



## CONTRIBUTION OF AYURVEDA TO REDUCE PERINATAL MORTALITY RATE

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## ABSTRACT

One of the most important phases of a woman's life cycle that ensures the survival of the human species on this planet is pregnancy and childbirth. The ancient science of life known as Ayurveda places a strong emphasis on maintaining health based on lifestyle choices before treating illness. Therefore, Ayurveda can be useful in preventing obstetric difficulties, safeguarding the health of mother and child, and offering simple, effective, healthier ways to treat common diseases. According to Ayurveda, measures for a healthy pregnancy and childbirth begin even before conception. Ayurveda lays emphasis on-physical and emotional maturity at the time of conception for better outcome. In order to lower rates of maternal and infant mortality, this research underlines the importance of fostering a pluralistic healing approach in maternal and child health care. It emphasises the benefits of Ayurveda and offers advice on how to incorporate these practises.

**KEYWORDS:** Ayurveda, perinatal mortality, healthy mother and offspring.

## INTRODUCTION

Perinatal period is the one extending from the gestational age at which the fetus attains the weight of 1000gm (equivalent to 28 completed weeks of gestation) to the end of the seventh completed day of life.

According to WHO -Perinatal mortality refers to 'All fetal and neonatal deaths weighing 1000 gm or more between 28 weeks of gestation to first week of neonatal life'

$$\text{Perinatal Mortality Rate (PMR)} = \frac{\text{etal and Early Neonatal Death}}{\text{Total Birth (live birth + still birth)}} \times 1000$$

The approach of Indian System of medicine relating to the care of mother and the child namely conception, fetal growth, prenatal and postnatal care are holistic in nature, safe, effective and may reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality. Garbhadhan Samskara, Garbhini Paricharya, Prasava Paricharya and Sutika Paricharya all these have been mentioned by Acharyas to achieve a healthy progeny from a healthy mother. According to Ayurveda, care for the woman's body starts much earlier than her actual pregnant state. The nutritional status of the parents specially woman has directs impact on outcome of pregnancy and health of the woman and child. In Ayurveda, combination of Ahar (food), Vihar (action), Vichar (thoughts/ emotions) and Aushadha (medications) are essential to improve overall status of health and nutrition of both mother and baby.

## Description

## 1. Garbhadhan Samskara

Acharyas has mentioned about Garbhadhan Samskara to achieve a planned conception, to improve the quality of all four Garbha Sambhava Samagri,<sup>[1]</sup> i.e. Ritu, Kshetra, Ambu, Beeja and six Garbha Utpadak Bhawas.<sup>[2]</sup> i.e. Matrija, Pitrija, Rasaja, Satwaja, Satmyaja, Atmaja and thereby to achieve healthy progeny with longevity, physical, psychological and spiritual health and to prevent the congenital anomalies and birth defects. Garbhadhan Samskara includes.<sup>[3]</sup>

- Panchakarma
- Rasayana and Vajikarana therapy
- Manashuddhi by Achar Rasayana
- Yoga, Pranayama
- Garbhadhana vidhi

2. Garbhini Paricharya (Antenatal Care)<sup>[4]</sup>

In Ayurveda, Garbhini Paricharya can be summarised under 3 categories such as Masanumasik Pathya Ahara - vihara, Garbhastapak Karma (diet and lifestyle for maintenance of pregnancy and better progeny) and Garbhopaghatakar Bhavas (diet and lifestyle which are harmful to fetus).

## Pathya ahara and vihar (Diet and regimen during pregnancy)

Garbhini should take cold, sweet, liquid, nutritive diet with milk, freshly cooked rice meat or meat soup, milk cooked with Madhura groups of drugs etc to prevent

dehydration and supply required nutrition.<sup>[5]</sup> Rasa derived from the diet taken by the pregnant women serves three purposes<sup>[6]</sup>- nourishment of her own body, nourishment of the fetus and nourishment of breast or formation of milk.

