

Garbhini Paricharya (Regimen for the pregnant woman)

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Vaidya Koppikar was a practicing Ayurvedic Physician at Poddar Ayurveda Hospital, Mumbai specializing in Women's health, specially reproductive health. She is no more with us. Including one of her articles is a small tribute to her phenomenal contribution to the legacy of Ayurvedic use in maternal health.

ABSTRACT

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. It changes in accordance with the growth of the fetus in the womb and at the same time ensures health of the mother. One can find remnants of this dietetics with midwives and older women, but a detailed and comprehensive diet plan is being practiced only by the vaidyas of the classical medical tradition. In this paper we are giving a broad expanse of the month wise diet, which can be modified according to the age, season, place, constitution and the digestive fire of the pregnant woman.

AHAR (FOOD)

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.

The food taken by a pregnant woman:

- Nourishes and helps the growth of the foetus.
- Nourishes the mother's own body.
- Nourishes the breasts by which the breast milk formed maintains newborn baby.

Study Results

It was found during survey of local traditions in villages in different parts of India (LSPSS-CHETNA survey) that many practices of this diet regimen still persist among masses. On following most of this diet regimen in Poddar Hospital, Bombay, following result were obtained:-

Out of 1000 deliveries between Oct '88 and Feb '90;

- *The low birth weight babies were 59 i.e. 5.9%*
- *Still births – 31 (3.1%)*
- *L.S.C.S. – 45 (4.5%)*
- *Due to Basties in 9th month of pregnancy and vaginal oil swab (Yoni Pi cchu) the prolonged deliveries were less and vaginal tears negligible.*

So the Garbhini should follow a careful regimen of food and behavior during pregnancy. This Regimen is known as “*Garbhini Paricharya*”.

The growth of the foetus is marked by a certain growth pattern. Thus in the 5th month there is a predominant growth of *Mamsa* (flesh) and *Rakta* (blood) dhatus. In 6th month there is predominant development of *Bala*, *Varna*, Nails, hairs, *Roma*, ligaments, bones etc. Accordingly the management changes every month according to 'Charaka Samhita.

FIRST MONTH OF PREGNANCY

Diet: Cold milk in small quantity but frequently. Mathur (sweet), Sheet (cooling to the body) and liquid diet is preferred in 2nd month for maintenance of foetus.

Medicine: *Jeshthamadhu* with white sandalwood powder, red sandalwood powder in cow's milk.

Jeshthamadhya, *Saagbee*, *Ksheerkakoli*, *Devdaru* (*Cedrus deodara*) milk.

SECOND MONTH OF PREGNANCY

Diet: Cold milk in small quantity but frequently *Madhur*, *sheet* and liquid diet like milk, coconut water, fruit juices, *peya*, *kanji* which has not become sour.

All these should be in small quantity but taken frequently. Fruits to be avoided are Pineapple, Papaya, Sugarcane.

Medicine: *Ashmantaka* (*Apta til*), *Pippali* (*Piper longum*), *Manjishtha* (*Rubia cardifolia*) *Shatavari* (*Asparagus recemosus*). These are taken in same quantity and a *Kashay* (decoction) is prepared and taken with milk and sugar. Lotus stem, Nagakeshar Milk, or butter-milk, lotus, bel fruit, Camphor and Goat milk.

THIRD MONTH OF PREGNANCY

Diet: Rice with milk or Ghee (clarified butter) and honey in unequal quantity with milk and same type of fruit juices that are told in 2nd month.

Medicine: *Vrikshadani*, *Ksheerkakolki*, *Priyangu*, *Sariva*.

- Sugar, *Nagkeshar* Milk
- Sandalwood powder, *Khus*, lotus, cold water with milk.

FOURTH MONTH OF PREGNANCY

Diet: Butter taken out of milk, Rice with curds, fruit juice, coconut water, Hridya Fruits viz. Mango, watermelon, white pumpkin, yellow pumpkin, snake gourd (*chichinda*) Berry

(*Badar*), pomegranate, *Amratak* (*Ambada*)

Medicine: *Sariva*, *Rasna*, *Bharangi* or *Jeshthamadhu* decoction.

- If pregnant woman feels thirst, burning and pain in abdomen then milk boiled with banana root, lotus, *Khus* is given in the same quantity.

For Thirst: *Shunthi*, *Mustha*, sandalwood powder.

Diet: Meat-soup, rice, chicken

FIFTH MONTH OF PREGNANCY

Diet: Rice and milk, ghee from butter, Rice milk, Ghee. *Mamsa Vardhak* (foods which promote bulk in fetus) – meat soup, back gram; *Rakta Vardhak* (which increase blood)– Pomegranate, *Chikoo*, Apple, spinach, beatroot, Amalki, guava etc.

Medicine – Ground pomegranate leaves, sandal wood paste should be mixed with curd and honey.

Kantakari (*Solanum xanthocarpum*) *Laghu Kantakari* (*Gmelina arborea*) leaves of *Ksheeri* trees (like Pipal – *Ficus religiosa*) banyan, *udumbar* (*Ficus glomerata*), *Plaksha* – (*Ficus factor*) powder with milk.

- Ground blue lotus, *Renukbeej*, *Nagkeshar*, pumpkin with water.

SIXTH MONTH OF PREGNANCY

Diet: Ghee, Rice, *Gokharu* (*Tribulus terrestris*) *Siddha* ghee (processed ghee), *Yavagu* (Rice *kanji*).

