

Ancient Antenatal Care – Rasayana Approach of Ayurveda in the Antenatal Period

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ABSTRACT:

Reproduction is a vital movement of all living beings. Humans have developed scientific protocols to be followed before birth, called antenatal care (ANC), for better and healthy newborn outcomes. Ayurveda, ANC protocol focuses on the formation of viable, mature, and potent gametes and non-consanguine marriage as a preconception prerequisite; after conception, there is starting of Garbhini Paricharya (pregnancy) till birth. Pregnancy is a susceptible point in a woman's life, as unhealthy and uneasy conditions in this period can lead to severe complications for the mother and offspring. Considering the enormity of the pregnancy period, Ayurveda applies the Rasayana drug, diet, and routine in pregnant women during the antenatal period as Masaanumasika Garbhini Paricharya, i.e., month-wise daily regimen. Rasayana drug and diet is Oja Vriddhikara, i.e., increases the nutrition of all body tissues, and enhances the immunity, enthusiasm, and vitality of mother and fetus. Godugdha (Cow's milk) and Goghrita (Cows Ghee) is the best Rasayana Aahara and Bsheshaja in Indian diet. Adequate and judicious use of cow's milk and ghee along with Rasayana medication followed by certain dos and don'ts is the mainstream of Masaanumasika Garbhini Paricharya for the birth of healthy, intelligent, and long-living offspring. The present article explains the Rasayana approach of Ayurveda in antenatal care.

Keywords: Garbhini Paricharya, Godugdha, Goghrita, Masaanumasika, Rasayana.

INTRODUCTION

Every animate has a tendency to reproduce the progeny to continue the race. Human is the highest authority in the universe and apply knowledge to improve and make life fruitful. Humans have a system of health for longevity and healthy life. Healthy life and longevity depend right from the birth and gestational periods. Research has proved that the impacts during gestational life show their impression in adult life [1]. Therefore, the care given in the gestational or antenatal period is essential to a healthy future life. Considering these facts, the health system developed a scientific protocol for the pregnancy period called Ante Natal Care (ANC). Ayurveda indigenous system of Indian medicine has defined the antenatal care protocols called Garbhini Paricharya. Certain dos and don'ts of Garbhini Paricharya should be followed during this period. Garbha or fetus remains inside the womb for nine months and then expelled out into the external environment from the womb. Therefore, the retention and healthy growth of Garbha for nine months inside the uterus and then the easy natural passage of the fetus through the birth canal are the critical events of the antenatal and natal periods.

The fundamentals of Ayurveda emphasize the balance of Tridosha and Dhatu Samya. Therefore, the balance of Dosha and Dhatu Poshana is the chief goal of the Garbhini Paricharya. As two individuals grow during pregnancy, there is an additional requirement for nutrients and routine should be advocated to the mother. Ayurveda explained the Rasayana approach during pregnancy and described it as Masaanumasika Garbhini Paricharya. Rasayana therapy is one of the eight fundamental branches of Ayurveda modalities. Rasayana Chikitsa focuses on the genesis, rejuvenation, vitality, and longevity of body tissues. The fetus continuously increases inside the uterus and seeks nutrition from the mother. Therefore, with this requirement and genesis, the Rasayana diet, drugs, and routine are explained in Ayurveda. This Rasayana approach of Ayurveda during pregnancy is unique, scientific, time tested, easier, and cheaper than today's conventional ANC protocols. Integrating the Ayurveda ANC approach with conventional ANC is beneficial to improve the delivery outcome with healthy and long-living babies.

“This article is an attempt to reveal the Rasayana approach of Ayurveda during the antenatal period and to give a key message to mainstreaming the Ayurveda ANC principle with today's ANC.”

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

1. To discuss the scientific background of the Rasayana approach of Ayurveda antenatal care Objectives:
2. Explore the newer dimension of Ayurveda Rasayana therapy in today's modern Antenatal care (ANC)

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Data and information regarding Ayurveda ANC care are collected from different Ayurveda Samhita and related texts, reference books, e-books, journals, health magazines, news papers, opinions of different traditional birth attendees (TBAs), folk as well as traditional routine care practices, various research articles from different journals, web, and e-books, and references from the different kinds of journals, articles, papers, and websites. Research papers, dissertation and thesis from different institutes. Reference books and text books on obstetrics and gynecology

DISCUSSION:

Ayurveda is a life science and has curative as well as preventive aspects. As wisely said, prevention is better than cure. *Rasayana* therapy of Ayurveda is curative as well as preventative. *Rasayana* means cyclic production and repairing of *Rasa Dhatu* to form purest *Rasa Dhatu*, which regulates, repairs and rejuvenating all the body tissues (Rest of *Rakta*, *Mamsa*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja* and *Shukra Dhatu*) ultimately improving the health and longevity of person [1]. Ayurveda is concerned about health from gamete formation, fertilization, fetal growth, birth, childhood, adulthood, and up to geriatric age. *Rasayana* is beneficial in all these aspects of life. In order to get the optimum benefits of *Rasayana* therapy, it should be administered in the early phase of life [2]. Therefore, the earliest time to apply *Rasayana* therapy is during fetal life. The fetus is completely dependent on the mother. Hence, the healthy growth and development of the fetus depends on the healthy status of the maternal *Rasa Dhatu*. Whatever is consumed by the mother is converted into *Rasa Dhatu*, and maternal *Rasa Dhatu* is divided into three parts: one part is used for maternal nutrition, the second is used for fetal growth, and the third is used for breast milk production.

