



Concept note

Qualitative antenatal care with Ayurveda regime, Yoga and Pranayama - a spiritual journey

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda is evolved in the basics of holistic concepts of health. It has deep practicability of philosophical, oriental methodologies providing individualized medical care. Science also looks after the geographical and social parts of the individual. *Garbhini paricharya* (antenatal care regime) is mentioned in ancient Ayurveda texts for best progeny. A detailed and comprehensive diet plan is being practised only by the vaidyas of the classical medical tradition. In this article, we are giving a broad expanse of the month-wise diet, which can be modified according to the age, season, place, constitution, and digestive fire of the pregnant woman as per Ayurveda texts. Pregnancy itself is a stress. Ayurvedic interventions along with spiritual practices can take care of the physiological and psychological aspects of normal pregnancy. With the practices of Yoga, Pranayama can give holistic care during pregnancy. The article gives a multidimensional *Garbhasanskar* approach to qualitative antenatal care.

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INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy itself is a stress and during this period, lots of physiological changes happen in the body. The Anxiety factor may be there because of a lack of knowledge, and fear of complications (Dunkel Schetter and Tanner, 2012). This must be handled delicately. The pregnant lady also needs guidance about diet and exercise. This is managed by Ayurveda antenatal regime, Yoga and Pranayama. The physical and psychological status of the mother is very important for her own health and the baby's well-being. This Qualitative antenatal care is a boon for today's obstetric care.

We have heard of Abhimanyu in the intrauterine life when Lord Shri Krishna was explaining the secrets to Subhadra. But he stopped when he knew that Abhimanyu was catching up with him. HE, as the knower of all future, wanted him to know only the secret of going into the *Chakravyuha*. We know what happened in Mahabharata later in the war.

Many other references in Ayurvedic Granthas point to the possibilities of learning in the womb itself. In intrauterine life, a baby is like a sponge and can absorb all things at such a wonderful speed with proper training. The baby can deliver in good shape with easy natural delivery and imbued with fine values. The training given to the fetus through the mother consists of Yoga, music, Ayurvedic *Garbhini paricharya* and reading of spiritual books and mantras.

YOGA

If the mother has practised *Asanas* before pregnancy, she can easily practice them during pregnancy with some precautions. She should practice them with a trained and experienced teacher who knows the adverse effects of unnecessary movements. She can practice the following poses.

Trikonasan, Parshwakonasan and Virbhadrasan

These poses in a standing position make the lower extremity light and increase confidence.

Baddhakonasan, Janushirshasan and Upvishtha konsan

These asanas make the woman capable of tolerating labour pains. The perineal muscles get relaxed and the delivery becomes normal and easy.

Virasana and Vajrasana

These asanas help to reduce oedema on the legs.

Parvatasana

It can increase space in the abdominal cavity and respiratory movements become easy.

Sarvangasan, Halasan and Shirsasan

Difficult poses like *Sarvangasan*, *Halasan* and *Shirsasan* can also be practised in pregnancy with precautions and proper guidance.

Pranayam

The regular practice of deep inhale-exhale, *anulom*, *vilom* and *bhramari pranayam* increases oxygenation in pregnancy.

Shavasana

In dehydration due to hyperemesis, anaemia, hypertension, and asthma: mothers get relief when they perform Shavasana 2-3 times a day.

MUSIC

Music and sound affect all living beings. Animals yield more milk with appropriate music; similarly, music enhances the deficiency of workers in factories and offices. Music pacifies the excited mind and it can also lessen the physical pain. Even plants are positively influenced by music. Then is it not natural that it should affect the fetus? Long before the hearing has developed in utero, the child is aware of energetic musical vibrations as well as the mother's emotional and biochemical response to them. Through shared musical experiences, the relationship between the mother and child is strengthened enormously.

But always listen to calm soothing music. Music increases intelligence, creativity listening skills. Loud music is not tolerated by a baby. There are many cassettes and CDs available in the market. But the one I prefer most for my patients is manashakti's 'music for unborn'. This CD combines Indian classical music along with the pronunciation of mantras. Additionally, it also includes western music enriched with tunes in low, medium and high frequencies. The famous music composer and singer late Shri Sudhir Phadake has also recited the Gayatri mantras in two different ragas, in his melodious voice.

