

## Ayurvedic insights into garbhini paricharya: holistic antenatal care"

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** *Garbhini Paricharya* means caring for the pregnant women in the form of *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (life style), *Oushada* (medications) and *Paramarsh* (counselling) and preparing her for *Sukhaprasava*, both mentally and physically. As the *Garbha* (foetus) is a small form of *Purusha*, the birth and growth of the child depends upon the food and actions of the mother. The food taken by a pregnant woman, nourishes and helps the growth of the foetus, nourishes the mother's own body and helps in the development of the breasts for breast milk formation. *Garbhini Paricharya* is a monthly regimen which is broadly discussed under three headings: a. *Masanumasikapathya* (Month wise dietary regimen) b. *Garbhopaghathakara Bhavas* (Activities and substances which are harmful to foetus) c. *Garbhasthapaka Dravyas* (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy). The main aim of *Garbhini Paricharya* are 1) To protect fetus from known /unknown hazards. 2) To promote normal growth and development of fetus 3) To conduct normal delivery without any foetal and maternal complications. Thus, great importance has been given to *Garbhini Paricharya* in our classics. Ayurvedic principles through the concept of *Garbhini Paricharya* improve the physical and psychological condition of the pregnant woman and make their body suitable for *Sukhaprasava* and helps to sustain the exhaustion of *Prasava*. Hence, proper *Garbhini Paricharya* should be followed throughout pregnancy.

**Keywords:** Antenatal Care, *Garbhini Paricharya*, *Garbhopaghathakara Bhavas*, *Masanumasikapathya*, *Sukha Prasava*

### INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is the most energetic and challenging phase in a woman's life. It brings about emotional and physiological changes as well as poses extra demands on the body. In this phase the body needs extra nutrition for developing foetus, pregnant woman herself and the lactation period to follow. Thus, wellness of the pregnant women is maintained through proper *Garbhini Paricharya* right from the confirmation of pregnancy till delivery. *Garbhini Paricharya* means caring for the pregnant women in the form of *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (life style), *Oushada* (medications) and *Paramarsh* (counselling) and preparing her for *Sukhaprasava*, both mentally and physically.

Ayurveda considers food to be the best source of nourishment as well as medication for the pregnant woman. The nine monthly diet is singularly unique to Ayurveda. It changes in accordance with the growth of the fetus in the womb and at the same time ensures health of the mother. One can find remnants of this dietetics with midwives and older women, but a detailed and comprehensive diet plan is being practiced only by the *Vaidyas* of the classical medical tradition.

*Purusha* (human) is born and grows from *Ahar Rasa*. So *Ahar Rasa* should be maintained healthy. The food and behavior should be such that the *Ahar Rasa* is protected at all cost. As the *Garbha* (foetus) is a small form of *Purusha*, the birth and growth of the child depends upon the food and actions of the mother. The food taken by a pregnant woman, Nourishes and helps the growth of the foetus, Nourishes the mother's own body and helps in the development of the breasts for breast milk formation.

The growth of the foetus is marked by a certain growth pattern. In the 5th month there is a predominant growth of *Mamsa* (flesh) and *Rakta* (blood) dhatus. In 6th month there is predominant development of *Bala*, *Varna*, Nails, hairs, *Roma*, ligaments, bones etc. Accordingly, the management changes every month according to 'Charaka Samhita. *Garbhini Paricharya* is a monthly regimen which is broadly discussed under three headings: a. *Masanumasikapathya* (Month wise dietary regimen) b. *Garbhopaghathakara bhavas* (Activities and substances which are harmful to fetus) c. *Garbhashthapakadravyas* (Substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy).

The main aim of *Garbhini Paricharya* are 1) To protect fetus from known /unknown hazards. 2) To promote normal growth and development of fetus 3) To conduct normal delivery without any foetal and maternal complications. Thus, great importance has been given to *Garbhini Paricharya* in our classics. <sup>i</sup>

## MATERIAL AND METHOD

Detailed literature review about *Garbhini Paricharya* was done from available Ayurveda and Modern texts, all the previous research works, papers published in research journals & subject related updated information available on internet and authentic sources.

The Bruhatrayi Samhita's i.e. Charak Samhita, Sushruta Samhita, Vagbhat Samhita and Harita Samhita was thoroughly referred.