Nourishment of a fetus with maternal Rasa Dhatu occurs in different ways according to the period of gestation. In early fetal life *Garbha Poshana* occurs with the *Upasnehana* and *Upaswedana* [3]. *Nyaya* and in later fetal life with *Apara Nirmana* (*Garbha Rasavahi Nabhi Nadi*) and *Kedariikulya* [2]. *Nyaya*. This description of *Garbha Poshana* reveals that the purity of maternal Rasa Dhatu is an essential or key factor in the healthy growth and development of the fetus. Therefore, it's obvious that one should strengthen the maternal Rasa Dhatu to get healthy progeny, and this can be achieved by administering Rasayana therapy to the mother. *Rasayana* therapy is applied in the form of *Rasayana Aahara*, *Rasayana Vihara*, and *Rasayana Dravya*. *Godugdha* [2] (Cow's milk) and *Goghrita* [2] (Cow's ghee) are said to be best *Rasayana* in Ayurveda [3]. Therefore, Acharya Charaka, as well as Sushruta, has described cow's milk, cow's Ghee, butter, and meat soup as *Rasayana Aahara* to maintain the optimum growth of the fetus. Along with *Rasayana Aahara*, *Rasayana Vihara* is also essential for the fetus's proper and healthy growth and development. *Rasayana Vihara* indicates a daily routine and lifestyle free from stress, anxiety, and fear. One should take care of health and follow the Spiritual path along with some *Pranayama* Practices, worship, etc. all measures maintain the psychosomatic balance and help the neuroendocrinal system to maintain the optimum health of pregnant women and fetuses.

Rasayana Dravya Sevana: along with *Rasayana Aahara* and *Vihara* use of *Rasayana* drugs in diet and as medicine during the pregnancy period is auspicious for the fetus's health not only in fetal period but also in future life after birth. There are several such *Rasayana* drugs mentioned in *Garbhini Paricharya* viz. *Prishniparni*, *Shatavari*, *Shunthi*, *Vidari*, *Gokshura* etc.

Sushruta describes the different Yoga in the treatment and prevention of *Garbhapata* and *Garbhasrava* (Table no. 2). Nowadays all *Dravya* are used in clinical practice as preventive medicine for the optimum growth and development of fetus inside. *Sariva*, *Bilva*, *Shatavari*, *Vidari*, *Prishniparni*, *Gokshura*, *Patola* etc are those drugs. All these drugs have *Rasayana* properties and are therefore valuable for day-to-day clinical practice as good *Garbhini Rasayana* and included in the *Garbhini Paricharya* (Table no.1). Therefore, *Garbhini Paricharya* with the optimum use of *Rasayana Aahara*, *Rasayana Vihara*, and *Rasayana* Drugs are very promising and useful in current health issues of pregnant women.

CONCLUSION:

Ayurveda explained the eight major branches of medicine. *Rasayana Chikitsa* is one of them and is deals with the preventive as well as curative aspect. Preventive aspect of *Rasayana* therapy is very useful in the *Garbhini Paricharya*. *Rasa* is initial *Dhatu* and all other *Dhatu* gets nourished through it. During *Garbha Kala* all *Dhatu* are developed and formed the all organs and body parts. Therefore *Rasayana* should be administered as early as possible in individual time and *Garbha Kala* is the best time for the same. Administration of *Rasayana Ahara*, *Vihara* and *Sadvritta* helpful for healthy growth of fetus is requirement of the today's society. *Rasayana* drugs like *Gokshura*, *Shatavari*, *Sariva* etc are very beneficial as part of *Garbhini Paricharya* and should be administered to mother for the outcome of healthy long living progeny.

Table 1: Garbhini Paricharya according to Charaka Samhita¹ and Sushruta Samhita [4].

