



Review Article

CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF *GARBHINI PARICHARYA* AS PER *HARITA SAMHITA*

Ekta^{1*}, Seema Shukla²

*¹PG Scholar, ²HOD, Dept. of Prasuti Tantra and Stree Roga, RGGPG Ayurvedic College and Hospital, Paprola, H.P., India.

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ABSTRACT

God has blessed the females with most valuable gift of motherhood. Ayurveda is the science which offers a specific routine to the pregnant woman and systematic supervision known as *Garbhini Paricharya* as pregnant woman's diet and activities performed during the period of pregnancy reflect on the fetus. Hence in Ayurveda, our *Acharyas* have given great emphasis on *Garbhini Paricharya* or Antenatal care. *Acharyas* have thrown an immense light on the concept of type of diet, behaviour, conduct, medications during pregnancy that a pregnant woman should follow and avoid, known as *Garbhini Paricharya*. Basic objective of *Garbhini Paricharya* depicted in Ayurveda is to achieve a healthy progeny as well as to ensure the good health of mother and fetus during the period of pregnancy, during labor and in the postpartum period. In this paper we have described the monthly dietary regimen and lifestyle for whole nine months of pregnancy that is essential for the wellbeing of the growing fetus and pregnant woman according to *Harita Samhita* as well as the scientific aspects of the antenatal care. As antenatal care should be done in an integrated way i.e., as per modern science and as mentioned in Ayurvedic classics.

INTRODUCTION

Ayurveda is the science that not only focuses on preventive and promotional health, but also has laid enormous importance on safe motherhood and healthy progeny. In *Amarkosha garbhini* means a woman in which *Garbha* is present and *Paricharya* means caring in every aspect; *Ahara*, *Vihara*, *Ausadh* and *Pramarsha*. *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] In Ayurveda, *Garbhini Paricharya* has been categorized in three parts i.e., 1. *Masanumasika Pathya* (monthly dietary regimen) 2. *Garbhopaghatakara Bhavas* (Diet regimen and behavioral activities that may produce adverse effects on fetal growth),

3. *Garbhasthapaka dravyas* (substances beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy and better progeny). *Acharyas* were very well known to the fact that food is not the only factor that plays vital role in the proper development as well as nutrition to the fetus. Along with dietary regimen, the environment and mother's psychic impression has huge impact on the growing fetus. *Garbhini paricharya* that has been advised ages ago in Ayurvedic classical texts are now scientifically proven. *Garbhini Paricharya*, if followed sincerely and thoroughly fulfils the demands of growing fetus, maintains maternal health, provides strength and vitality essential at the time of labor, during puerperial period and for successful lactation.^[2,3] In modern medical science, Antenatal care is systemic supervision including examination and advice that is given to the pregnant lady that starts before pregnancy and ends at delivery and the postpartum period,^[4] in order to diagnose diseases or complicating obstetric conditions and to provide information about lifestyle, pregnancy and delivery. Good ANC plays an important role in preparing a woman for birth by establishes assurance between the pregnant woman, her family and doctor by individualizing promotional health messages.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

References from the literature collected from Ayurveda i.e., classics, commentaries, modern literatures, research journals available in institute library, online portals like Pubmed central, Ayush Research Portal, Google Scholar etc. and analyzed to frame conceptual work.

Masanumasika Pathya (Monthwise Dietary Regimen)

The requirement of nutrition to the fetus varies as the pregnancy progresses, as it imposes extra nutrient requirement. All parts of the fetus organs are made from nutrients in the food that the mother eats. There is a saying; you are what, you eat.

In this context, we can say that the fetus is what, the mother eats. Nutrient needs of a woman during pregnancy are higher than at any other times. The better a woman takes care of her diet, psychic status, behavioral activities during pregnancy, the more successful her pregnancies are likely to be. In order to provide proper nourishment and to fulfil the demands of growing fetus in respective stages of development, Ayurvedic classics depicted the role of monthly dietary regimen of pregnant woman known as *Masanumasika pathya*. Monthly dietary regimen as Acharya Harita mentioned is described in table 1;^[5] and sequential development of fetus is also described in table 2 as well.^[6]

