thus her ability to withstand the strain of labour and have an eventless post-natal phase. Garbhini paricharya have described monthly dietary regimen and living style for whole pregnancy, specific water for bathing during pregnancy, amulet for pregnant woman etc. All of these advices are done with the aim to ensure normal pregnancy and uncomplicated labor with delivery of a healthy baby from a healthy mother. Dietetics and mode of life which are contraindicated during pregnancy are known as garbhopaghatakara bhavas. Garbhopaghatakara bhavas should be avoided as well as uses of garbhashthapaka drugs is beneficial for the fetus.

Key Words: garbhini, garbhopaghatakara bhava, fetus, nutrition, pre natal care.

Introduction:

Pregnancy is a beautiful phase in women's life. Life of women is not complete until and unless she gets pregnant and gives birth. Birth should not be risky both for mother and child, however, extra care needs to be taken by woman during pregnancy. Adequate medical care and awareness of the society about importance of healthy pregnancy can also check maternal mortality and new born deaths. Woman must not go through pregnancy if she is poorly nourished, physically weak, surrounded by myths and misconception.

Garbhini paricharya:

The monthly regimen is broadly discussed under three headings:

- Masanumasika pathya (month wise dietary regimen)

- Garbhopaghathakara bhavas (Activities and substances which are harmful to fetus)
- Garbhashthapaka dravyas (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy)

Masanumasika pathya (month wise dietary regimen): During pregnancy fetus starts to get nutrition from mother through placenta. Adequate nutrition is needed for monthly constant and proper development of embryo. The requirement of nutrition varies according to development of fetus. Thus the dietetic requirements of the mother also changes month wise. By following these dietetic regimens prescribed, the pregnant woman remains healthy and delivers a child having good health, energy, strength, complexion and voice. The child would also be well-built. Having importance of this change in

requirements, the Ayurvedic scholars have given in detail the month wise dietetic regimen known as masanumashika paricharya (monthly regimen) for woman right from the first month up to the ninth month of pregnancy.

The monthly regimen helps in¹:

1. Softening of placenta (apara), pelvis, waist, sides of the chest and back
2. Downward movement of vata (vata anulomana) - this is needed for the

normal expulsion of foetus during delivery.

3. Normalization of the urine and stool and their elimination with ease
4. Promotion of strength and complexion
5. Delivery with ease of a healthy child endowed with excellent qualities in proper time

Texts	Dietary Regimen
During 1st month	
Charaka Samhita	Non medicated milk ²
Sushruta Samhita	Sweet, cold and liquid diet ³
Astanga Sangraha	Medicated milk ⁴
Harita Samhita	Madhuyashti, madhuka puspa with butter, honey and sweetened milk ⁵
During 2nd month	
Charaka Samhita	Milk medicated with madhura rasa (sweet taste) drugs ⁶
Sushruta Samhita	Same as first month ⁷
Astanga Sangraha	Same as Charaka ⁸
Harita Samhita	Sweetened milk treated with kakoli ⁹
During 3rd month	
Charaka Samhita	Milk with honey and ghrta ¹⁰
Sushruta Samhita	Same as first month ¹¹
Astanga Sangraha	Milk with honey and ghrta ¹²
Harita Samhita	Krisara ¹³
During 4th month	
Charaka Samhita	Milk with butter ¹⁴
Sushruta	Cooked sasti rice with curd, dainty and pleasant food mixed with milk and butter and

Samhita	meat of wild animals ¹⁵
Astanga Sangraha	Milk with one tola (12gm) of butter ¹⁶
Harita Samhita	Medicated cooked rice ¹⁷
During 5th month	
Charaka Samhita	Ghrita prepared with butter extracted from milk ¹⁸
Sushruta Samhita	Cooked shastika rice with milk, meat of wild animals along with dainty food mixed with milk and ghrita ¹⁹
Astanga Sangraha	Same as Charaka ²⁰
Harita Samhita	Payasa ²¹
During 6th month	
Charaka Samhita	Ghrita prepared from milk medicated with madhura (sweet) drugs ²²
Sushruta Samhita	Ghrita or rice gruel medicated with gokshura ²³
Astanga Sangraha	Same as Charaka ²⁴
Harita Samhita	Sweetened curd ²⁵
During 7th month	
Charaka Samhita	Same as in sixth month ²⁶
Sushruta Samhita	Ghrita medicated with prithakaparnyadi group of drugs ²⁷
Astanga Sangraha	Same as charaka ²⁸
Harita Samhita	Ghritakhanda (a sweet dish) ²⁹
During 8th month	
Charaka Samhita	Kshira Yawagu mixed with ghrita ³⁰
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 ³¹
Astanga Sangraha	Kshira yawagu mixed with ghrita, asthapana basti with decoction of badari, anuvasana basti with oil medicated with Madura drugs ³²

Harita Samhita	Ghritapuraka ³³
During 9th month	
Charaka Samhita	Anuvasana basti with oil prepared with drugs of Madhura (sweet) group, vaginal tampon of this oil ³⁴
Sushruta Samhita	Unctuous gruels and meat-soup of wild animals up to the period of delivery ³⁵
Astanga Sangraha	Same as Charaka ³⁶
Harita Samhita	Different varieties of cereals ³⁷

Table No.1: Showing the monthly dietary regimen described by classics

Garbhopaghathakara bhavas (Activities and substances which are harmful to fetus):

Garbhopaghatha kara bhavas are the ahara and vihara which are harmful to the garbha (fetus). These may cause some congenital defects in

the child and are not conducive to the birth of a healthy child, with all the good qualities. These can be grouped under two different headings namely ahara (diet) and vihara (behavior).

