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Review Article

# ROLE OF *SWASTHAVRITTA* IN MATERNAL HEALTH CARE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO *GARBHINI PARICHARYA*

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## ABSTRACT

Pregnancy is a phase that brings about a lot of physical and biochemical changes in the female body, be it the skin, respiratory, cardiovascular or endocrine system which engenders the need of Antenatal care or *Garbhini Paricharya* for them. Ayurveda has precisely defined *Garbhiniparicharya* which is a detailed description of month-wise *Ahar-Vihar* and *Vichara* to be followed by the lady to maintain a healthy pregnancy and a safe normal delivery of the baby. *Vichar* is an equally important aspect as a lot of psychological and emotional crest and troughs occur in this period. Acharyas have also described *Garbhopghatakar Bhav* which are the diets and habits that are restricted during pregnancy. Post Delivery body becomes weak so it requires very good care and consciousness towards *Ahara-vihar* which is defined as *Sutika paricharya*.

## INTRODUCTION

We live in an era where financial wellbeing brings us a sedentary lifestyle with bad food habits and poverty brings us a lack of nutrition so we can conclude that most of the population today has nutritional insufficiency or some lifestyle disorder. This is where *Swasthavritta* comes into play in correcting the faulty diet and lifestyle. *Swasthavritta* is an important branch of ayurveda dealing with healing lifestyle in terms of *Pathya Ahar* and *Vihar* which includes *Dincharya, Ritucharya, Ratricharya, Shadrasa*, *Rasayana, Achar Rasayana, sadvritta*. Especially to be mothers are generally found anaemic and weak with various nutritional deficiencies which elevates the maternal mortality rate and Infant mortality rate making ante-natal care/*Garbhiniparicharya* mandatory for them.

In *Amarkosha Garbhini* is a woman with *Garbha* and *Paricharya* means conscious care and regime following in multi dimensions i.e., *Ahara, Vihara, Ausadh*, and *Paramarsha*. *Garbhini Paricharya* is not only about *Ahara* (dietary regimen) and *Vihara* (lifestyle of pregnant woman throughout pregnancy) but also about the concept of diet, behavior, psychic state, conduct and medications during pregnancy.[1]

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## MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

An in-depth review of literature about *Garbhini Paricharya* has been thoroughly done from various *Samhita* like *Charak, Sushrut* and *Harita Samhita*. All the survey and Researches have been looked thoroughly to quote the inference of efficacy of *Garbhini Paricharya.*

### What is the need of *Garbhini Paricharya*/ Antenatal Care?

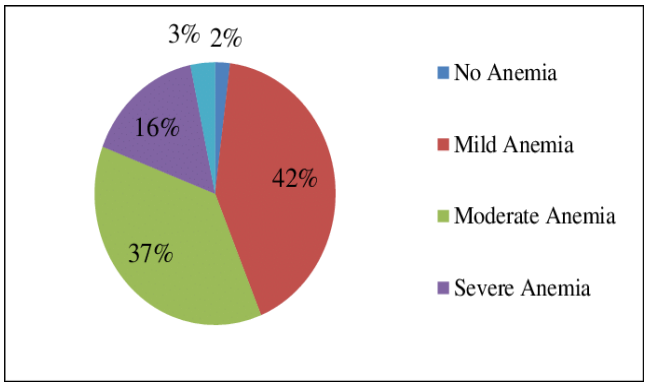
To improve the health of pregnant woman & baby, reduce chances of complicated pregnancy and achieve a healthy progeny.

Nutritional deficiency in mothers is a pre-requisite for *Garbhini Paricharya* as most of the woman in the reproductive age group are anaemic, deficient and underweight for which they need a good dietary evaluation and care. Hypertension is a very common reason for complicated pregnancy and maternal death which accounts for about 7.1% of maternal death.[2]

According to WHO about 800 women died of preventable causes during pregnancy and child birth, four ANC Visits with healthcare professionals are mandatory as per WHO. *Garbhini Paricharya* itself is sufficient to take care of the mother.