## OBSERVATIONS

*Masanumasika Garbhini Paricharya* as described in different classics

MONTH	CHARAK <sup>ii</sup>	SUSHRUT <sup>iii</sup>	VAGBHAT <sup>iv</sup>	HARITA <sup>v</sup>
1	Non medicated milk	Sweet, cold and liquid diet	Medicated milk	<i>Madhuyashti</i> , <i>Madhukpushpa</i> with Butter, Honey and sweetened milk.
2	Milk medicated with <i>Madhura Rasa</i>	Same as 1st month	Same as Charaka	Sweetened milk treated with <i>Kakoli</i>

	<i>Dravya</i>			
3	Milk with honey and <i>Ghrita</i>	Same as 1st month	Same as Charaka	<i>Krishara</i> (a dish prepared with rice & pulses)
4	Butter extracted from milk (12 gm) Or Milk with butter	Cooked <i>Shashti</i> rice with curd, food mixed with milk and butter, meat of wild animals	Butter extracted from milk (12 gm) Or Milk with butter	Medicated cooked rice
5	<i>Ghrita</i> prepared with butter extracted from milk	Cooked <i>Shashti</i> rice with milk, meat of wild animals	Same as Charaka	<i>Payasa</i> (rice cooked with milk & sweetened)
6	<i>Ghrita</i> prepared from milk medicated with <i>Madhura Dravyas</i>	<i>Ghrita</i> or <i>Yavagu</i> (rice gruel) medicated with <i>Gokshura</i>	Same as Charaka	Sweetened curd
7	<i>Ghrita</i> prepared from milk medicated with <i>Madhura Dravyas</i>	<i>Ghrita</i> medicated with <i>Prithakparnyaadi</i> group of drugs	Same as Charaka	<i>Ghritakhanda</i>
8	<i>Yavagu</i> (rice gruel) prepared with milk and mixed with <i>Ghrita</i>	<i>Asthapanabasti</i> (decoction of <i>Badari</i> mixed with <i>Bala</i> , <i>Atibala</i> , <i>Shatapushpa</i> , <i>Patala</i> , milk, curd, <i>Mastu</i> , oil, salt, <i>Madanphala</i> , honey and <i>Ghrita</i> ) followed by <i>AnuvasanaBasti</i> (oil medicated with milk & decoction of <i>Madhura Dravyas</i> )	<i>Yavagu</i> (rice gruel) prepared with milk and mixed with <i>Ghrita</i> , <i>Asthapanabasti</i> , <i>Anuvasanabasti</i>	<i>Ghritapuraka</i>

9	<i>Anuvasanabasti</i> (oil medicated with milk & decoction of <i>Madhura Dravyas</i> ), Vaginal tampon of oil	<i>Asthapanabasti</i> , <i>Madhura</i> , <i>Snigdhadravya ahara</i>	Same as Charaka	Different varieties of cereals
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Month wise regimen mentioned in Ayurved Samhitas in

1<sup>st</sup> Month-

- ✓ Non medicated milk
- ✓ Favourable *Ahara* twice daily.
- ✓ *Madhura, Sheeta, Drava Ahara*.
- ✓ Milk medicated with *Garbha Sthapana Dravyas* for twice a day.
- ✓ First 12 days – *Ksheerodhrita Ghrita* medicated with *Shalaparni* and *Palasa*.
- ✓ Drink water, boiled with gold or silver and cooled.
- ✓ *Yashti, Parushaka, Madhuka* alone or combined with butter and honey followed by
- ✓ *Madhura Ksheera*.

2<sup>nd</sup> Month

- ✓ Milk medicated with *Madhura* group.
- ✓ *Madhura, Sheeta, Drava Ahara*.
- ✓ *Madhura Ksheera* treated with *Kakoli*.

3<sup>rd</sup> Month

- ✓ Milk with honey and ghee.
- ✓ *Madhura, Sheeta, Drava Ahara*.
- ✓ Cooked *Shashti* rice with milk.
- ✓ *Krisara*.

4<sup>th</sup> Month

- ✓ Butter prepared from milk (or) Milk with butter in *Aksha (2 tolas) Matra*
- ✓ Cooked *Shashti* rice with *Dadhi* and *Hridya Ahara* with adequate quantity of *Ksheera*
- ✓ *Navaneetam* and *Jangala Mamsa*.
- ✓ *Prativihita Ksheera* with milk.
- ✓ *Kritaudanam*.

