

An *Ayurvedic* review of diet and nutrition in pregnancy

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Abstract

Nowadays with changing life style comes various lifestyle associated diseases. Especially when a women is going through such a physiological change. It is very important to maintain the womens health status to optimum until the delivery. Ayurveda plays a prime importance in maintaining a good health as it has mentioned *grabhini paricharya* which emphasis *Ahara* (diet), *Vihara* (regimen), *Vichara* (emotions/thoughts) and *Aushadha* (medications). In which *ahara* itself is a broad aspect to study in *grabhini paricharya*. *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*, *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. Therefore, here in this paper we are mentioning a month vise *ahara paricharya* according to different *Acharayas* in *garbhini*.

Keywords: Diet, *Garbhini paricharya*, Nutrition, pregnancy.

INTRODUCTION

Purusha (human) is born and grows from *Ahara Rasa*. So *Ahara 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. According to WHO survey announcement 99% of all maternal deaths occur in developing country like India. Maternal mortality rate in India=239/1 lakh live births (2015) whereas, 12 /1lakh live births in developed countries maternal health is a complex, influenced by various genetic, social and economic factors, infection and environmental conditions, many of which may affect the foetal growth. Thus maintaining maternal health is very important as it deals with two lives and affectcts the demography of the world. Maintaining a good lifestyle and good dietary habbits seems to be neglected these days but looking at the big picture it affects on the different aspects and can change once life completely. In *Ayurveda* our ancient *acharyas* like *Charaka*, *Susruta*, *Vagbhata*, and *kashyapa* they clearly emphasised

about diet and nutrition of mother and child care under the heading of “*masanumasika garbhini paricharya*”. Balanced and adequate diet is therefore of utmost importance during pregnancy and lactation to meet the increased needs of the mother.

Foetal Nourishment

Acharya Charaka explains the point that whatever diet the pregnant women consumes, the *Ahara Rasa* (digested food) formed from this performs three functions¹

1. Nourishment of women’s body.
2. Formation of milk.
3. Nourishment of the foetus.

Charaka says the diet and management mentioned in the chapter on the principles of procreation (*Jatisutriya Adhyaya*) prevent disorders and promote the growth of foetus, if these two are not properly observed the offspring dies immediately after birth as the newly planted tree with unstable roots is destroyed by the wind and the sun.²

In *Jatisutriya Adhyaya*, *Charaka* has described the factors responsible for damaging the foetus. In short the pregnant women gives birth to a child suffering mostly from the respective disorders, hence the women desiring excellent progeny should particularly abstain from non-congenial diet and regimen.²

METHODOLOGY

The matter related to Antenatal care, scattered in various *Ayurvedic* classics were critically examined, evaluated and probable modifications that can be included in traditional practices which suits today’s lifestyle without altering the principles of care of pregnant woman are suggested.

MASANUMASIK GARBHINI AAHAR PARICHARYA

Ayurveda conceptualized a vibrant society, which is made of healthy population. This they called as *Supraja* (healthy citizens). In order to achieve this eugenic goal they advocated a regime for pregnant woman, called *Garbhini Paricharya* (antenatal care).

PRATHAMA MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6)

1**Charaka samhita- Ksheera*

**Susruta samhita- Madhura sheeta drava ahara*

**Astanga sangraha - Aushadha siddha ksheera*

**Harita samhita - Madhuyasti, madhuka pushpa with Navaneeta, madhu, madhura ksheera*

DWITIYA MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6)

2* *Charaka samhita- Ksheer with madhura rasa*

**Susruta samhita- Same as 1st month*

**Astanga sangraha – same as charaka*

**Harita samhita - Madhura sidda ksheera with kakoli*

TRITIYA MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6,7)

3, **Charaka samhita- Ksheera with madhu ghrita*

**Susruta samhita- Same as 1st month*

**Astanga sangraha – same as charaka*

CHATURTHA MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6)

4. **Charaka samhita- Ksheera with navneeta*

**Susruta samhita- Shastika shali anna with dadhi, navneeta, jangalamamsa rasa*

**Astanga sangraha – Ksheera with 1 tola of navaneeta*

**Harita samhita – Medicated odana*

PANCHAM MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6)

5. **Charaka samhita- Ghrita prepared with navaneeta extracted ksheera*

**Susruta samhita- Shastika shali anna with dadhi, navneeta, jangalamamsa rasa*

**Astanga sangraha – Ksheera with 1 tola of navaneeta*

**Harita samhita – Medicated odana*

SHASHTAM MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6)

6**Charaka samhita- Ghrita prepared from maddhura aushdha*

**Susruta samhita- Ghrita or yavagu gokshura*

**Astanga sangraha – Same as charaka*

**Harita samhita – Madhura dadhi*

SAPTAM MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6)

7*Charaka samhita- Same as 6th month

*Susruta samhita- Ghrita prepared with prathakparnyadi gana

*Astanga sangraha – Same as charaka

*Harita samhita – Ghritakhanda

ASHTAMA MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6)

8*Charaka samhita- Ksheera yavagu mixed with ghrita

*Susruta samhita- Asthapana basti with badara kwatha mixed with bala, atibala, shatapushpa.