**Infant Mortality Rate in India - 30.6 death /1000 live Birth**

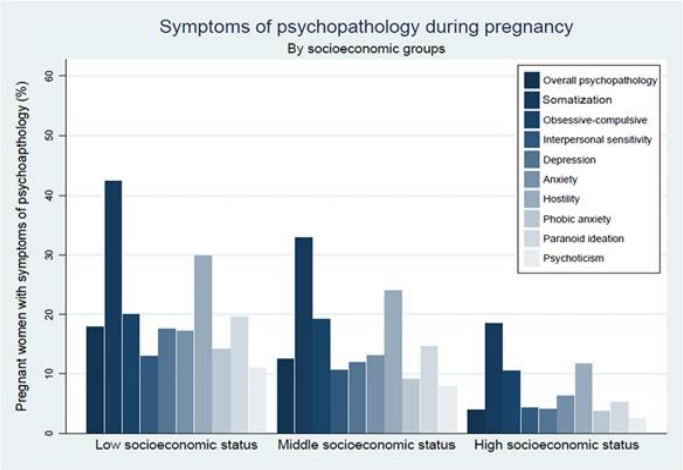
**Maternal Mortality Rate in India - 97/100000 live births (2018-2020) (UNICEF)**




**Percentage of Anemic Pregnant Woman [3]**

Along with all the physical changes that a woman go through during pregnancy psychological changes, stress, anxiety, irritability and depression also seems to be a major concern as her behaviour and mental well-being will directly affect the psyche and mental status of the progeny, so to combat this we incorporate *Achar rasayana* and *Satva* enhancement by the use of *Dhyana* and *Pranayama.*

A three-day cross over study was done on 60 pregnant women in their third trimester with 10 min of Breath awareness and *Pranava Pranayama* (Om Meditation Breathing) and it was found that there were significant changes in maternal and foetal heart rate, it enhanced cardiovascular haemodynamic, reduced sympathetic activity coupled with enhanced vagal parasympathetic tone.[4]




[5]

As a part of *Swasthavritta* we majorly focus on the food and nourishment of the pregnant woman, discussing it month wise:

| Month | Diet[6] | Reason[7] |
|---|---|---|
| 1st | **Carak Samhita:** Milk<br>**Susruta Samhita:** Sweet, cold, liquid diet<br>**Harita:** *Yasthimadu, Parushaka, Madhupuspha* with *Navneeta* and honey followed by use of sweetened milk. | Fetus develop *Ghana* from liquid stage (*Budbud*)[8] due to predominance of *Jala* and *Prithvi mahabhuta* in *Madhura rasa* promotes the process of solidification.<br>Low dose of *Yasthimadhu, Navneeta*, *Madhura* (honey) and *Sarkara* (jaggery) relieve *Chardi*, dehydration and anaemia. |
| 2nd | **Charak Samhita:** Milk medicated with *Madhura rasa* drugs<br>**Susruta Samhita:** Sweet, cold, liquid diet<br>**Harita:** *Kakoli* with *Dugdha* and *Sarkara* (*Kakoli siddha ksheer)* | *Kakoli* is a *Jeevanya dravya* which prevent the high risk of miscarriage in second month. It is *Balya*, *Brimhaniya*, diuretic, *Stanyajanana*. Prevents dehydration due to nausea and vomiting. |
| 3rd | **Charak Samhita:** Milk with honey and *Ghrita*<br>**Susruta Samhita:** Sweet, cold, liquid diet; *Shashthi* rice with milk.<br>**Harita:** *Krishara* (a special formulation of rice and pulse). | *Guru guna* of *Krishra* and predominance of *Prithvi mahabhuta* help in formation of *Hasta, Pada, Sira* and excretory system of fetus start. Act upon excretory system as it is *Malamutrakari* (repellent of fecal and urine) |
| 4th | **Charak Samhita:** *Navneeta* (butter), milk with butter<br>**Susruta Samhita:** *Shashthi* rice with milk and butter and meat of wild animals. | Fetus grows sufficiently requiring more protein which is supplied by the use of meat soup. *Krutodana* comprises of carbohydrates which is primary component for the growth of fetus in second trimester. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Harita:** *Krutodana* (medicated cooked rice) | |
| 5th | **Charak Samhita:** *Ghrita*<br>**Susruta Samhita:** cooked *Sasti* rice with milk, meat of wild animals along with dainty food mixed with milk and *Ghrita*<br>**Harita:** *Payasa* (preparation of *Shali* rice, *Sharkara* and milk) | Fetus is *Sujiva* and mother can feel the movement of fetus (quickening). *Brimhniya, Balya*, growth of fetus, *Pittahara*, *Raktapittahara*, balance *Vata dosha, Jatharagni mandakara* (Pacifies excess digestive fire) |
| 6th | **Charak Samhita**: *Ghrita* prepared from milk medicated with *Madhura* drugs<br>**Susruta Samhita:** *Ghrita*/rice gruel medicated with *Goksuru*<br>**Harita:** *Madhura dadhi* | Cools down body temperature, calms the emotional centre in order to prevent anxiety, acidity and heartburn. *Sarkara* is rich in iron, contributes to fulfil daily iron requirement and reduce the chance of anemia. |
| 7th | **Charak Samhita:** *Ghrita* prepared from milk medicated with *Madhura* drugs<br>**Susruta Samhita:** *Ghrita* medicated with *Vidarigandhadi* group of drugs<br>**Harita:** *Ghritakhanda* | *Go-ghrita* is shown to have relaxing nerves and lower the stress. Also help in flushing out toxins, repair damage tissues, strengthening immune system and help to maintain body temperature of fetus. |
| 8th | **Charak Samhita:** Rice gruel prepared with milk and mixed with *Ghrita*<br>**Susruta Samhita:** *Asthapana basti*<br>**Harita:** *Ghrita puraka (ghevar)* | *Ghrita puraka* provide relief from the acidic and moist environment. Have a calming effect on mind as well as body.<br>*Agni vriddhi* is one of the important features of *Ghrita* in Ayurveda. |
| 9th | **Charak Samhita:** *Asthapana basti* with oil prepared with the drug of *Madhura* group<br>**Harita:** *Vividha anna.* | Relieve this constipation, help in regulating their function during labour. |