5<sup>th</sup> Month

- ✓ *Ghrita* extracted from milk or *Ghrita* with milk.
- ✓ *Shashti* rice with milk and *Hridya Ahara* with adequate quantity of *Ksheera Sarpi*.
- ✓ *Ksheera Sarpi* alone (ghee extracted from milk).
- ✓ *Yavagu*.

✓ *Payasa.*

6<sup>th</sup> Month

- ✓ *Madhuraushadha siddha Ksheera Sarpi.*
- ✓ *Ghee or Yavagu medicated with Gokshura.*
- ✓ *Ksheera Sarpi alone.*
- ✓ *Madhura Dadhi.*

7<sup>th</sup> Month

- ✓ *Madhuraushadha siddha Ksheera Sarpi.*
- ✓ *Treat the Kikkisa.*
- ✓ *Ghrita medicated with Prithakparnyadi group of drugs.*
- ✓ *Ghrita Khanda*

8<sup>th</sup> Month

- ✓ *Yavagu prepared with milk and mixed with Ghrita.*
- ✓ *Asthapana Vasti with Badarodaka, Bala, Atibala etc. drugs and Anuvasana Vasti with Dugdha and Madhura Kashaya Siddha Taila.*
- ✓ *Snigdha Yavagu and Jangala Mamsarasa.*
- ✓ *Ksheera Peya along with Ghrita.*
- ✓ *Anuvasana Vasti with drugs of Madhura group (Draksha etc.).*
- ✓ *Ghrita Puraka.*

9<sup>th</sup> Month

- ✓ *Anuvasana Vasti with Madhuraushadha Siddha Taila.*
- ✓ *Yoni Pichu of the same oil.*
- ✓ *Snigdha Mamsarasa with Ahara of Bahu Snehayukta Yavagu.*
- ✓ *Bath with Sheeta Kashaya of Vataghna drugs.*
- ✓ *Various Anna.*
- ✓ *Anuvasana Vasti with Kadamba oil.*
- ✓ *Yavagu.*

### **Conduct of Garbhini**

As food is important for physical and mental development of a fetus, in similar manner conduct of *Garbhini* also plays important role in development of the fetus

To Follow :-

Lady should maintain good conduct. Her sleeping and sitting places should be covered with soft cushion or mattress. During *Grahana Kala*, she should go into *Garbhagriha* and offer oblation to free from the clutches of *Grahas*. She must offer alms to beggars. Throughout pregnancy, she must bath daily, wear clean, white or light colors and loose garments. She must wear light weight ornaments. Her living place should be free from insects like mosquitoes etc. Pregnant woman should follow conduct psychological health. She must be happy and live a pious life. People around her must perform joyful functions and auspicious deeds. She should worship the Diety, *Brahmanas* & priest for her and fetus well being. Her Husband and family relatives should behave affectionately and should follow *Apta*

*Vachana.*

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

*Garbhopaghathakara 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). If the *Garbhini* is exposed to *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas*, this may cause following complications-

1. *Moodha Garbha* ( Malposition, Malpresentation)
2. *Garbha Vyapat* (Pre-mature labour, Abortion, Intrauterine growth retardation, Intrauterine death)
3. *Dushprajataja Amayas*. (congenital malformations)

**Garbhopaghathakara Bhavas as discussed in classics**

SAMHITA	GARBHOPAGHATAKARA BHAVAS	
	AHARA ( DIET )	VIHARA ( BEHAVIOUR )
CHARAKA	Pungent drugs, Tobacco / Smoking, Cocaine, Alcohol intake, Meat, Inadequate calorie intake, Caffeine (tea, coffee, chocolates)	High pitch voice, Suppression of natural urges, Exercise, Coitus, Strenuous work, Going outside alone to lonely places, Visiting cremation places, haunted trees and entering into shades of tree, Use of blood stained clothes, Peeping into well
SUSHRUT <sup>vi</sup>	Dry, Food kept overnight, Boiled food, Wet or moistened food	Coitus, Exercise, Night awakening, Day sleeping, Prolonged squatting & abnormal postures, Travelling, Suppression of natural urges, Bloodletting, Excessive satiation, Excessive emaciation
ASHTANGA SANGRAHA <sup>vii</sup>	Intake of Dry food	Travel, Indigestion, Anger, Grief, Fear, Fasting, Abnormal & difficult postures, Night awakening, Day sleeping
ASHTANGA HRIDAYA <sup>viii</sup>	Meat, Alcohol intake, Intake of food which is hard to digest ( <i>Vishtambhi</i> )	Excessive coitus, Exercise, carrying heavy weight, untimely sleep, squatting, grief, anger, excitement, suppression of natural urges, fasting, excessive walking, use of red garments, sleeping in supine position, bloodletting