In late pregnancy (in 8<sup>th</sup> month) Sushruta has mentioned about Asthapan and Anuvasan Basti for proper functioning of vata; also this may affect the autonomous nervous system governing myometrium and help in regulating their function during labour.<sup>[7]</sup>

Yoni picchu (medicated tempon)<sup>[8]</sup> may destroy pathogenic bacteria of vaginal canal and prevent

infection; also this tempon may soften vaginal passage thus help in normal labour.

### Garbhasthapak dravyas (Drugs beneficial for maintenance of pregnancy)<sup>[9]</sup>

Garbhasthapak dravyas mainly counter the effect of substances which are harmful to fetus and pregnant women and help in proper maintenance of garbha. Thus these can be considered even as a treatment for abortion. In ayurvedic texts, these drugs are described in Prajasthapak Mahakashay such as aindri, brahmi, shatavari, durva, amogha, avyatha, siva, arista, vatyapuspi and have advised oral use of milk or ghrita prepared with these drugs.

### Garbhopaghatakar Bhawas (diet and mode of life harmful for fetus)<sup>[10]</sup>

Dietics and mode of life of pregnant women	Effect on the fetus or child
1. Suppression of natural urges-defecation, urination, flatus; excessive exercise, use of pungent, hot edibles	IUD or Premature delivery or abortion
2. Trauma and compression in lower abdomen, riding in jerking vehicle	Premature delivery or abortion
3. Excessive use of sweets	Suffers from prameha, obese and dumb
4. Excessive use of salty articles	Early wrinkling, greying of hair and baldness
5. Nasya	Less body parts in fetus
6. Dhumrapaan	Crooked armed and blind fetus

### 3. Prasav Paricharya (Care during childbirth)

Childbirth is a natural process at the same time Ayurveda lays emphasis on preparedness and readiness to deal with any complication.

Construction of a special ward has been advised for every parturient woman.<sup>[11]</sup>

Multiparous women who possess strong character, experienced in conducting the labour, affectionate in nature, capable of making parturient woman happy should remain there.<sup>[12]</sup>

During the process of delivery, she should have bath with lukewarm water and to drink good, strength producing rice gruel.<sup>[13]</sup> Avoid exertion and not to bear down in absence of labour. Massage with lukewarm oil over waist, flanks, back and thighs. It helps the fetus descend downwards.<sup>[14]</sup> In case of garbhasanga /delayed labour, vaginal fumigation with pinditaka,<sup>[15]</sup> anointment of pestled potaki root with tila taila inside vaginal canal,<sup>[16]</sup> brings easy delivery.

### 4. Sutika Paricharya (Care after childbirth)<sup>[17]</sup>

To gain the lost strength in childbirth, Ayurveda focuses on both mother and newborn upto 45 days to bring back pre-pregnant health to mother and make the child strong and healthy. Her nutritional need increases to meet dual purpose of prasuti and prasuta paricharya. So, snehapana given to sutika mixed with Pippali, Pippalimoola, Chavya. Chitraka for agnideepana, amapachana and to avoid vataprakopa. Mamsarasa, madhura, brimhaniya

drugs are helpful maternal health and to enhance property of maternal milk.

### Navajaata Sisuparichaya (Neonatal care)<sup>[18]</sup>

It includes Jatamatra Sisuparichaya (period immediately after birth upto cutting of umbilical cord), Sadyajata Sisuparichaya (refers to first 24 hours of age). In Jatamatra paricharya, Pranaprayagamanam (neonatal resuscitation) is advised to establish proper cardio-respiratory function, Ulbasodhanam (now a days avoided to prevent hypothermia), Mukhakantha Vishodhanam to clear airways, Garbhodakavamanam (drugs are administered to baby to make him vomit the aspirated fluid); Nabhinaala Chedana Vidhi are included.

### CONCLUSION

The science of life, Ayurveda could contribute significantly in improving mother's and newborn's health as well as reducing diseases and disabilities. The diet and mode of life advised during different stages of pregnancy and childbirth aims to ensure a healthy and smooth delivery also to sustain overall health, nutrition and wellbeing of both woman and baby. The role of Ayurveda is immensely important in prevention of obstetric complications to reduce perinatal mortality rate.

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