During the first trimester of pregnancy most women experience nausea and vomiting, thus cannot take proper diet. Use of cold, sweet, liquid diet and milk will prevent dehydration and supply required nourishment, besides the drug of *Madhura* group being anabolic will help in maintenance of proper health of mother and fetus.[9]

- ***Yasthimadhu:*** Adjuvant, acts better in conjunction with other drugs.
- ***Parushaka:*** Rich in iron, calcium, potassium, sodium, vitamin C, B2 and carbohydrates. Useful in anemia, electrolyte balance in body and provide energy.
- ***Madhuka (Madhuca indica):*** Contains albumin, saponins and act as a galactogogue. Rich source of calcium, iron, phosphorus, potassium and vitamins.[10]
- ***Navaneeta:*** *Vrishya*, body coolant, improve digestion, effective in vitiation of *vata, pitta* and *rakta. Navneeta* contains vitamins A, D, E & K and minerals like zinc, iodine, copper etc. Zinc deficiency increasee fetal death due to spontaneous abortion, multiple congenital anomalies[11], malformation of organs and skeletal system. Cause of malformation due to abnormal synthesis of nucleic acids and proteins, impaired cellular growth and morphogenesis, abnormal tubuling polymerization, chromosomal defects and excessive lipid peroxidation of cellular membrane. Maternal zinc deficiency has long term effect on growth, immunity and metabolic status of the surviving offspring's.

Fourth month onward muscular tissue of fetus grows sufficiently requiring more protein which is supplied by the use of meat soup. By the end of second trimester most women suffer from oedema of feet and other complications of water accumulation. Use of *Gokshur* a good diuretic in sixth month will prevent retention of water as well as its complications.[12]

During third, fourth and fifth month of pregnancy, *Krishra* (a special formulation of rice and pulse) and *Krutodana* (medicated cooked rice) and *Payasa* (preparation of *Shali* rice, *Sharkara* and milk) is wholesome diet as per *Harita*. Rice is the only cereals that is eaten as whole grain, according to Ayurvedic text is more easily digestible. Rice is rich in starch which is nearly completely absorbed by human body. Positive qualities of high digestibility of starch, high biological value of amino-acids, adequate amount of essential fatty acids, selenium and anti-hypertensive property. The presence of essential nutrients such as vitamin D, thiamine, riboflavin and minerals. Low sodium content balances and reduces the effect of sodium intake from other food items. Rice facilitates

the growth of beneficial bacteria in the stomach which helps in normal and smooth bowel movements during pregnancy. *Raktashali* is considered to be the best quality rather than other varieties. It comprises *Madhur rasa, Laghu, Sitavirya, Tridoshasamaka*. It provides nutrition, rich in iron, zinc and minerals and possess antioxidant properties. *Madhur rasa* provides a feeling of generalized strength and pleasure. As foetus is dominated by *Kapha*, naturally it would need more oil-based substances to replenish the *Kapha*.