<b>KASHYAPA<sup>ix</sup></b>	Excessive use of garlic in food, Use of cold water	Looking at declining moon & setting sun, Excitement, Exposure to solar or lunar eclipse, Excessive laughing, Staying for longer periods in erect or flexed posture, Wearing tight garments, Viewing the filled pots, garlands, pot filled with <i>ghrita</i> or curd.
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### Things a pregnant lady should avoid during pregnancy is as follows:

She should not be engaged in excessive *Vyayama*, *Vyavaya* or vehicle riding. She should give up the things those are contrary to *Indriyas* and other harmful articles. She must avoid *Divaswapna*, *Ratrijagarana*, *Ukatasana*. *Akala Poorvakarma*, *Panchakarma*, *Raktamokshana*, *Vega Vidharana*. She must not be involved in excess of outing, visiting of lonely places, cremation ground, *Chaityas* etc. She Avoid high pitch talks, activities that make her fatigue, Avoid articles likely to aggravate *Doshas*, peeping in the pit or well, sleeping in supine position, not to look at descending noon, setting sun and both the *Rahus*. She should not wear red or dark color garments, should not touch dirty or disfigured persons possessing less body parts. She should avoid coming in contact with foul smelling, awful looking substances. She should control her grief, fear, anger etc. she should not visit the places where thoughts likely to promote anger, fear etc.

### **Garbhashthapaka Dravya (Drugs beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy):<sup>x</sup>**

*Garbhashthapaka 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)*, *Brahmi (Centella asiatica)*, *Shatavirya (Asparagus racemosus)*, *Sahasravirya (Cynodon dactylon)*, *Amogha (Stereospermum colais)*, *Avyatha (Tinospora cardifolia)*, *Shiva (Terminalia chebula)*, *Arishta (Picrorhiza kurroa)*, *Vatyapushpi (Sidaca rdifolia)*, *Vishwakshakanta (Callicarpa macrophylla)*, *Priyangu (Aglaiia elaeagnoides)* etc. These *Dravyas* should be taken orally as preparation in milk and *Ghee*. *Dravyas* of the *Jeevaniya Gana* can also be used in a similar way. The cold decoction of pulp of *Bilva (Aegle marmelos)*, *Karpasa (Gossypium herbaceum)*, *Agnimantha (Clerodendrum phlomidis)*, *Jatamansi (Nardostachys jatamansi)* and pounded leaves of *Eranda (Ricinus communis)* or the water prepared with *Sarvagandha* drugs should be used for bathing by the pregnant woman.

## DISCUSSION

### **Benefits of Garbhini Paricharya**

Woman sustains her healthiness and delivers the child having outstanding virtues in respect of strength, voice and intelligence etc. Placenta (*apara*), Foetal Membrane or Vaginal canal, pelvis, waist, sides of the chest and back, becomes soft. *Vata anulomana* helps in expulsion of foetus during delivery and innormalization and elimination of urine and stool with ease. Moreover, it facilitates easy removal of

placenta. Her skin, nails becomes softer. Woman gains overall boost in strength and complexion. *Aahar Rasa* produced in pregnant woman is utilized in providing nourishment to mother herself, nourishment and growth of baby and formation of *Stanya* (breast milk), which results into increase in calorie requirement during pregnancy. Pregnancy requires an additional 80000 kcal, most are accumulated in the last 20 weeks. To meet this demand, calorie requirement of 100 to 300 kcal per day is recommended during pregnancy. Calories are necessary for energy and whenever caloric intake is inadequate, protein is metabolized rather than being spared for its vital role in foetal growth and development. In *Garbhini Paricharya* the concept behind using food articles *Having Madhura Rasa* predominance might be helpful in meeting the increased caloric needs during pregnancy.