Table 1: Dietary Regimen

Months	Regimen
1 st	<i>Yashtimadhu, Parushaka, Madhuka with Navaneeta, Madhu, Sarkara</i>
2 nd	<i>Kakoli – Sarkara – Dugdha</i>
3 rd	<i>Krishara</i>
4 th	<i>Sanskruta odana</i>
5 th	<i>Payasa</i>
6 th	<i>Madhura dadhi</i>
7 th	<i>Ghrita khanda</i>
8 th	<i>Ghrita puraka</i>
9 th	<i>Vividha anna</i>

Table 2: Garbha Vikasa Krama

Days / month	Development
First day	<i>Budbud</i>
Tenth day	<i>Sonita</i>
Fifteenth day	<i>Ghana</i>
Twentieth day	<i>Mamsapinda</i>
Twenty fifth day	<i>Panchatwa prabhava</i>
One month	<i>Panchabhuta</i>
Fifty day	<i>Ankura</i>
Three month	<i>Hasta, pada</i>
Three and half month	<i>Sira</i>
Fourth month	<i>Loma</i>
Fifth month	<i>Sujiva</i>
Sixth month	<i>Sphurana</i>
Eighth month	<i>Jatharagni</i>
Ninth month	<i>Chesta</i>
Tenth month	<i>Prasava kala</i>

DISCUSSION

First Month

In the first month of pregnancy, Acharya Harita has described that the fetus develops *Ghana* from liquid stage (*Budbud*),^[7] so *Madhura rasa* which is comprised of *Jala* and *Prithvi mahabhoot* has been given to the mother, that may promote this process of solidification. Acharya Harita has advised pregnant women to have *Yashtimadhu*, *Parushaka*, *Madukapushpa* with *Navaneeta*, *Madhu* and *Sharkara*.^[8] *Yashtimadhu* (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*) has been described in *Chardi nigrhana* (anti-emetic) as well as *Vamanopaga* (adjuvants in emetic therapy) *Mahakashaya* by Acharya Charaka,^[9] as it acts as antiemetic in lower dose and emetic in a higher dose. According to a research published in the American Journal of Epidemiology, liquorice contains a compound that can adversely affect mother's health and can be detrimental to fetus's health, if used in large amount. Fetuses that were exposed to large amount of liquorice did not fare well in cognitive reasoning and memory capacity.^[10] *Yashtimadhu* has been used as adjuvant as it acts better in conjunction with other drugs.^[11,12] *Parushaka* (*Grewia asiatica* Roxb.) is rich in iron, calcium, potassium, sodium, vitamin-C, vitamin-B2, carbohydrates.^[13] It is useful in anemia due to the presence of iron. As it is rich in sodium, potassium; it is quite helpful in maintaining electrolyte balance in the body and also provides energy. *Madhuka* (*Madhuca indica*) contains albumin, saponin and acts as a galactagogue along with rich source of calcium, iron, phosphorus potassium and vitamins.^[14-16] As a whole, *Yashtimadhu* combined with *Parushaka* / *Madhuka* / both of these with *Navaneeta* (type of butter).

Navaneeta having properties of *Vrishya*, acts as body coolant, improves digestion, effective in vitiation of *Vata*, *Pitta* and *Rakta*.^[17]

- *Navaneeta* has vitamin A, E, D and K, minerals like Zinc, Iodine, copper etc.
- Zinc plays an important role in many biological functions like protein synthesis, cellular division and nucleic acid metabolism.^[18]
- Studies show that severe zinc deficiency increases fetal death due to spontaneous abortions or multiple congenital anomalies.^[19] Malformations of the heart, lungs, brain, urogenital system and skeletal system are commonly found. Abnormal synthesis of nucleic acids and protein, impaired cellular growth and morphogenesis, abnormal tubulin polymerisation, chromosomal defects and excessive lipid peroxidation of cellular membranes are seem to be the cause of these malformations.

- Studies show that maternal zinc deficiency has long-term effects on the growth, immunity and metabolic status of the surviving offspring.^[20,21]
- Vitamin A boosts immune system and that is how butter helps in boosting immune system.^[22]
- Among the many components of butter, it also contains glycosphingolipids. This special type of fatty acid can protect the body against a number of gastrointestinal diseased conditions, by contributing to the mucus layers along the membrane by making it more difficult for bacterial infections to bind to functioning receptors.^[23]

Navaneeta, *Madhu* (honey), and *Sarkara* (jaggery) is helpful to relieve vomiting, dehydration, anemia that arises in first month of pregnancy along with rich source of nutrients to fulfil the demands of fetus as well as mother's body requirements during late first month of pregnancy.