Curd is rich in vitamin A, C, D, calcium, protein, probiotics and folic acid. Cools down body temperature, calms the emotional centre in order to prevent anxiety, acidity and heartburn. It prevents stomach upset, yeast infection and pigmentation that is *Kikissa* (Striae gravidarum) that appear in six months.

*Sarkara* is rich in iron, contributes to fulfil daily iron requirement and reduce the chance of anemia. Potassium helps in stabilizing electrolyte balance in the body. Vitamins and minerals help to nourish bones and joints. It triggers the secretion of digestive enzymes and aid in digestion and also help in smooth bowel movement. According to the study published in Journal of Food Processing and Technology, half cup *Sarkara* contains calcium (40-100mg), potassium (1056mg), magnesium (70-90 mg), sodium (19-30 mg), iron (10-13 mg), phosphorus (20-90 mg), zinc (0.2-0.4 mg), manganese (0.2- 0.5 mg), copper (0.1-0.9 mg), chloride (5.3 mg) and trace amount of vitamins.[13]

The drugs of *Vidarigandhadi* group are diuretic, anabolic, relieve emaciation and suppress *pitta* and *kapha*, their regular use in seventh month might help in maintaining health of mother and fetus. Most women experience constipation in late stage of pregnancy due to pressure of gravid uterus over the bowels and effect of progesterone.[14]

A pregnant woman needs 200-300 extra calories daily then a normal person, ghee can provide those extra calories in the healthiest way as well as vitamin A, D, E, K, Omega 6 & 9, calcium, iron, magnesium etc. nutrients helpful in fetal development and nourishment. In Carak Samhita, it has been mentioned in the text as it promotes memories, intelligence, *Agni*, semen, *Ojas*, *Kapha* and *Medas*. Alleviates *Vata, Pitta*, insanity, inauspiciousness and fever. *Ghrita* is best of all fats it possesses *Shita, Madhura rasa, Madhura vipaka* and has thousand potentialities and thousands of actions.

Use of enema in eight months will relieve this constipation, besides this may also effects the autonomous nervous system governing myometrium and help in regulating their function during labour. Tampon oil may destroy pathogenic bacteria of vaginal canal and prevents puerperal sepsis, besides this tampon may also soften vaginal passage thus help in normal labour. It is just possible that the regular use of tampon might influence autonomic fibers governing myometrium and help in regulating their functions. Besides, this might soften the perineum and help in its relaxation during labour.[15]

Milk and drugs of *Madhura* group have been advised for entire pregnancy period. Milk is a complete diet. It is a natural source of calcium, protein, vitamin D and antacid. It hydrates the body, provide strong immune system to body. Helps in development of baby's nervous system. Iodine content in milk enhances brain development and increase IQ of children. The drugs of *Madhura* group are anabolic, thus use of these will help in maintenance of proper health of mother and growth and development of fetus.

***Sutika Paricharya***

*Sutika* is weak due to exhaustion of labor pain, development of foetus, loss of *Dhatu*, excretion of blood and *Kleda*.

सूतिकां तु खलु बुभुचितां विदित्वा स्नेहं पाययेत् परमया शक्तया सपिस्तैलं वसा मज्जानं वा सात्म्यीभावमभिसमीक्ष्य पिप्पलीपिप्पलीमूलच व्यचित्र कश्टङ्गबेर चूर्णसहितम् । नेहं पीतवत्याश्च सर्पिस्तैलाभ्यामभ्यज्य वेष्टयेदुदरं महताऽच्छेन वाससा; तथा तस्या न वायुरुदरे विकृतिमुत्पाद्यत्यनवकाशत्वात् । जीर्ण तु स्नेहे पिप्पल्यादिभिरेव सिद्धां यवागूं सुखिग्धां द्रवां मात्रर्शः पाययेत् । उभयतःकालं चोष्णोदकेन च परिषेचयेत् प्राक् बेहयवागूपानाभ्याम् । एवं पञ्चवरात्रं सप्तरात्रं वाऽनुपाक्ष्य क्रमेणाप्यायेत् । स्वस्थवृत्त- मेतावत् सूतिकायाः ॥ ४८ ॥ ref Charak

| ***Pathya*** | ***Apathya*** |
|---|---|
| *Hitakara ahara* and *Vihar* which does not aggravate *Vata* | *Shita ahara vihar* |
| Bath with warm water | *Maithuna* |
| Adequate sleep | Physical and mental stress |
| Use boiled water for drinking purpose | *Ativyayama* |
| *Abhyanga* (oil massage), *Parishek* (Pouring medicated water), *Avagahana* | *Shok, Krodha, Bhaya* |
| *Udarveshtana* (bandaging of abdomen) | *Atapsevana, Divaswapa* |
| Diet must contain *Garbhashayashodhaka, Sthanyavarshaka* and *Vatahara dravya* | *Panchakarma* |