**Importance of milk in *Garbhini paricharya*** -After going through *Garbhini Paricharya* suggested by different Acharyas it is observed that use of milk and *Madhura* drug has been advised in each month. In pregnancy *Vata* is increased. This may be due to obstruction by *Garbha* (foetus). *Madhura Rasa* is congenial since birth, excellent for formation of *Dhatu*s, *Vatashamak*, pre-eminent in *Bruhana Karma*, lactogenic, increases longevity of life and excellent in enhancing complexion. It may cross placental barrier and gives high energy nutrients to the foetus. Milk also increases intellectual level (*Medhya*), strength (*Bala*), lactogenic, relieves dyspepsia. Iodine is found in milk and dairy products which is essential for producing hormones made by the thyroid gland which has direct effect on development the foetal brain. Milk is a whole diet and good source of calcium. The drug of *Madhura* group are anabolic, thus use of these will help in maintenance of appropriate health of mother and normal growth and development of foetus.

***Shali-Shashtik (Rice)***- It is rich in carbohydrates, provides fuel for body, excellent source of Niacin, Vitamin D, Calcium, Fibre, Iron, Thiamine and Riboflavin.

***Mudga (Green Gram or Vignaradiata)***- It is rich source of low fat protein. It has a wide amino acid profile, providing at least every type of amino acids. It contains both insoluble and water soluble fibres. Water soluble fibre reduces LDL cholesterol and reduces risk for cardiovascular diseases. It has low glycemic index. It digests slowly and releases glucose into your bloodstream, stabilizing blood sugar which in turn lowers risk of developing diabetes.

***Wheat***- This food is very low in Saturated fat, Cholesterol and Sodium. It is also a good source of dietary fibre and very good source of Manganese and Selenium.

***Navneetam***- It contains a high amount of Saturated fat and provides 7 % of recommended dietary allowance of Vit A based on a 2000- Calorie diet. Vit A is important for vision health.

***Ghee***- It contains 112 calories/tbsp and 33 mg of cholesterol. The total fat content is 12.7 g. It provides many essential fatty acids such as omega-3 and omega-6 which provides anti-inflammatory properties. Regulate DNA products and assist with cellular communication. Protein content of *Ghrita* 0.04 g/tbsp, which includes 17 amino acids essential for good health. It contains 3 % linoleic acid, an antioxidant. It also contains Vitamin A, D, E, K, Calcium, Potassium and small amount of Riboflavin and Pantothenic acid.

***Honey***- Energy – 64 calories in 1 tbsp, Fat- 0 g, Carbohydrate -17.3 g (Fibre 0.04, Sugar 17.25), Protein- 0.06 g.



**Sugar-** It is rich in Carbohydrates.

**Fruit of *Amalaki*** - It is a rich source of antioxidants, iron, Vit.A, C, Fibre, Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium etc. It prevents ageing, improves vision, prevents constipation, protects and cures diabetes, improves cardiovascular health and prevents anaemia.

**Grapes** - It has calorie value of 62, Total fat content is 0.3g, Sodium 2 mg, Total carbohydrate 15.8 g, Dietary fibre 0.8 g, Sugar 14.9 g, Vit A 2 %, Vit C 6%, Calcium 1 %, Iron 1 %.

By the above details , it is clear that milk and drugs of *Madhura* group have been advised for entire pregnancy period. Milk is a wholesome diet. It provides nutrition and stability to the foetus. The drugs of *Madhura* group are having anabolic property. Hence, the use of these drugs will help in maintenance of proper health of *Garbhini* and development of foetus. So, the *Garbhini* who follows the such said *Upakramas* creates *Snigdha Guna Garbhini Avastha* , that *Snigdha Guna* predominantly of *Kapha Dosha* and *Kapha Dosha* plays important role in nourishment which gains strength and delivers normally and easily without any complication.

## CONCLUSION

To get the fruitful outcome of nature, our Acharya has advised *Garbhini Paricharya* from the conception till delivery. Ayurvedic principles through the concept of *Garbhini Paricharya* improve the physical and psychological condition of the pregnant woman and make their body suitable for *Sukhaprasava* and helps to sustain the exhaustion of *Prasava*. Hence, proper *Garbhini Paricharya* should be followed throughout pregnancy.

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