Second Month

Acharya Harita has been described *Kakoli* (*Roscoea procera* Wall.) with *Dugdha* and *Sarkara* in second month of pregnancy.^[24] *Kakoli* (*Roscoea procera* Wall.)^[25,26] is a *Jivaneeya dravya* (vitalizer) described both in *Jeevaneeya mahakashya* by Acharya Charaka & *Jeevaneeya gana* by Bhavprakasha.^[27-29] As there is more chance of miscarriage in second month, so *Jeevaneeya dravya* should be added to the diet of *Garbhini*. It is also *Balya* (tonic), *Brihaniya* (nutrients), diuretic, *Stanyajanana* (galactagogue) in actions. Along with *Kakoli*, *Dugdha* has also been mentioned as it prevents dehydration due to nausea and vomiting. Milk is mentioned as a complete diet can be taken throughout pregnancy. It is natural source of:

- **Calcium:** As the fetus develops and starts forming the major parts it requires calcium to accomplish the task along with folic acid, vitamins, minerals and enzymes which are essential for fetal and maternal nourishment.
- **Proteins:** Milk is a store house of proteins. Protein is required to facilitate the growth of the uterus, breasts, blood supply and the baby's tissue during pregnancy. Deficiency of protein may lead to decreased birth weight.
- **Vitamin D:** milk contains vitamin D nutrients that help to prevent neonatal rickets and low birth weight along with other issues. Drinking milk helps in meeting about 59% of recommended vitamin D nutrition.
- **Antacid:** Milk is a great antacid that helps to relieve heartburn and other gastric problems which is a common problem faced by many pregnant ladies.

- **Hydration:** Milk is a good source to keep the body hydrated and compensate for fluid loss during this time.

The abundance of proteins, amino acids and fatty acids in milk helps in the development of the baby's nervous system. The iodine content in milk enhances brain development and increase the IQ of children, as milk is rich in many vitamins that are required for the intrauterine fetal development. All the nutrients in the milk help in building a strong immune system of the baby. [30]

Milk is a highly nutritious food that contains suffice amount of macro and micro components, scientifically proven to be beneficial to human health. While the composition of milk is influenced by a variety of factors, such as genetics, health, lactation stage etc., the animal's diet that remains one of the key mechanisms by which its nutrition and characteristics can be altered. Pasture feeding has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on the nutrient profile of milk, increasing the content of some beneficial nutrients such as Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, vaccenic acid, and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), while having low level of Omega-6 fatty acids and palmitic acid. These resultant alterations to the nutritional profile of "Grass-Fed" milk resonate with consumers that desire healthy, "natural", and sustainable dairy products. So, if pregnant woman is having dairy products or milk of grass fed cows that will benefit the growing fetus in numerous ways.

Here, all the macronutrients and micronutrients of milk are shown in Fig.1.[31]

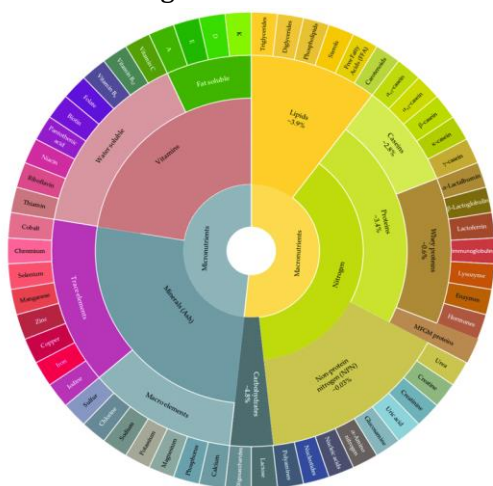


Fig.1: Showing all the macronutrients and micronutrients of bovine milk

Third Month

In the third month, Acharya Harita has described the formation of *Hasta*, *Pada* and *Sira*. [32]

Acharya Harita [33] has prescribed *Krishra* [34,36] (a special formulation of rice) to pregnant lady.