**Research and Survey Conducted to Establish the Efficacy of *Garbhini Paricharya***

An Observational single blind Clinical Study 4 was conducted at Tribhuvan Medicare Centre (1984-1986) where 40 Antenatal cases (without high-risk pregnancy) were the subject of observation. They were made to follow a treatment schedule which include the following:

1. *Garbha Pala Rasa* one tablet with milk throughout pregnancy.
2. *Phalaghrita* one teaspoon a day with milk only for the first trimester.
3. *Kshirbala Taila Abhyanga* beginning from third trimester till term.
4. *Matra Basti* and 60ml *Kalyanak Ghrita* for seven days in the eighth month.
5. *Yoni taila Pichu* for seven days during the course of *Matra Basti.*
6. No other medicines were given except the above-mentioned ones.

**DISCUSSION**

Abhyanga, use of *Tail* and intake of *Ghrita* (as *Rasayana*) are a part of *Swasthavritta*. *Yoni Pichu* helps in *Vivardhana* of *Yonimukha* and *Sukha Prasav. Taila* is *Vatahara* so it softens the passage and destroy the bacteria present in vaginal flora. Taila balances *Apanvata* responsible for delivery of baby and removes *Rukshta* improving the elasticity of pelvic floor leading to easier expulsion of baby.

Basti being the best *Chikitsa* for *Vata* has been recommended to curb any aggravation of *Vata* thus leading to *Sukha-prasava*.

*Phala ghrita* is *Pitta* and *Vatahara* and improves fertility also help in maintaining healthy pregnancy.

**OBSERVATION**

- Out of 40 subjects 38 had normal vaginal delivery.
- All phases of pregnancy were incidence free.
- Deviations like indigestion, ache and pain were not observed.
- Lacerations in birth canal healed early.
- No incidence of pre-term and low birth rate was seen, all babies weighed 3-3.5kgs.

A study was conducted in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology- Ayurveda; Banaras Hindu University in 1989 which indicated the use of *Yoni pichu* along with intake of a combination of-*Ashwagandha, Shatavari* and *Gokshur* during pregnancy lead to positive outcomes in terms of the time interval of labour, smooth passage of the foetus, no morbidity and survival and health status of baby.

An observational study by Poddar Medical College-Mumbai indicated fewer morbidities and disabilities among women who followed the traditional *Garbhini paricharya*.[16]

A study was conducted by Central council for research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) with technical support of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in two districts of Himachal Pradesh i.e., Mandi and Kangra for mainstreaming Ayurvedic interventions for reproductive and child healthcare.

The intervention included consumption of AYUSH AG, GG and PG tablet along with Ayush AD candy (for nausea/vomiting). The study was done on 2465 pregnant woman out of which 691 dropped out, 1774 completed the treatment and the outcome was encouraging and this study could create awareness among the beneficiaries and service providers about Ayurveda for reproductive healthcare. [17]

**CONCLUSION**

*Garbhini Paricharya* include everything from food, lifestyle, diet, medication and mental health care. It is a complete package of care that can be followed to avoid any sort of complication as half the complications are avoidable as are a resultant of lack of care. Food is the best medicine when taken cautiously as per monthly regime described in *Samhitas*.

प्राणाः प्राणभृतामन्नमन्नं लोकोऽभिधावति । वर्णः प्रसादः सौस्वर्यं जीवितं प्रतिभा सुखम् ॥

तुष्टिः पुष्टिर्बलं मेधा सर्वमन्ने प्रतिष्ठितम् । लौकिकं कर्म यवृत्तौ स्वर्गतौ यच्च वैदिकम् ।। (च.सू. 27:349-350)

*Garbhopghatakar Bhav* should be avoided and *Garbhasthapaka* food items should be consumed as per the indication to achieve the ultimate goal being *Sukha-Prasava* and *Swastha Santaan.*

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