*Astanga sangraha – Ksheera yavagu mixed with ghrita Asthapana basti with badari kwatha Anuvasana basti with taila with medicated madhura aushadha

*Harita samhita – Ksheera yavagu

NAVAM MASA PARICHARYA (3,4,5,6)

9*Charaka samhita- Anuvasana basti with taila prepared with madhura aushadha

*Susruta samhita- Snehayukta yavagu, jangala mamsa rasa upto the period of delivery

*Astanga sangraha – Same as charaka

*Harita samhita – Different varieties of cereals

In this way different *acharyas* explained the ahara *paricharya* in *garbhini*, which if followed properly prevents the mother/*garbhini* from different diseases.] *Charaka* says that by following this regimen the woman remains healthy and delivers the child possessing good health, energy, strength, voice, compactness and much superior to other family members.⁸

DAILY DIETARY ALLOWANCES FOR PREGNANCY

	after 1st trimester	sources
Energy (Kcal)	2600 k cal	Protein, fat, carbohydrate
Protein (gm)	60gm	Meat, fish, polutary, dairy product.
Iron (mg)	40mg	Meat, egg, sea food
Calcium (mg)	1000mg	Dairy products
Zinc (mg)	15mg	Meat, egg, sea food
Vitamin A (IU)	8000 IU	Vegetables, liver, friuts.
Vitamin D (mg)	400 IU	Dairy prodcts
Iodine (ug)	175 ug	Idonised salt, sea food
Thiamine (mg)	1.5 ug	Grains, cereals
Riboflavin	1.6 ug	Meat, liver, grains
Nicotinic acid (mg)	17 mg	Meat , nnt, cereals
Ascorbic acid (mg)	70mg	Citrus fruits , tomato
Follic acid (ug)	400 ug	Leafy vegetables, liver
Vitamin B12	2.2 ug	Animal proteins ⁹

DISCUSSION

Whatever the food the pregnant woman takes that food becomes homologous to the foetus. The pregnant woman desirous of producing a healthy and good looking child should give up noncongenial diet and regimen and protect herself by doing good conduct and use congenial diet and regimen

I. Properties of *ahara* mentioned

a. *Dugdh*

Generally milk is sweet in taste. It is unctuous (it has oiliness). It promotes growth of tissues and is cooling to the body. Cow's milk especially, improves intelligence, sustains life and acts as a rejuvenator. Milk cures fatigue, excessive thirst and hunger. It is an ideal food for persons suffering from emaciation. It helps in preventing bleeding. It increases strength and breast milk. For these reasons milk is the ideal food for pregnant mothers. It provides nutrition and stability to the foetus.

b. *Shali-shastik*

It is rich in carbohydrates, provides fuel of the body, excellent source of niacin, vitamin D, calcium, iron, thiamine , riboflavin¹⁰

C. Mudga:

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.¹¹

d. Navneeta:

It contains a high amount of saturated fat and provides 7% of recommended dietary allowance of vitamin A based on 2000-calorie diet. Vitamin A is important to vision health.¹²

e. Ghrita:

It contains 112 calories/tbsp. and 33 mg of cholesterol. The total fat content is 12.7 gm. 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.²⁵

f. Madhu :

28 Energy: 64 calories in 1 tbsp. Fat: 0 g. Carbohydrate: 17.3 g. Protein: 0.06 g.

II. Clinical importance of *masanumasik aahara dravyas* mentioned in *garbhini*

The drugs of sweet group like *Yasthimadhu*, *Parushaka*, *Madhukapushpi* are having anabolic, memory enhancing, *pitta* decreasing and Anti emetic property.

In Fourth month muscular tissue of fetus grows sufficiently requiring more protein which is supplied by use of meat and meat soups. Meat possesses many good properties. Meat in general, is the best food for controlling the *Vayu* in the body. Meat soup bestows stoutness, strength and nourishment to the body.

In fifth month ghee, *Shastik Shali* rice with milk, meat of wild animals, pleasing food with milk, ghee should be given, because there is marked increase in foetal muscular tissue and blood.

In sixth month i.e. by the end of the second trimester most women suffer from edema of foot and other complications of water accumulation. Use of tribulus terrestris that, it is an excellent herb in all problems related to the urinary system. It cleanses the urinary bladder, removes urinary stones, controls diabetes and relieves difficulty in urination in sixth month and will prevent retention of water as well as its complications.

In seventh month the *Vidarigandhadi* groups of drugs are indicated, these drugs are diuretic, anabolic, relieve emaciation and suppress Pitta and Kapha. The regular use in this month might help in maintaining health of mother and foetus.

In eighth month use of enema will relieve this constipation besides this may also affect the autonomous nervous system (ANS) governing myometrium and help in regulating their function during labour.

In ninth month following ahara regime, women gains strength and complexion and she delivers easily at proper time desired, excellent, healthy child possessing all the qualities and long life.

CONCLUSION

The pregnancy diet should be light, nutritious, easily digestible and rich proteins, minerals and Vitamins. In terms of figures, the daily requirement during pregnancy is given in table. It is not an absolute recommendation but simply a guide. Woman with normal BMI should eat as to maintain the schedule weight gain in pregnancy. This holistic regimen advised during various stages of pregnancy and childbirth comprising of thoughts, action, dietary modifications and herbs aims to ensure a healthy and smooth childbirth and at the same time sustain the overall health, nutrition and well being of both the woman and the baby.

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