



A Brief Narrative Review Of Recommended Diet And Dietary Regimen In Pregnancy According To Brihatrayee (3 Main Treatises) Of Ayurveda.

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Abstract: Diet is an important factor for human survival. Ayurveda gives immense importance to proper wholesome diet. In pregnancy, diet plays a dual role as a material cause by nourishing embryo/foetus as well as mother. In this article, dietary regimen indicated in three main treatises of Ayurveda during pregnancy has been compiled, compared and discussed conceptually. For review, Brihatrayee have been used. And after narrative review it has been concluded that in Ayurveda, antenatal diet has been very scientifically recommended. Charaka, Sushruta and Vagbhata prescribe almost similar diet pattern during antenatal period.

Index Terms - Garbhiniparicharyaa, Aahara, antenatal care.

INTRODUCTION

Aahaara (diet) is called as the greatest medicine (*Mahaabheshaja*) in *Ayurveda*.ⁱThis signifies its importance in health as well as diseases. In *Ayurveda*, *Aahaara* has been included in three *Upasthambhas* (three supporting pillars of the body).ⁱⁱDiet is having the greatest importance as it is *Samavaayee* (material) cause of *Dosha* (body humours), *Dhatus* (body tissues) and *Mala* (excretory products) which form the body. Without diet human being cannot survive. *Charaka* quoted that everything in human body is generated from diet one consumes, even diseases also. So for physical and mental health, proper diet is very important.

In pregnant women, proper diet is very important for both mother as well as baby. Diet promotes well nourishment, strength, longevity, immunity and *oja* (vitality). In pregnancy, states of *Doshas*, *Dhatus* and *Malas* changes significantly in body. This changed physiology needs to be complemented with proper dietary regimen. So that homeostasis of *Doshas*, *Dhatus* and *Malas* will be maintained in both mother and baby.

In this article, recommended antenatal as well as prenatal diet / dietary regimen from selected treatises of *Ayurveda* has been described in brief and its scientific analysis has been done on the basis of *Ayurveda* and modern medical science.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES:

To review antenatal dietary regimen described in *Brihatrayee* of *Ayurveda*

To compile antenatal regimen described in *Brihatrayee* of *Ayurveda*

To compare antenatal regimen described in *Brihatrayee* of *Ayurveda*

METHODOLOGY-

In this narrative review dietary regimen indicated during pregnancy described in three main treatises of *Ayurveda* (*Charakasamhita*, *Sushrutasamhita*, *Ashtangsamgraha*) have been compiled and discussed in context of *Ayurveda* and contemporary understanding.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In *Ayurveda* the antenatal care doesn't start with conception but it starts just with the planning of conception. For healthy pregnancy, proper care and management should be planned since planning of pregnancy. In *Ayurveda* pre-conception regimen has also been indicated which should be followed before conception. This is because the product of conception that is the baby is nothing but product of union of maternal and paternal reproductive factors. If these reproductive factors are healthy, then only a healthy baby can be produced. As seen earlier diet plays an important role in formation of maternal and paternal body tissues and other physiology of body. So, the ideal dietary regimen should be followed since couples plan for baby. Below a brief overview has been given of indicated diet before conception and diet during pregnancy.

DIETARY REGIMEN WHEN COUPLE PLAN FOR BABY CONCEPTION

There are different regimens have been indicated for both male and female who plans conception. For males *Charaka*ⁱⁱⁱ has recommended diet which is dominant in sweet taste. Means sweet dietary articles like sugar, milk and so on have been recommended. Milk and ghee processed with herbs included in *Jeevaniya* group of medicines by *Charaka* are more beneficial for proper formation male reproductive factors. For females *Charaka* has recommended to consume recipes prepared from oil and black gram. This improves quality of female reproductive factors (*Shonita*). One important thing is *Shodhana* (bio-purification) of body is recommended before all of these to have proper assimilation of ingested diet and to maintain homeostasis of *Doshas* in body. In *Ayurveda* month wise specific diet has been recommended as per requirement of embryo or foetus. The details of it have been shown in table below.

This regimen promotes normal foetal growth and development and maintains homeostasis of *Doshas*, *Dhatus* and *Malas*.

Along with indicated diet, general contraindications are also described in *Ayurveda*. These are as follows. Pregnant women should avoid substance like wine, excessive meat. *Ushana* (hot), *teekshna* (sharp), *katu* (spicy), *guru* (heavy), *vishambhi* food should also avoided by pregnant women.

In *Ayurveda*, a special condition called as *dauhridah* has been described in which pregnant mother develops various desires in fifth month of pregnancy.^{iv} It has been said that desires of foetus are expressed through the mother hence in this condition and they must be fulfilled because negligence or non-fulfilment can cause abnormalities or even death of foetus. These desires sometimes appear weird or unwholesome. But still it is said that these should be fulfilled smartly by converting them in to wholesome form with proper organisation so that they should not harm to foetus.