S.N.	Text	Garbhopaghathakara bhavas
1.	Charaka Samhita	Pungent drugs, Exercise, Coitus ³⁸
2.	Sushruta Samhita	Coitus, Exercise, Excessive satiation, Excessive emaciation, Sleeping in day and awakening in night, Grief, Riding on vehicle, fear, Squatting, Oleation, Bloodletting, Suppression of natural urges ³⁹ etc.
3.	Astanga Sangraha	Pungent drugs, Exercise, Coitus ⁴⁰ , Emaciation, trauma, Conveyance causing excessive jerks, night awakening, 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 ⁴¹ etc.
4.	Astanga Hridaya	Excessive coitus, Exercise, carrying heavy weight, covering herself 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 supine position, bloodletting, purifying measures and enemas ⁴² etc.
5.	Kashyapa Samhita	Erect or flexed posture for long, shaking, excessive laughing, and trauma, cold water, garlic, looking declining moon, setting sun, seeing solar or lunar eclipse, misbehave with guests, rough behavior with beggars, perform oblation of ghrita for pacification, oppose full ewer, ghrita, garland, and pot filled with curd or ghrita, tie anything from thread or rope, wear tight garments ⁴³ etc.

Table No. 2: Showing the Garbhopaghatakara bhavas described by classics

Garbhashthapaka dravyas (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy)⁴⁴:

Garbha sthapaka dravyas counter act the effect of the garbhopaghatakara bhavas and help in the proper maintenance of the garbha. They can also be used in the treatment and prevention of abortion. These are to be used as a routine as they are beneficial for the maintenance of proper health, growth and development of the mother and fetus. Some of the garbhashthapaka aushadhis are Aindri (*Bacopa monnieri*), braahmi (*Centella asiatica*), Satavirya (*Asparagus racemosus*), Sahashravirya (*Cynodon dactylon*), Amogha (*Stereospermum suaveolens*), Avyatha (*Tinospora cardifolia*), Shiva (*Terminalia chebula*), Arista (*Picrorhiza kurroa*), Vatyapushpi (*Sida cardifolia*), Vishwasenkanta (*Callicarpa macrophylla*) etc. These should be taken orally as preparations in milk and ghee. A bath with cold decoction of these drugs should be given during pushya nakshatra. These should be kept in close contact with the mother and can be used as amulets around the right arm and on the head. Drugs of the jeevaneeya gana can also be used in a similar way. Kasyapa has advocated that amulet of trivrit (*Operculina Tharpethum*) should be also tied in the waist of pregnant woman⁴⁵.

Discussion:

Garbhini paricharya is very well documented in Ayurvedic classics starting from samhita period. Ancient Ayurvedic scholars knew the importance 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 fetal development and well being. Nausea and vomiting are the main complications experienced by majority of women during pregnancy. Due to this, there is a possibility in pregnant women to get dehydrated and malnourished. Scholars have advised liquid diet instead of heavy and solid food in first trimester to avoid 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 maintenance of proper health of mother and fetus. Garbhini paricharya considers milk an ideal constituent of diet for pregnant women as it is a source of calcium, lactose and butter fat⁴⁶. Milk also has moderate amounts of protein with anabolic properties that give strength. 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 fetus grows sufficiently requiring more protein which is supplied by use of meat soup. By the end of second trimester most women suffer from edema 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. Being diuretic, gokshura is also helpful in pregnancy induced hypertension and related other complications. The drugs of prithakaparnyadi group are also diuretic, anabolic, relieve emaciation and suppress pitta and kapha, their regular use in 7th month might help in maintaining health of mother and fetus. Most women experience constipation in late pregnancy due to pressure of engaged head in pelvis over the bowel and rectum. Use of basti (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 labour⁴⁷. 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. It is just possible that the regular use of tampon might influence autonomic fibers governing

myometrium and help in its relaxation during labour.

Garbhoghatakaras (diets and mode of life) are resulting either in abortion or intrauterine death of fetus⁴⁸. Garbhoghatakaras also cause congenital anomalies in fetus. So, these are absolutely avoided during pregnancy from starting.

Charaka and Kasyapa have described certain garbhasthapaka drugs which are mainly considered as treatment for abortion and maintenance of pregnancy successfully.

Conclusion:

Ancient scholars of Ayurveda were very much aware about the need of maternal care during pregnancy. Garbhini paricharya prescribed during samhita period are very much cope with Antenatal care set by modern gynecologists. 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 labour. Garbhasthapaka 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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