Krishra, being comprised of *Guru guna* and *Prithvi mahabhuta* may help in the formation of these organs. It acts upon excretory system as it is *Malamutrakari* (repellent of fecal and urine). [37] In addition to that, it has been found that the formation of excretory system of fetus starts in third month. Rice starch is nearly completely absorbed by the human body. Positive qualities of high digestibility of starch, high biological value of amino acids, adequate amount of essential fatty acids, selenium and antihypertensive property have been confirmed scientifically. Rice can therefore, be described now as a functional food. Rice meets most of the requirements of a good and healthy food. Rice is only cereal that is eaten as a whole grain, which according to Ayurvedic texts is more easily digestible. [38]

Fourth Month

In fourth month, formation of *Loma* in fetus has been depicted in *Harita Samhita*. As there is description of *Sthiratva* in fourth month which is a *Pitrujabhava*. [39]

Acharya Harita has been prescribed medicated cooked rice in the fourth month of pregnancy. [40] *Krutodana* (medicated cooked rice) comprises of carbohydrates which is the primary component for the growth of fetus in second trimester. [41-43]

High amount of carbohydrates in rice are a good source of energy to the body. Rice consumption gives strength and energy during pregnancy. The presence of resistant starch in rice facilitates the growth of beneficial bacteria in the stomach which helps in normal and smooth bowel movements during pregnancy. The presence of essential nutrients such as vitamin D, thiamine, riboflavin and minerals like calcium, fiber and iron make rice a nutrient rich food. It helps to regulate blood pressure. Its low sodium content balances and reduces the effect of sodium intake from other food items. [44,45]

Fifth MONTH

In fifth month, Acharya Harita has described the fetus will be *Sujiva* (lively). [46] In this month of pregnancy, mother can now feel the movements of the fetus (quickening). [47]

Acharya Harita has emphasized on *Payasa* in fifth month of pregnancy. [48] *Payasa* acts as *Brihniya*, *Balya* which is necessary in fifth month as the *Garbhini* becomes *Krishra* in this period as well as for the growth of fetus. [49] As *Payasa* is the preparation of *Shali* rice, *Sharkara* and milk as well. *Rakta shali* is considered to be best quality rather than other varieties, as it possesses *Madhura rasa*, *Laghu*, *Sheeta Virya* and pacifies all three *Doshas*. [50] It is considered more nutritious and have been found to be rich in

iron, zinc and minerals and possess antioxidant properties.^[51]

In *Bhavaprakasha*, properties of *Payasa* has been mentioned as *Brimhan* (nourishing/nutritive), *Balavardhaka* (energizing), *Pittahara* (pacifier of *Pitta dosha*), *Raktapittahara* (pacifier of bilious disorders or bleeding disorders), balances *Vata dosha*, *Jatharagni Mandakaraka* (pacifies excess digestive fire) etc.^[52]

Generally milk is sweet in taste and promotes growth of the tissues, improves intelligence, sustains life and acts as rejuvenator. Cow's milk especially cures fatigue, excessive thirst and hunger, increases strength and helps in lactation. Milk is considered as an ideal food for pregnant mothers. It provides nutrition and stability to the fetus.^[53]

Madhur rasa has *Snigdha*, *Sheeta*, *Guru*, *Kaphavardhaka*, *Vata-pitta shamaka* properties. *Madhur rasa* provides a feeling of generalized strength and pleasure. All these mentioned properties of *Madhura rasa* help to maintain the proper condition of *Garbhini* and *Garbha*. As fetus is dominated by *Kapha*, naturally it would need more oil based substances to replenish the *Kapha*.^[54]

Sixth Month

Acharya *Harita* has described that there will be *Sphurana* (quivering) in fetus which might resembles the appearance of locomotor and nervous system along with the reflexes.^[55]

In *Harita Samhita*, Acharya has described *Madhura dadhi* in sixth month of pregnancy.^[56]

Curd is rich in vitamin- A, C, D, calcium, proteins, probiotics and folic acid.^[57,58] It cools down the body temperature, calms the emotional centre in order to prevent the anxiety and prevents acidity and heartburn. It also prevents stomach upset, yeast infections and pigmentations i.e., *Kikissa* (striae gravidarum) that appears on sixth month.

Sarkara is rich in iron and contributes to fulfil daily iron requirement, also known to purify blood and breast milk, thereby offering nourishment to the baby during pregnancy and even during lactational period. According to a study published in the *Journal of Food Processing and Technology*, half a cup (100g) of *Sarkara* (Jaggery) contains calcium (40-100mg), potassium (1056mg), magnesium (70-90mg), sodium (19-30mg), iron (10-13mg), phosphorus (20-90mg), zinc (0.2-0.4mg), manganese (0.2-0.5mg), copper (0.1-0.9mg) and chloride (5.3mg). It also contains trace amounts of vitamins.^[59]

- Iron helps in reducing the chances of anemia that is common during pregnancy.^[60]

- Potassium helps in stabilizing electrolytic balance in the body.
- Vitamins and minerals help nourish bones and joints.
- It is believed to trigger the secretion of digestive enzymes and aid in digestion. It could help in smooth bowel movements.