Medicine: *Gairik*, cow's dung, black mud heated and put in water and after setting for some time, take upper water only and in that mix sandal powder, sugar and drink it.

- *Prishniparni* (*Urarica picta*), *Bala*, *Gokharu*, Drum stick, *Jeshthamadhu* decoction.

Balya (Strengthening):

Endri, *Gorakshakarkati* (*papaya*), *Vidarikanda*, *Shatavari*, *Ashwagandha*, *Mashparni*, *Bala*, *Atibala*.

Varnya (for complexion):

Sandalwood powder, lotus, *ushir*, *Sariva*, *Jeshthamadhya*, *Manjishtha*, White *Durva*, *Vidarikanda*.

SEVENTH MONTH OF PREGNANCY

If there is itching on her lower abdomen, thigh or breast, the following medicine are used:-

- *Berry Kashay*: processed in sweet medicines, butter milk.
- *Kanheri* siddha oil massage
- *Parishek of Jai*, *Jeshthamadhu* decoction.
- Avoid salt and large quantity of water.
- Take *bala*, *Gokharu*, *Musta*, *Lajjalu*, *Nagkeshar* powder, Honey. In 7th month all parts of foetus are well

developed.

- Take – Water Chestnut (*Trapa Bispinosa*) lotus, grapes, *Musta*, sugar, *Jeshthamadhu* decoction.

EIGHTH MONTH OF PREGNANCY

Diet – *Yavagu* in milk.

Medicine: Take *Lodhra*, *pippali* powder with honey and milk.

- Milk processed in *Kapittha* (*Eeronia elephantum*) *Laghu Kantakari* and snake gourd, *Bruhat Kantakari*, Cane Sugar.
- *Asthapana Basti*(decoction enema) – *Berry Kashaya*, *Bala*, *Atibala*, Milk, oil, salt, honey and ghee.
- After this give *Anuvasana Basti*(Oil enema) of milk, *madhuraushadhi siddha kashay* (decoction prepared with drugs of sweet taste)oil, so that pregnant woman has got strength and soft vaginal passage and she will deliver easily.

NINTH MONTH OF PREGNANCY

Anuvasana Basti with *madhurashadhi siddha* oil and put oil tampon in vagina. In 8th and 9th month there is pain in abdomen and some time bleeding through vagina also. So use pain killing and *stambhana* (drug to stop bleeding) medicine.

Medicine – *Shunthi*, (*Zigiber officinale*) *Jeshthamadha*, *Deodaru* are pain killers. *Sariva*, *Jeshthamadha*, *Ksheerkakoli Kashaya* medicines.

If pregnancy continues upto 10th month then only take – *Shunthi*, *Ksheeravidari Kashay* or only *Shunthi Siddha* milk.

PREGNANCY HARMING FACTORS

Along with the diet, Ayurveda lists out certain factors, which can cause disturbances or harm to the pregnant woman and fetus. These are as follows:-

- Travel on irregular roads, travel in speeding vehicles
- Wearing of red clothes
- Sitting on hard and irregular surface
- Intercourse, smoking, narcotic drugs, wine or sedatives.

- Sleeping in supine position, lest the cord twists around the neck.
- Taking fish in large quantity,
- *Guru*(heavy), *Tikshna*(spicy), *Ushna* (hot)Diet.
- Holding of natural urges
- Excessive exercise
- Predominant use of one taste in large quantity. If she takes:-
- *Sweet* – Baby will be fat and may develop diabetes.
- *Sour* – Skin diseases, diseases of eyes and allergies.
- *Salty* – Hair become white early, graying hairs, wrinkles on the skin.
- *Pungent* – Weak and may cause infertility.
- *Bitter* – Weak and dry.

The pregnant women were supervised to take most of the above diet and other regimen to ensure anemia free, pains free and enjoyable pregnancy. Most of the women also had normal, trouble free deliveries.

Botanical names of the herbs used in the paper :

Jeshtamadhu	-	<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>
Ksheerakakoli	-	<i>Lilium polyphyllum</i>
Devdaru	-	<i>Cedrus deodora</i>
Manjishta	-	<i>Rubia cordifolia</i>
Shatavari	-	<i>Asperagus racemosa</i>
Bel	-	<i>Aegle marmelos</i>
Aswagandha	-	<i>Withania somnifera</i>
Nagakesar	-	<i>Mesua ferrea</i>
Vrikshadani	-	<i>Dendrophthoe falcata</i>
Priyangu	-	<i>Callicarpa macrophylla</i>
Sariva	-	<i>Hemedesmus indicus</i>
Rasna	-	<i>Pluchea lanceolata</i>
Bharangi	-	<i>Clerodendron serratum</i>
Shunti	-	<i>Zingiber officinalis</i>
Musta	-	<i>Cyperus rotundus</i>
Bala	-	<i>Sida cordifolia</i>
Mashaparni	-	<i>Phaseolus sublobatus</i>
Prsnaparni	-	<i>Desmodium gangeticum</i>
Kantakari	-	<i>Solanum xanthocarpum</i>
Ksheeri trees	-	<i>Ficus religiosa</i>
		<i>Ficus benghalensis</i>
		<i>Ficus racemosa</i>
		<i>Ficus glomerata</i>
Atibala	-	<i>Abutilon indicum</i>
Ksheeravidari	-	<i>Ipomoea mauritiana</i>
Gairik	-	Red ochre