The dietary recommendations described in *Ayurveda* during preconception and pregnancy has been given prime importance in all treatises of *Ayurveda* and the principle and properties of diet during these periods are similar. It not only acts as diet but also works as medicine during this period.

DISCUSSION:

Pre conception and antenatal diet recommendations in *Ayurveda* are based on need of nutrition per respective month of pregnancy. The diet recommended before conception is having similar qualities with parental reproductive factors. It is aimed to improve quality as well as quantity (in case of male) of reproductive factors.

In initial months of pregnancy, growth of embryo doesn't need much proteins or fats. So the simple diet rich in *Madhura* and *Sheeta* properties is indicated. These properties are similar with that of embryo and fulfil growth requirements of foetus. From second trimester, foetal growth and development fastens. Bulk of body tissues increases, so the need of heavy diet which is rich in fats, proteins increases progressively. So from fourth month successive changes have been made in diet. In sixth month, to prevent pregnancy induced hypertension, preeclampsia like conditions, *gokshura* (*Tribulusterrestris*) has been added in dietary article by *Sushruta*. *Basti* (medicated enema) is been contraindicated till seventh month of pregnancy to protect foetus as it promotes downward progression of *vaata* and so the foetus. But after that, to make reproductive system ready for delivery of baby naturally, *bastis* are indicated to promote normal labour.

Explanation of development of *dauhridah* desires in pregnant women can be given on the basis of principle of similarities and differences. According to this principle similar factors are responsible for increase in similar factors in body when consumed; while opposite factors are responsible for decrease in opposite factors. If any factor exceeds in body the person dislikes things which cause its further aggravation and desires the opposite factors. Or whenever any Factor reduces than normal, the individual desires for that factors. Foetal growth and development completely occurs by nutrition provided by mother. So if such abnormal increase or decrease occurs in foetus, it will be expressed through mother. That's why, to establish homeostasis or to correct proportion of such factors in foetus desires of mother should be fulfilled.

CONCLUSION:

After reviewing dietary indications during pregnancy and pre-conception, it can be concluded that in *Ayurveda*, antenatal diet has been very scientifically recommended. *Charaka*, *Sushruta* and *Vagbhata* prescribes almost similar diet pattern during antenatal period.

Table 1:

Month of pregnancy	<i>Charaksamhita</i> ^v	<i>Sushrutsamhita</i> ^{vi}	<i>Ashtangasangraha</i> ^{vii}
First	Plain, non-medicated milk	<i>Madhura</i> (sweet), <i>Sheeta</i> (cold) and liquid diet	Medicated milk
Second	Medicated milk-Processed with sweet group of drugs	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Sheeta</i> and liquid diet	Medicated milk-Processed with sweet group of drugs
Third	Milk with honey and ghee	<i>Madhura</i> , <i>Sheeta</i> and liquid diet	Milk with honey and ghee
Fourth	Milk with butter	Cooked <i>Shasti</i> rice with curd, dainty; pleasant food with milk, butter and meat of <i>Jaangala</i> animals	Milk with a <i>tola</i> (~12 gram) of butter
Fifth	Ghee made from butter of milk	Cooked <i>Shasti</i> rice with milk, meat of <i>Jaangala</i> animal, dainty food with milk and ghee	Ghee made from butter of milk
Sixth	Ghee made up of milk processed with sweet group of drugs	Ghee or gruel of rice processed with <i>Tribulusterrestris</i>	Ghee made up of milk processed with sweet group of drugs
Seventh	Ghee made up of milk processed with sweet group of drugs	Ghee medicated with <i>prithakparnyaadi</i> group of drugs	Ghee made up of milk processed with sweet group of drugs,
Eighth	<i>Ksheerayavaagu</i> (gruel made with milk) with ghee	<i>Aasthaapanabasti</i> (medicinal enema of decoction) of <i>badari</i> , <i>balaa</i> , <i>atibalaa</i> , <i>shatapushpaa</i> , <i>paatala</i> , honey and ghee. After <i>Aasthaapanabasti</i> , <i>Anuvaasanabasti</i> should be given by oil processed with milk and medicated with sweet drugs	<i>Ksheerayavaagu</i> (gruel made with milk) with ghee, <i>Aasthaapanabasti</i> (medicinal enema of decoction) of <i>badari</i> , <i>Anuvaasanabasti</i> (~medicinal enema of fats) of oil processed with sweet group of drugs
Ninth	<i>Anuvaasanabasti</i> (~medicinal enema of fats) and vaginal tampon of oil processed with sweet group of drugs	<i>Snigdha</i> (unctuous gruels with meat soup of <i>Jaangala</i> animals- till delivery	<i>Anuvaasanabasti</i> (medicinal enema of fats) and vaginal tampon of oil processed with sweet group of drugs

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