Seventh Month

Acharya *Harita* has advised *Ghritha khand* in seventh month of pregnancy.^[61] *Ghritha* is a form of healthy fat which can help provide nourishment to the baby in the womb. A pregnant woman needs at least 200-300 extra calories daily than a normal person. Ghee can provide those extra calories in the healthiest way possible as well as vitamin A, D, E, K, Omega 6 & 9, Calcium, Iron, Magnesium etc nutrients helpful in fetal development and nourishment. Cooking food with *Desi Ghee* can also enhance the nutrition intake. In *Charak Samhita*, it has been mentioned "Out of all oils fit for human consumption, ghee is the best to eat." And the properties of *Ghritha* mentioned in the text as it promotes memory, intelligence, *Agni*, semen, *Ojas*, *Kapha* and *Medas*; alleviates *Vata*, *Pitta*, insanity, inauspiciousness and fever. It is best of all fats, *Sheeta*, *Madhura rasa*, *Madhura vipaka*, has thousand potentialities and has thousands of actions, if used properly as prescribed.^[62]

Pregnancy with all the biochemical and physical changes, altered metabolism, fear of labor pain, fatigue etc. can be a stressful time. Cow *Ghee* is shown to have relaxing nerves and lower the stress.

It is also believed that just like castor oil, ghee can help to prepare the uterus for labor. It is also believed that it acts as a powerful laxative, which when it stimulates your gut also stimulates your womb to start contractions.

It also helps flushing out toxins, repairing damaged tissues, strengthening the immune system and helps to maintain the body temperature of fetus.

Eighth Month

Acharya *Harita* has advised *Ghritha Purakat*^[63] or *Ghevar* – a kind of sweet preparation in eighth month of pregnancy. *Ghevar* is made up of milk, finely powdered wheat flour, sugar, black pepper and *Ghritha*. As in this month of pregnancy, instability of *Oja* has been mentioned in all classical texts. According to Acharya *Harita* formation of *Garbh Jatharagni* has been occurred. In *Charaka Samhita* *Ghritha* enhances the intellect, memory, *Ojas* etc. Also *Ghritha* has its ability to assimilate effectively the properties of the ingredients added to it without forfeiting its own properties. *Ghritha* provides energy to body as it is more useful than the carbohydrates

and proteins; one gram of *Ghrita* gives 9.3 calories.^[64] Due to the presence of *Ghrita* and *Sarkara*, *Ghevar* provides relief from the acidic and moist environment. It has *Vata* and *Pitta shamaka* properties. Thus, they have a calming effect on mind as well as the body.

Agni vriddhi has been explained as one of important features of *Ghrita* in Ayurvedic classics.^[65-70]

Ninth Month

Acharya Harita has mentioned the appearance of *Cheshta* in the fetus in ninth month of pregnancy, which may indicate the complete formation of fetus.^[71] As it indicates the complete formation of fetus and complete formation of all the systems of fetus. Acharya Harita has mentioned the intake of *Vividha anna* (different varieties of cereals).^[72] Acharya Charaka has classified *Ahara* in

twelve categories i.e., *Sukadhanya, Samidhanya, Mamsa, Harita, Phala, Saka, Madya, Ambu, Gorasa, Ikshuvikara, Krtanna, Aharayogi*.^[73]

Acharya Sushruta classified *Ahara* mainly in two categories i.e., *Drava varga & Annapana varga*. *Drava varga* again sub-classified in: *Jala, Kshira, Dadhi, Takra, Ghrita, Taila, Madhu, Ikshu, Madya, Mutra*.

Annapana varga has been classified in: *Dhanya, Mamsa, Phala, Saka, Lavana, Krtanna, Bhakshya, Anupana*.^[74]

Classification of Food

According to Dietetics: Table 3 is showing the major and other nutrients present in the food.^[75]

According to Acharya Charaka: Table 4 is showing the food mentioned by Acharya Charaka in the text.

Table 3: Major and other nutrients present in the food.