Most of the patients give feedback that after listening to this CD during pregnancy the child has become aware of the music. one mother told me that her daughter who is 3 years old now when she hears *Gayatri mantra* anywhere, just stops and listens to it. The march past song filled with bravery is also included in this CD. Many antenatal mothers tell me that the fetus starts kicking inside when it hears it. Unbelievable!!!!

GARBHINI PARICHARYA

Many Ayurvedic texts have advised diet and activities for a pregnant woman in detail (Koppikar, 2008).

1. The diet of a pregnant woman must be palatable, liquid, sweet and appetizing. Milk, butter and ghee must be liberally used in her diet. Kashyapa has advised the use of hot water, milk and meat. According to him, milk increases the weight of the baby, meat provides nutrition to the baby and also suppresses Vata in a pregnant woman.
2. Yogratnakar has given a list of some dietary

substances such as mudga, wheat, floor or porched rice, butter, rasala (curd mixed with sugar and condiments), honey, sugar, banana, amlaki, draksha etc.

3. Ayurveda has mentioned the monthly dietary schedule followed by a pregnant lady. Especially in 1st trimester when the mother is unable to have proper healthy food due to nausea, vomiting and anorexia, many recopies can be advised from Ayurveda e.g. avaleha, mand, peya, yush. The guideline is to be taken by a competent Ayurved person who also has a thorough knowledge of obstetrics.
4. The behaviour of a pregnant lady is also explained in detail. e.g. "every morning after a clean bath one must worship the rising sun. She should wear clean, white clothes, sacred, auspicious, new, intact ornaments, and use cooling agents like musk, chandan, camphor, etc.

BASTI IN PREGNANCY

In the eighth month, ayurveda has advised giving *Asthapan basti* followed by *Anuwasan basti* even though the position given to the woman at the time of enema is explained. Vaginal tampons are lubricated by medicinal oil if used in the ninth month because softening of *yonimarg* i.e vagina and facilitate easy vaginal delivery (Patil et al., 2020).

ADVANTAGES OF GARBHINI PARICHARYA

1. Use of monthly regimen soothe her *garbhadharini* area i.e. uterus and kukshi i.e. abdomen and perineal muscle: sacral region, flanks and back
2. *Vayu* becomes normal or anulomak
3. Bladder and bowel empty easily
4. Strength and complexion improve
5. The labour process becomes normal and easy. She delivers healthy child

Reading spiritual books prayers and chanting mantras

A mantra is defined as that which helps to balance the mind. Therefore it helps to create a very positive impact on the personality of the fetus. Among the several mantras, the Gayatri mantra is the king of mantras. There is no proof in Vedas, in religion nor is it scientific and logical that women should not recite the Gayatri mantra so both parents can chant this mantra daily.

Prayer means concentrated good thoughts. Right from the moment of conception welcomes the baby with prayer. Your bond with your baby will grow stronger day by day. Here, also I would like to refer to the book of *manashakti* which mentions a prayer which means as follows.

O little baby, we welcome you! Come to enjoy a truthful and real life, we wish you to be a good human being, and for it, we shall try to provide you necessary facilities' etc.

RECOMMENDATION

So, without forcing our thoughts, or desires, we can welcome the baby into this new world for him or her. The thoughts reach the baby inside the uterus and of course, he/she is prepared well for the battle of life!!! Instead of

watching soapy TV serials, action movies, and bad news, the lady can spend her time well by reading some good religious books like Bhagvatgita, Ramayan, and Mahabharata. She can also recite ramraksha, manache shlok every day.

Everybody has stress in today's life. But you have to find ways to distract your mind from worrying. If the mother develops the habit of reading daily, it is good for her and the baby. She can study any religious scriptures of her faith which can give her guidance and direction in life. She can read biographies of great men like Shivaji Maharaj, and Mahatma Gandhi. The troubles faced and overcome by them will inspire her. She can also convey it to her fetus by telling stories every day.

The gynaecologist is the person who is the companion of her pregnant patient from conception up to delivery. The birth is a journey for three of them, the doctor, the mother and the baby. Therefore all should make it a special event, something to be always remembered and treasured, a joyous occasion to welcome the new addition to the family.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare(s) no conflicts of interest.

DECLARATION

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