Month	Charaka Sharira 8	Sushruta Sharira 10
1	Cow's milk in small quantity frequently (small	<i>Madhura</i> (To promote the growth), <i>Shita</i>

	but frequent), and routine food which mother take as normal routine diet.	(produces coolness) and <i>Drava</i> (liquid) diet
2	Cow's milk processed or medicated with the <i>Madhura Rasa Dravya</i> (e.g. <i>Yashtimadhu</i> , <i>Priyal</i> , <i>Gokshura</i>)	<i>Madhura</i> (To promote the growth), <i>Shita</i> (produces coolness) and <i>Drava</i> (liquid) diet
3	Cow's milk fortified with the Cow's <i>Ghee</i> and <i>Madhu</i> (Honey)	Cow's milk and Rice <i>Madhura</i> (To promote the growth), <i>Shita</i> (produces coolness) and <i>Drava</i> (liquid) diet
4	Cow's milk and one <i>Aksha</i> (10-12.5g) butter	Curd and Rice, butter, cow's milk, Meat of Jangala creatures Delicious and tasty food
5	Cow's milk fortified with the Cow's <i>Ghee</i>	Cow's milk and Rice fortified with the Cow's <i>Ghee</i>
6	Cow's milk and Cow's <i>Ghee</i> processed or medicated with the <i>Madhura Rasa Dravya</i> (sweet taste diet)	Gruel mixed with Cow's <i>Ghee</i> , <i>Ghee</i> medicated with the <i>Gokshura</i>
7	Cow's milk and Cow's <i>Ghee</i> processed or medicated with the <i>Madhura Rasa Dravya</i> Butter processed or medicated with the <i>Madhura Rasa Dravya</i> (to prevent <i>Kikkisa</i> i.e. striae marks)	Cow's <i>Ghee</i> , <i>Ghee</i> medicated with the <i>Prithakparni</i> (<i>Uraria picta</i>)
8	Gruel made up of milk and fortified with Cow's <i>Ghee</i> should be consume frequently	Cow's milk, Gruel mixed with Cow's <i>Ghee</i> , oil, meat soup <i>Anuvasana Basti</i> (enema) with the medicated sesame oil (processed or medicated with the <i>Madhura Rasa Dravya</i>)
9	<i>Anuvasana Basti</i> with the medicated sesame oil (processed or medicated with the <i>Madhura Rasa Dravya</i>)	Cow's milk, Gruel mixed with Cow's <i>Ghee</i> , oil, meat soup <i>Anuvasana Basti</i> (enema) with the medicated sesame oil (processed or medicated with the <i>Madhura Rasa Dravya</i>) up to delivery

Table 2: Rasayana Drugs described in Sushruta Samhita for the treatment of *Garbhapata* and *Garbhasrava* [4].

Months	<i>Bheshaja</i> - Sushruta Samhita month wise <i>Kashaya</i> for treatment of <i>Garbhasrava</i>
Month 1	<u><i>Yashtimadhu</i> (<i>Glycerrhiza glabra</i>), <i>Shaka Bija</i> (), <i>Payasya</i> (<i>Pureria tuberosa</i>), <i>Devadaru</i> (<i>Cadru deodara</i>).</u>
Month 2	<u><i>Ashmantaka</i> (), <i>Tila</i> (<i>Sesame indicum</i>), <i>Tamravalli</i> (), <i>Shatavari</i> (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>)</u>
Month 3	<u><i>Vrikshadani</i> (), <i>Payasya</i> (<i>Pureria tuberosa</i>), <i>Utpala</i> (), <i>Sariva</i> (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>).</u>
Month 4	<u><i>Ananta</i> (<i>Hemidesmus imdicus</i>), <i>Rasna</i> (<i>Pluchea lanceolata</i>), <i>Sariva</i> (), <i>Padmaka</i> (), <i>Yashtimadhu</i> (<i>Gycerrhiza glabra</i>).</u>
Month 5	<u><i>Brihati</i> (<i>Solanum indicus</i>), <i>Kantakari</i> (<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i>), <i>Kashmari</i> (<i>Gmelina arborea</i>), <i>Tvaka</i> (<i>Cinnamomum zeylanica</i>), <i>Ghee</i></u>
Month 6	<u><i>Prishniparni</i> (<i>Uraria pecta</i>), <i>Bala</i> (<i>Sida cordifolia</i>), <i>Shigru</i> (<i>Moringa olefera</i>), <i>Gokshura</i> (<i>Tribulus terestres</i>), <i>Madhuparnika</i> (<i>Pureria tuberosa</i>)</u>
Month 7	<u><i>Shringataka</i> (), <i>Bisam</i> (), <i>Draksha</i> (<i>Vitis venefera</i>), <i>Kasheru</i> (), <i>Yashtimadhu</i> (<i>Glycerrhiza glabra</i>), <i>Sitopala</i> (<i>Sugar</i>)</u>
Month 8	<u><i>Kapittha</i> (), <i>Bilva</i> (<i>Agel marmosus</i>), <i>Brihati</i> (<i>Solanum indicum</i>), <i>Patola</i> (), <i>Ikshu</i> (), <i>Kantakari</i> (<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i>)</u>
Month 9	<u><i>Yashtimadhu</i> (<i>Glycerrhiza glabra</i>), <i>Ananta</i> (<i>Hemidesmus indicus</i>), <i>Payasya</i> (<i>Pureria tuberosa</i>), <i>Sariva</i> ()</u>

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Article information

Manuscript Submitted: 15-10-2023

Manuscript Revised: 20-10-2023

Manuscript Accepted: 15-01-2024

Manuscript published: 19-02-2024

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