	Major Nutrients	Other Nutrients
Energy Rich Foods	Carbohydrates and Fats	
	Whole grain cereals, millets	Protein, fiber, Calcium, Iron & B- complex vitamins
	Vegetable oils, ghee, butter	Fat soluble vitamins, Essential fatty acids
	Nuts and oilseeds	Proteins, Vitamins/Minerals
	Sugar	Nil
Body Building Foods	Proteins
	Pulses, nuts and oilseeds	B- complex vitamins, Invisible fat, fiber
	Milk and milk products	Calcium, Vitamin A, Riboflavin, Vitamin B ₁₂
	Meat, Fish, Poultry	B-complex, Vitamins, Iron, Iodine, Fat
Protective Foods	Vitamins and Minerals
	Green leafy vegetables	Antioxidants, fiber and other carotenoids
	Other vegetables/ fruits	Fiber, sugar and antioxidants
	Eggs, milk & milk products	Protein and fats

Table 4: Concept of Diet to be taken as per Acharya Charaka

S. No.	As per Acharya Charaka	Can be correlated to
1.	<i>Sashtika shali</i>	Carbohydrate
2.	<i>Mudaga</i>	Protein
3.	<i>Saindhava</i>	Salt
4.	<i>Amlaka</i>	Vitamin
5.	<i>Yava</i>
6.	Rain water	Water
7.	Milk	Protein, fat, sugar etc.
8.	<i>Ghee</i>	Fat
9.	<i>Jangala Mamsa</i>	Protein
10.	<i>Madhu</i>	Sugar

Above mentioned *Ahara* having adequate amount of nutrients required in ninth month of pregnancy for nutrition of mother and fetus.

Foods to Avoid^[76]

- *Dwidal Dhanya*
- *Vidahi*
- *Garistha*
- *Amala bhojana*
- *Ushana ksheerapana*

Activities to Avoid

- *Vyayama*
- *Maithuna*
- *Rosha*
- *Shosha*
- *Chankramana*
- *Guru Anna*

The contraindications for the diet and activities that have been mentioned in Harita Samhita might be explained as:

- The activities which produce psychological or physical strain such as grief, exercise etc. though normal exercise is beneficial, however, their excessive use, physical or psychological trauma may precipitate abortion especially in ladies that are prone for the mishappening.
- Diet of the pregnant mother is highly important for the maintenance of her own health, for providing proper nourishment to growing fetus to meet the requirements for the progressing pregnancy. Text have contraindicated the use of *Guru anna*, may produce digestive abnormalities.

CONCLUSION

Benefits of dietetic regimen has been described for the woman for the normal development of the fetus, Charaka says that by this the woman remains healthy and delivers the child possessing good health, energy or strength, voice, compactness and much superior to other family members.

From all above descriptions one would be able to understand the fact that *rasa* derived from the diet taken by the pregnant lady serves three purposes:

1. Nourishment of her own body.
2. Nourishment of the growing fetus.
3. Nourishment of breast or formation of milk.

Dietetic regimen as mentioned in classical texts is so scientific and applied as during first trimester most women experience nausea and vomiting, thus can't take proper diet. Use of *Parushaka*, *Yashtimadhu*, *Sharkara*, *Krishra* and milk, use of cold and sweet liquid diet and milk prevent dehydration and supply required amount of nourishment, besides the drugs of *Madhur* group

being anabolic will help in maintenance of proper health of mother and fetus. Fourth month onwards muscular tissues of fetus grow sufficiently requiring more proteins which is fulfilled by *Sanskrit odana* as Acharya *Harita* mentioned in 4th month of pregnancy. Milk, ghee and drugs of *Madhur* group have been advised for entire pregnancy period. As earlier said, milk is a wholesome diet throughout the life of human as it provides required amount of essential nutrients for the proper nourishment and growth of fetus and health of the mother too.

All the dietary, behavioral and medicinal regimen prescribed in Ayurvedic classics aim at the healthy progeny and avoiding complications during pregnancy. Do's and don'ts for the pregnant ladies show the vigilant observation and scrutiny of our *Acharyas* about the prevention of any adverse effects of food, activities and medicines, its interactions and incompatibility.

If prescribed regimen is followed sincerely will result in the yield of desirous healthy and happy entity.

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***Address for correspondence**

Dr. Ekta

PG Scholar,

P.G. Department of Prasuti

Tantra & Stri Roga, RGGPG

Ayurvedic College & Hospital,

Paprola, Himachal Pradesh.

E-mail: drekta94@gmail.com

Contact no. 9816792356

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